

DAFA Strategic Forum

DAFA's annual Strategic Forum provides a venue where strategic issues in agricultural and food research are discussed in an encompassing setting. Events are open to the public.

Recent topics for strategic forums included:



The Food of tomorrow

What are the challenges if production of in-vitro meat and insect proteins are scaled up?



Dimensions of agricultural science

Science is more than merely research – but where is the right balance?



New breeding techniques

CRISPR/Cas etc. – which perspectives are in stock for agriculture?



Big Data and research data management

Curse or blessing for agriculture?



Foresight agricultural science

What changes do we need now for the future that we want?



Research infrastructures

Large-scale sites and equipment: What do we have, what can we share, what do we need?



Evaluation of applied research

Making the societal and practical impact of research count.

DAFA – a voice for agricultural and food research

Agricultural and food research in Germany is very diverse, in part due to the country's federal setup.

Many universities and universities of applied sciences conduct research and offer courses in agricultural and food sciences. Both the federal government and the states run research institutions to support public policy and extension services for practitioners. The major national research organisations (Fraunhofer, Helmholtz, Max-Planck, Leibniz) run specialised institutes, often with close links to universities. In several states, chambers of agriculture, funded jointly by farmers and the state governments, also conduct agricultural research.



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Deutsche Agrarforschungsallianz

- DAFA represents the majority of German agricultural and nutritional research institutions.
- DAFA provides an integrative platform for its members and supports interdisciplinary cooperation.
- DAFA creates dialogue with stakeholders to initiate and support the development of research programs.
- DAFA conveys insights from agricultural research to stakeholders, supporting formulation and implementation of agricultural policies.
- DAFA represents its members' interests in strategic research planning in Germany and the EU.
- DAFA provides current information on the structure and the competences of German agricultural research to interested national and international parties.

German
Agricultural
Research Alliance

German Agricultural Research Alliance (DAFA)

Our members

In the German Agricultural Research Alliance (Deutsche Agrarforschungsallianz, or DAFA), the publicly funded research entities in Germany combine their capabilities, uniting universities, federal and state research institutes and chambers of agriculture.

Our aim

The alliance facilitates an integrated perspective on agricultural and food systems and their interactions with society, markets and the environment.

DAFA thereby helps to address public and consumer expectations for agriculture not only to provide healthy food, nourishing feedstuffs and renewable resources, but also to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, to reduce pesticide use and nutrient losses, to support biodiversity and attractive landscapes, to create rural jobs and income, to improve animal welfare and to compete on globalized markets.

Our approach

DAFA invites all involved stakeholder groups to jointly develop research strategies facilitating integrated solutions to the big questions facing agricultural and food systems today. This integrative approach avoids partial solutions that often create trade-offs or lack support from practitioners, market partners or the public.

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Example: Livestock research strategy

The goal

Animal welfare attracts much attention from the public, NGOs, policy makers and the media. But milk and meat producers who operate on open markets are concerned about competitive disadvantages from regulatory costs and the lack of markets for products with enhanced animal welfare. How can all concerns be addressed?

The strategy

In response, the DAFA Expert Forum on Livestock was established in 2011. Two major workshops with researchers, NGOs, administrators and farmers served to develop a shared understanding across disciplines and manifold realms of practice. After an iterative writing and consultation process, DAFA adopted its Livestock Strategy in 2012. The strategy informed two funding calls by the German Federal Government over a period of two years.

On track?

An expert review of the intermediate results found in 2018 that excellent research had been conducted. The experts called for further integration across projects in order to increase the potential of the research to support ambitious innovations and policy design. Consequently, DAFA invited the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture to develop approaches jointly to further improve the coordination and integration of research with a view to maximising societal impact. A major conference in October 2019 discusses the recommendations for the three main livestock species, i.e. cattle, pigs and poultry.

DAFA Research Strategies

DAFA develops research strategies that enable integrated solutions to the grand societal challenges facing our agricultural and food systems.

DAFA's strategy processes are participatory and inclusive. Strategy drafts go through several rounds of feedback and consultation with stakeholders and DAFA-scientists to ensure broad support and a cutting-edge knowledge base. Strategies are formally adopted by the DAFA membership. They are published also in English (online and in print).

The strategies have shaped national research funding calls, facilitating cohesive and ambitious research programmes.

So far, DAFA has adopted five national research strategies:



Livestock

Linking up markets, policy, technology and management for enhanced animal welfare



Legumes

Improving ecosystem services and competitiveness



Grassland

Innovative uses, enhanced valorisation, better protection of natural resources



Aquaculture

Integrated research for an underdeveloped source of food



Organic Food Production

Steps towards Germany's 20% target



Bees and Agriculture (in progress)

Exploring synergies, developing solutions

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