

Press Release

Kassel (Germany) – March 5, 2018

K+S commissions Aquaponic Research Container

Why Lettuce and Fish Go Well Together

Today, **K+S Aktiengesellschaft** unveiled a new aquaponic research container at its headquarters in Kassel. Speaking at a press conference, **Dr. Burkhard Lohr**, the chairman of the **K+S Board of Executive Directors**, and **Alexa Hergenröther**, managing director of **K+S KALI GmbH**, accompanied by **Christian Geselle**, the lord mayor of Kassel, explained why aquaponics and research and innovation were so important for the company.

“We examined megatrends intensively during our ‘Shaping 2030’ strategic development process. The population of the world is growing while the land available for cultivation is declining. Naturally, as a company that provides fertilizers, we have to ask ourselves about the impact of this on our business. We are keen on finding new ideas and approaches”, says Lohr. There are about 7.6 billion people in the world today and this figure is expected to rise to 9.8 billion by 2050. Cities will grow. That is another reason for the decline in the land available for farming. To be able to produce sufficient food in spite of this, plant nutrition as well as new cultivation methods are gaining in importance.

New Concepts for Growing Food

The term “urban farming” also encompasses research into ways in which plants can be cultivated in urban environments. It includes various cultivation methods. Aquaponics refers to the interaction between the breeding of fish in aquacultures and the cultivation of agricultural crops, such as vegetables

and herbs using hydroculture. The system results in fish and plants supporting each other: What fish discharge is processed by bacteria and then serves as a fertilizer for plants. On the other hand, the plants purify the water in which the fish swim. Such systems use much less water than regular fields and plants mature faster. "Apart from our existing products, we are also looking at new business sectors in which we are not active yet but for which we have the necessary basic skills," said Alexa Hergenröther, commenting on the idea of exploring aquaponics more intensively. "We already possess very sound knowledge and skills in the area of liquid fertilization. It is essential to view things from a broader perspective in order to continue being successful in the future as well."

The container has been installed on the K+S site at Bertha-von-Suttner-Str. 7. People who are interested can view the pilot plant from outside. The glass container makes it possible to view the different plant levels. The process is described on a monitor. "In this way, we want to keep on engaging in a dialogue with the citizens of Kassel," said Lohr, commenting on the choice of location. "It was previously occupied by the unity man, who has been moved to our Zielitz site (Saxony-Anhalt). We want to make a contribution to the discussion about the important issue of food. After all, K+S has been helping farmers supply food to the population of the world for more than 125 years," said Lohr. He added that the company had set up an innovation lab of its own in Kassel. It is following a different course from the customary paths followed by research departments and is also intended to promote cooperation with startups.

Kassel Is the Right Place

Christian Geselle, Kassel's lord mayor also underscored the importance of innovation and forward-looking thinking. "Together with numerous partners, including partners drawn from industry, we have managed to grow Kassel's standing as a research center, as a university town with more than 25,000 students and as a business hub. In terms of the labor market situation, the city has never experienced better times since unification," he

said. As further proof of success, Geselle mentioned trade tax receipts, which reached a record level of more than 170 million euros in 2017. "The figure is a result of the fact that we in Kassel can place reliance on our old tried and tested strengths while remaining open to innovation and being ready to actively shape the future." Therefore, he was delighted about new projects that will give a further boost to the development of the economy.

Note to editors

You can find photographs of the event and of the research container as well as infographics you can use on our webpage <http://www.k-plus-s.com/en/news/presseinformationen/2018/presse-180305.html>.

About K+S

K+S considers itself as a customer-focused, independent minerals company for the segments of Agriculture, Industry, Consumers, and Communities and wants to grow the EBITDA to €3 billion in 2030. Our over 14,000 employees enable farmers to provide nutrition for the world, provide solutions that keep industries going, improve daily life for consumers and provide safety in the winter. We continually meet the growing demand for mineral products from production sites in Europe, North and South America as well as a worldwide sales network. We strive for sustainability because we are deeply committed to our responsibilities to people, environment, communities and economy of the regions in which we operate. Learn more about K+S at www.k-plus-s.com.

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