



Press Release, 02 March 2020

WHEAT INITIATIVE'S HEAT AND DROUGHT ALLIANCE AHEAD KICKS OFF 1ST WORKSHOP

(Berlin) The AHEAD - Alliance for wheat adaption to heat and drought - Steering Committee and its stakeholders had their first workshop in 2021. Under the guidance of the Wheat Initiative, AHEAD is an international network, which aims to address scientific gaps and create synergies globally to support the development of new, more tolerant wheat varieties, which are better adapted to changes predicted with climate change. The AHEAD programmes driving force is coming from well-established companies and organisations such as BBSRC, CIMMYT, GRDC, JKI, AAFC, INRAe and CAAS.

Caused by climate change, wheat crop loss due to heat and drought is increasing, and predicted to continue reducing wheat yields and quality globally. Receiving great support by the Julius-Kuehn Institut in Germany the AHEAD programme was launched in 2020 by the Wheat Initiative to create a special unit on heat and drought, dedicated to this topic only.

The workshop was a forum to present the heat and drought research from Germany, France, UK, Canada, Australia, China and CIMMYT. The presentations gave an extraordinary overview of the research priorities and activities in these countries and revealed common themes, issues and challenges. Also limitations on delivering heat and drought resilient wheat were presented.

Peter Langridge, Chair of the Wheat Initiative's Scientific Board, said: "Not surprisingly, the predictions of the impact of heat and drought are concerning but the willingness of all groups to collaborate and the strength of the research programmes offer great hope going forward."

The AHEAD steering committee will soon meet again to discuss more in detail and to elaborate options and strategies to keep building the international collaboration programme on heat and drought involving possible interactions with private sector breeders.

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