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Finalists of the first Robotic Challenge have been selected

BayWa and RWA look for the best agricultural robot

Munich/Vienna, 25 June 2019 - The finalists of the first Robotic Challenge of the Agro Innovation Lab (AIL) have been selected: six technology companies from Europe and overseas have been selected to further develop the agricultural robots towards market maturity. The AIL is the joint innovation platform of BayWa AG and RWA Raiffeisen Ware Austria AG and has attracted around 650 start-ups from over 60 countries with its broad-based Acceleration & Market Entry programme since 2016. With the Robotic Challenge, the Accelerator is focusing for the first time on a specific technology area.

"Robotics offers very interesting fields of application, especially for agriculture here at home," says Klaus Josef Lutz, Chairman of the Board of Management of BayWa AG. "We want to offer our customers access to such innovative agricultural solutions at an early stage and thus also make farm work more modern, efficient and attractive overall.

"It is time to look into agricultural robotics and its areas of application in Germany and Austria as well in order to participate at an early stage", says AIL Managing Director David Saad. "The participants in our Robotic Challenge

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Datum 25/06/2019

Seite 2

clearly show that robotics is already very advanced in certain sub-areas of agriculture".

As part of a screening process lasting several weeks, the AIL identified 127 technology companies worldwide that are working on robots for harvesting, weed control and related topics in agriculture as well as vegetable and fruit cultivation. 34 of these companies applied to participate in the Robotic Challenge. From these, six finalists were selected:

Agrointelli, Denmark / "Robotti": Development of an autonomous and versatile tool carrier to which machines for sowing, fertilising, weed control and harvesting can be attached. This means that this robot can be used in both arable and vegetable farming.

Cerescon, Netherlands / "Sparter": Development of a robot for harvesting white asparagus. The robot, attached to a tractor, uses sensors to detect the ripe asparagus on the surface. The asparagus is harvested independently by the robot after reaching an appropriate minimum size, whereby two to three rows can be processed in parallel.

Deepfield Robotics, Germany: Development of robots that autonomously regulate weeds in row crops. By accessing 4.3 million recorded images, the robots can distinguish between 35 different plant genera.

Mascor, FH Aachen, Germany / "Etarob": Development of a robot for selective weed control based on

Datum 25/06/2019
Seite 3

electrophysical principles that can be used in all weather conditions and at night. This can be used in row crops or in vegetable cultivation between the rows. Further developments focus on selective fertilisation and in particular the harvesting of iceberg lettuce and potatoes.

Saga Robotics, Norway: Development of modular robots for UV treatment against mildew and autonomous harvesting of strawberries. These are suitable for use in glass and foil houses as well as in orchards and on arable land.

Tensorfield, USA/Hong Kong: Development of autonomous robots for thermal weed control in row crops using heated food grade rapeseed oil. Development of visual recognition in vegetable plants and specialisation in spinach and Roman salad.

During the summer, the agricultural robots will be intensively tested in field trials, technically adapted and their market presence or, in a next step, their market launch prepared. The winners of the competition will be announced in mid-September. A later sales cooperation with or investment by BayWa and RWA is possible.

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Picture 1: AIL Advisory Board Chairman Christoph Metzker (2nd from left) and AIL Managing Director David Saad (3rd from right) with participants of the AIL Robotics Challenge 2019.

Datum 25/06/2019
Seite 4

Picture 2 & 3: During the kick-off event in Hafnerbach in Lower Austria the ALL presented robots in the field. Among them "Robotti" of the Robotics Challenge participant Agrointelli (picture 2) or "Oz", a robot for weed control (picture 3).

Note: You can find us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/BayWaPresse.

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