KWS Vegetables expands its business in Spain KWS

KWS Vegetables is further expanding its business in Spain: The plant breeding specialist has now acquired a 14.5-hectare site in Almería, Spain, at the heart of European vegetable plant breeding and cultivation area.

KWS will set up a breeding station, which will include demo trial areas and offices for the R&D and commercial team. The focus of this location will be on breeding tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers; three of the most strategically relevant vegetable crops for KWS along with melons and watermelons.

“The area around Almería is one of the most important locations for vegetable breeding and cultivation in the world. Building a breeding station at this site is an important step in setting the course for developing our breeding and research programmes and so further expanding KWS' vegetable business”, says Wybe Van der Schaar, Head of Breeding Spain.

The plot is located in the middle of the cultivation area in El Ejido, Almería. The site is being built up from scratch and the first preparatory activities for the construction measures are to start soon.

“We are very much looking forward to get started here and to develop high quality varieties for our customers that have a high tolerance to abiotic stress and minimize the use of resources in growing them”, Van der Schaar adds.

Already in 2020, KWS has started its first breeding and commercial activities in Spain and has been continuing building up an experienced team for the market there.

Background: New business unit for vegetable seeds

KWS is one of the world’s leading plant breeding companies. With a history of 165 years in the seed industry, the company focuses on plant breeding, and the production and sale of seeds for corn, sugarbeet, cereals, rapeseed and sunflowers. In 2019, the company announced its entry into the long-term growth market for vegetable seeds, based on a greenfield approach which entails organic growth, supplemented by suitable acquisitions and the sales of licensed-in varieties.

This included the acquisition of the Dutch vegetable breeding company Pop Vriend Seeds, the world market leader in spinach seed. In addition, KWS acquired the Italian vegetable seed company Geneplanta S.r.l. (now: KWS Vegetables Italia), a specialist in breeding, production and sales of tomato varieties, in March last year. In parallel, KWS has been concentrating on staffing the new business division as well as on launching its own breeding activities in Brazil, Mexico, and Turkey.