



Presse release

## **Agriculture at its limits: Between climate change and pest pressure**

Mannheim, 5 May 2025 - Agriculture is under pressure: while extreme weather events are becoming more frequent even in supposedly temperate latitudes as a result of climate change, invasive or increasingly common pests such as the reed glass-winged cicada are threatening harvests. Südzucker AG (Südzucker) and the Industrieverband Agrar e. V. (IVA) today held a joint farm day at the Kirschgartshausen experimental farm to show what this means for farmers, what solutions are being worked on and what politicians need to do now.

At its experimental farm, Südzucker focuses on current topics relating to the future of agriculture. These include new methods of weed control such as robotics and spot spraying, as well as the promotion of biodiversity through integrated flower strips. Practical trials provide results that serve as a basis for professional exchange with farmers. This takes place as part of guided tours of the trials and on-site training sessions. "The current focus is on research into ways of controlling the reed glass-winged cicada. The bacterial diseases transmitted by the cicada lead to very heavy yield losses in sugar beet. The diseases are now also affecting other crops such as potatoes and carrots," explains Dr Georg Vierling, Head of Sugar Beet Cultivation and New Plants at Südzucker. "In the face of climate change and new diseases and pests, sustainable, regional agriculture for food supply will only work if farmers can use a toolbox of options available to them. These include plant protection, breeding and improved cultivation methods," Vierling continues.

Domestic arable farming faces a double challenge from climate change: On the one hand, it must adapt to new challenges such as extreme weather and pest pressure, and on the other hand, agriculture must also make its contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in production. Dr Theresa Krato, Head of Plant Nutrition and Biostimulants at the IVA, explained how this can be achieved: "If we use technological solutions consistently, emissions from arable farming can be reduced by up to 40 per cent. Green nitrogen fertilizers can make the biggest contribution to this in the future if we continue to focus consistently on renewable energies and the development of a hydrogen infrastructure."

However, solutions that are already available for a long time also offer reduction potential, such as nitrogen stabilizers or digital tools such as optical N-sensors. "Although the production of nitrogen fertilizers with green hydrogen is still considerably more expensive than with natural gas," says Krato, "if we look at the CO<sub>2</sub> avoidance costs, they are

significantly cheaper than previously subsidised climate protection measures such as the energy-efficient refurbishment of buildings or electric cars.”

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### **About Industrieverband Agrar**

Industrieverband Agrar (IVA) is German industry association representing manufacturers of inputs for sustainable crop production in Germany. The association comprises 47 member companies with businesses in plant protection, mineral fertilizers, plant breeding, biostimulants and pest control. The industry represented by IVA offers innovative products for modern agriculture, professional horticulture and responsible private use.

### **About Südzucker Group**

Südzucker is a major player in the food industry with its sugar, special products, starch and fruit segments, and Europe's leading ethanol producer with its CropEnergies segment. In the traditional sugar business, the group is Europe's number one supplier of sugar products, with 21 sugar factories and two refineries, extending from France in the west via Belgium, Germany and Austria, through to Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bosnia, and Moldova in the east. The special products segment, with its consumer-oriented functional ingredients for food and animal feed (BENEO), chilled/frozen products (Freiberger) and portion packs (PortionPack Group), operates in dynamic growth markets. Südzucker's CropEnergies segment is Europe's leading producer of renewable ethanol, with production sites in Germany, Belgium, France and Great Britain. Other products in this segment are protein food and animal feed products as well as biogenic carbon dioxide. The starch segment comprises AGRANA's starch and ethanol activities. The group's fruit segment operates globally, is the world market leader for fruit preparations for dairies and is a leading supplier of fruit juice concentrates in Europe. In 2024/25, the group employed about 19.300 persons and generated revenues of about EUR 9.7 billion.