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Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture launches Syngenta and CIMMYT wheat Ug99 stem rust resistance research partnership

Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA) today announced a two-year public-private partnership between Syngenta, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and SFSA to rapidly identify and map genetic markers for use in wheat resistance breeding against Ug99 stem rust, a fungal disease which can cause devastating crop losses.

The project, funded by the Foundation, will combine Syngenta's plant genetic profiling expertise with the strengths of CIMMYT's extensive field research to develop a genetic map of wheat stem rust resistance. This will culminate in the development of wheat varieties that can better resist the disease. The results from this project will contribute directly to the global efforts to combat stem rust, which are coordinated by the Borlaug Global Rust Initiative. The marker data arising from the research will be published.

"The role of independent bodies such as the Syngenta Foundation is very important in overcoming the challenges presented in building much-needed public private partnerships for agricultural development. We are very pleased to be the catalyst of this important collaboration that brings together complementary skills and addresses a pressing need of farmers in many developing countries" said Marco Ferroni, Executive Director of the SFSA.

Ug99 stem rust, which first emerged in Uganda in 1999, is caused by the fungus *Puccinia graminis*. It is currently spreading across Africa, Asia and the Middle East with potential to spread further, posing a serious risk to wheat, the world's third most important food crop.

"Technology and collaboration in agriculture play an important role in addressing the global challenge of food security, especially across the developing world. I am pleased that Syngenta will contribute its scientific expertise to this public-private partnership with CIMMYT, which aims to help farmers protect their yields against this serious disease," said Mike Mack, Syngenta CEO.

"Along with rice, wheat is a major food crop and is crucial for global food security—it provides 500 kilocalories of food energy per capita per day in China and India, and can provide up to 50 percent of daily calorie uptake in Central and West Asia or North African countries," says CIMMYT Director General Thomas A. Lumpkin. "Wheat yields need to rise 1.6 percent each year to reach required global production levels by 2020, yet investments in wheat technology have lagged far behind those for other cereals. So we are very pleased to enter this new partnership."

The Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture is a not-for-profit organization that focuses on supporting the productivity of small-scale farmers in developing countries around the world.

Syngenta is one of the world's leading companies with more than 24,000 employees in over 90 countries dedicated to our purpose: Bringing plant potential to life. Through world-class science, global reach and commitment to our customers we help to increase crop productivity, protect the environment and improve health and quality of life. For more information about us please go to www.syngenta.com.

CIMMYT is an internationally funded, not-for-profit organization that conducts research and training related to maize and wheat throughout the developing world. CIMMYT works to create, share, and use knowledge and technologies to increase food security, improve the productivity and profitability of farming systems, and sustain natural resources. For more information, please visit www.cimmyt.org.