



Contact Christoph Götz  
Phone +49 69 6603-1891  
E-Mail [christoph.goetz@vdma.org](mailto:christoph.goetz@vdma.org)  
Date May 30, 2022

## VDMA Agricultural Machinery celebrates anniversary 125 years of innovation and efficiency

**Frankfurt, May 30, 2022** – The manufacturers of agricultural machinery and tractors organized in the VDMA celebrated the 125th anniversary of the Agricultural Machinery Association with a ceremony on May 24. The event took place at the founding site in Leipzig, where the former "Verein der Fabrikanten für landwirtschaftliche Maschinen und Geräte" was established in 1897 by 20 innovative entrepreneurs.

"Our industry has every reason to be proud of what it has achieved," said association chairman Anthony van der Ley. "At the end of the 19th century, plows, drills, threshing machines and locomobiles were not just drivers of agricultural mechanization; rather, they formed a significant strand of industrial development as a whole. Their driver was: greater efficiency – a factor that continues to fuel agriculture today," he said.

### True to the brand essence

To a large extent, the association has remained true to its brand essence from 1897. To this day, VDMA Agricultural Machinery acts as a forum for its members, a strong industry voice and a competent service provider for market, technology and standardization issues.

All of this has taken place on an international level from the very beginning. Rudolph Sack, the founder of the association, a plow manufacturer, industrial politician and cosmopolitan, already relied on international business, exporting to Kiev and Moscow as early as the mid-19th century. The association did the same and, at the turn of the century, put together a comprehensive package of consulting services covering all aspects of the then virulent issues of customs tariffs and export conditions.

### **Standardization advantages thanks to standardized interfaces**

The agricultural machinery sector, which was dependent on interfaces, also benefited from its early entry into the standardization business, which took place at the official suggestion of the government in 1917. "The standardization approach of governmental bodies, which initially appeared to be completely counterintuitive to agricultural machinery manufacturers, provided considerable standardization advantages in subsequent years thanks to professional standardization work within the association. Today, our interface competence is paying off, especially in the future field of digitization," said van der Ley.

### **More than 80 special statistics with global appeal**

Market and business cycle information, based on what are now a good 80 special statistics, are one of the key hallmarks of the association's service offering, which has been massively expanded and internationalized since the 1990s. "Looking beyond our own nose, being open to the world and having a thirst for action have not only opened up many new markets for us in the past decades, but have also brought us numerous new members. Today, VDMA Agricultural Machinery lives and thinks globally," van der Ley summed up. VDMA offices in Europe, Asia, North and South America document this claim of the industry association.

### **Digital consistency indispensable**

But the challenges of agricultural and food policy are not diminishing in these stormy global political times. "Together, we must make the food system more resilient to crises," said Silvia Bender, Parliamentary State Secretary to the German Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, in her welcoming speech at the anniversary celebration.

In view of the German government's ambitious climate and sustainability goals, "digital consistency of agricultural processes" will be indispensable in the future. "The agricultural machinery industry is making an important contribution to this," Bender said.

### **Successful generation change**

At the managing director level, the ceremony in Leipzig was accompanied by a generational change. After almost 30 years, Dr. Bernd Scherer is handing over the management of VDMA Agricultural Machinery to Dr. Tobias Ehrhard. "If you ask around the agricultural industry what and who people associate with the VDMA, the word immediately falls on Bernd Scherer. As a formative figure in the industry's public sphere, he was and is far more than the managing director of our association. Dr. Scherer is an integration figure in the best sense of the word, a man who has effectively advanced the European agricultural machinery industry," said Anthony van der Ley, paying tribute to the outgoing managing director.

From the very beginning, Scherer's focus was on the consistent Europeanization of the association and its network. "Within just a few years, you shaped the association, which has always enjoyed a great reputation, into a powerful, service-oriented interest group that is unparalleled throughout Europe," said van der Ley.

Since April, Tobias Ehrhard has been leading the association together with Bernd Scherer, who is retiring at the end of June. "I am delighted about the successful generation change. In Dr. Tobias Ehrhard, who has already held management positions at VDMA for several years, we have gained a convinced European and proven expert in the association's business," said Anthony van der Ley.

### **Trend-setting projects at the start**

The 42-year-old industrial engineer, who holds a doctorate, has already initiated the first trend-setting projects, such as the drive system of the future in agricultural machinery and tractors. But also with regard to the further development of the large range of services offered by VDMA Agricultural Machinery in market and economic analysis, Ehrhard is an accomplished expert and idea generator on board. "I am pleased to be able to start into the future on a well-tilled field. Here's to the next 125 years of VDMA Agricultural Machinery," summed up Dr. Tobias Ehrhard.

**Do you have any further questions? Call Christoph Götz on +49 69 6603 1891 or email him on [christoph.goetz@vdma.org](mailto:christoph.goetz@vdma.org); he will be pleased to provide you with additional information!**

180 manufacturers of innovative agricultural machinery, tractors and software systems are organised in the VDMA Agricultural Machinery Association. With 125,000 employees in Europe, around 30,000 of them in Germany alone, the agricultural machinery industry is one of the leading sectors of the mechanical and plant engineering industry.

The VDMA represents more than 3,400 German and European companies of the mechanical engineering industry. The industry stands for innovation, export orientation and medium-sized businesses. The companies employ around four million people in Europe, more than one million of them in Germany. Mechanical and plant engineering represents a European turnover volume of around 800 billion euros. With a net value added of around 270 billion euros, it contributes the highest share of the entire manufacturing sector to the European gross domestic product.



Successful handover of management: Anthony van der Ley congratulates Dr. Bernd Scherer and Dr. Tobias Ehrhard. Source: b+b.