

Make Eight out of Five: Making Use of Available Potentials through Sustainable Innovation

Just imagine our refrigerators were empty – every day. The lack of food is a bitter daily truth for many people in emerging and developing countries. Almost 870 million people are chronically undernourished¹⁾. This means: One in eight humans has to go to bed hungry. And this is true in spite of the right to food being an inalienable human right.

So when farmers harvest their crops these days, they do so being conscious of the fact that part of the responsibility for feeding mankind is resting on their shoulders.

According to estimates of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development²⁾, the global food production must be increased by 60 percent until 2050. And yet, additional agricultural area is hardly available. In order to adequately feed more and more people from a shrinking agricultural area, resources which are used must now be used efficiently and sustainably.

Farmers as well as other stakeholders in the industry have taken up the challenge. This becomes obvious when looking at the marked increases in yield and quality which have been achieved already. The successful breeding of wheat, potatoes and rapeseed can be taken as examples:



BDP, 2013

When taking rapeseed as an example, five tonnes can presently be harvested per hectare and year under favourable conditions. Experts, however, attest this crop a clearly higher physiological yield potential of eight tonnes per hectare³⁾.

How will we be able to utilise this potential? This can only be achieved by means of modern breeding techniques, integrated disease and pest management as well as optimised cultivation techniques – and again: if weather conditions are favourable.

Innovations in plant breeding, in crop protection, in harvest and storage technologies are the “engine running at high speed” – to enable our making eight out of five.

¹⁾ The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
<http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en/>.

²⁾ „Ernährung sichern, Zukunft ernten“, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, April 2013, page 15ff.

³⁾ „Theoretisch kann Raps 8 Tonnen“, Stephan Pleines, DLG-Mitteilungen 8/2013, S. 24/25.