

Press Release

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Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems: Scientific Director of the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ) appointed to new DFG Senate Commission

Prof Dr Nicole van Dam, Scientific Director of the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ) and Professor at the Institute of Biodiversity at Friedrich Schiller University Jena, is a member of the German Research Foundation's (DFG) Permanent Senate Commission on the Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems (SKAE). The DFG set up this commission to analyse scientific findings in this area and provide policy advice.

As a renowned chemical ecologist, Prof van Dam has extensive expertise in the field of biodiversity-preserving plant cultivation systems. Her participation in the Senate Commission emphasises the importance of the IGZ as a research institution that is involved in developing sustainable approaches to agricultural and food systems.

Under the leadership of Prof Dr Doris Vetterlein, the Senate Commission will bring together basic scientific findings and examine their social and political relevance. The broad scientific expertise of the commission, consisting of 18 experts from various scientific fields, allows a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities along the value chain from cultivation to the consumer.

The work of the Senate Commission focuses on controversial topics, newly developing issues and the assessment of the potential and risks of technical innovations. The thematic priorities of the commission, which was established on 1 January 2024, are ways of achieving food security within planetary boundaries, ways of diversifying the cultivation of crops as well as ways of bringing about a societal transformation in the production and consumption of meat and animal products.

The IGZ sees this programme as an important opportunity to provide forward-looking impetus for the sustainable development of agricultural and food systems.

Prof Dr Nicole van Dam welcomes her new role: “The transition to ecologically and economically sustainable crop production can only succeed if the measures to be taken are based on scientific evidence. The IGZ is one of the few remaining research institutes in Germany that combines basic and applied scientific research on how to produce climate-resilient and healthy horticultural crops in production systems that use less pesticides, fertilisers and energy. I am therefore delighted to be able to contribute our expertise, ranging from molecular and chemical biology to horticultural production systems, to this important DFG committee.”

The constituent meeting of the Senate Commission is planned for the end of April.

More Information

Prof van Dam's research interests, publications and academic career can be found on her [IGZ staff profile](#).

Further information on the Permanent Senate Commission Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems can be found on the [website of the German Research Foundation \(DFG\)](#).

Contact

Julia Vogt, Press and Public Relations | Email presse@igzev.de | Phone +49 (0) 33 701 78 163

Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops

The Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ) is a research institute of the Leibniz Association and contributes to solving current global challenges with science-based findings from basic and applied research in horticulture. These include the preservation of biodiversity, combating climate change and the still widespread malnutrition. The institute is jointly funded by the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture of the State of Brandenburg (MWFK) and the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). The IGZ is based in Großbeeren.

Portrait of the Scientific Director of the IGZ, Prof Dr Nicole van Dam

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