



## News Release



**Gent, Belgium and Ludwigshafen, Germany – December 14, 2005**

### **Multimillion Euro deal on developing higher yielding crops**

**BASF Plant Science and CropDesign sign broad license and research cooperation agreement to genetically improve crops. CropDesign's high-quality trait portfolio will be used by BASF Plant Science to develop higher yielding crops such as corn, soybean and wheat.**

BASF Plant Science obtains exclusive license rights to genetic traits discovered and validated by CropDesign for commercial use in major crops. This agreement also initiates a multi-year research cooperation between the two companies in developing additional yield traits for the market. The aim is to genetically improve yield of agricultural crops and to enhance their protection against environmental stress conditions, such as drought. Traits are commercially important characteristics controlled by corresponding genes in crops.

In return, CropDesign will receive multimillion Euro payments from BASF Plant Science consisting of substantial upfront fees, milestone payments as well as royalties on sales of products.

"Knowing the function of genes is key to success in plant biotechnology. CropDesign's excellent trait portfolio will significantly strengthen and complement our product pipeline", states Hans Kast, president and CEO of BASF's plant biotechnology company BASF Plant Science. "It gives us a strong competitive advantage. Our goal is to be amongst the market leaders in the genetic improvement of crops."

Johan Cardoen, CEO of CropDesign adds: "This agreement clearly validates the competitive edge of our discovery platform of genetic traits and the quality of our trait portfolio. We are pleased to have BASF Plant Science as a partner for developing our traits for the market. In addition this cooperation contributes significantly to CropDesign's strategy for future growth and preserves the opportunity to develop our own trait-based products in crops such as rice."



**cropdesign**

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### *About CropDesign*

CropDesign is a biotechnology company delivering traits for the global seed market and for plant-based products. CropDesign uses its proprietary TraitMill™ platform to discover genetic traits for the improvement of corn, rice and other plants. Founded in 1998, CropDesign employs 75 people at its research facilities in Gent, Belgium and has an extensive network of research and commercial partners.

### *About BASF Plant Science*

To exploit the potential of biotechnology, BASF, a leading player in agricultural products and fine chemicals, established BASF Plant Science as its proper plant biotechnology company in 1998. BASF Plant Science operates a research and development platform in Europe and North America, where more than 450 employees are developing products in the following areas: crops for a more efficient agriculture and for the production of renewable raw materials as well as plants for healthier nutrition. Examples are plants with higher vitamin content, or with omega-3-fatty acids that can prevent cardiovascular diseases.

BASF is the world's leading chemical company: The Chemical Company. In 2004, BASF had approximately 82,000 employees and posted sales of more than € 37 billion.

To find out more about BASF Plant Science, please the web site at:

<http://www.basf.com/biotechnology>

To find out more about CropDesign, please see the web site at:

<http://www.cropdesign.com>

Note to editors: press photos can also be downloaded at

[www.basf.de/pressphotos](http://www.basf.de/pressphotos) under the heading biotechnology.

CropDesign N.V.

Johan Cardoen, CEO

Tel: +32 9 241 50 86

Fax: +32 9 241 50 89

e-mail: [antonella.masarie@cropdesign.com](mailto:antonella.masarie@cropdesign.com)

BASF Plant Science:

Dr. Susanne Benner

Tel: +49 621 60 28574

Fax: +49 621 60 28117

e-mail: [susanne.benner@basf.com](mailto:susanne.benner@basf.com)