



PRESS RELEASE

Hubert Heigl re-elected as president of Naturland

Two women newly appointed to the Naturland board of directors

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Frankfurt/Main – Hubert Heigl is to embark on another term at the head of Naturland. On Wednesday evening, the international assembly of delegates from this organic association, which is present in 60 countries throughout the world, elected Heigl, an organic farmer (56) from Bavaria, Germany, in a unanimous vote for a further four years as a member of the association’s board of directors. The five members of the new board then voted for Heigl for a new term as president of the association.

“Thank you very much for the renewed display of the confidence you place in me and in the Naturland board of directors as a whole”, said Heigl after the election. “Irrespective of whether we are talking about the climate crisis, the extinction of species or how to design really fair supply chains – in every case we as a society are faced with pressing challenges which necessitate a truly comprehensive ecological and social transformation of our agriculture to overcome them.” He went on to reaffirm, “It is towards this transformation that Naturland farmers are working, in Germany, Europe and throughout the world.”

In the context of the impending German elections in September 2021, Heigl added that it was essential to pursue relentlessly the change of direction embarked upon to some degree with the revision of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the years to come. “We can no longer afford to tread water. It is imperative that the future concept of the CAP takes into close consideration the long-term impact of any of the measures it is funding, following the example set by organic agriculture with its holistic approach”, said the president of Naturland.

Naturland International: Expansion of assistance programmes for smallholders

“It is often smallholders who bear the brunt of the ever-greater dramatic impact of the climate crisis, the increasing loss of diversity throughout the world and unfair trading practices”, said Frauke Weissang, who, as a member of Naturland’s World Advisory Board (WAB), has for many years been representing the interests of Naturland’s international farmers and will continue to do so as a new member of Naturland’s board of directors. “We intend to tackle the global problems which unite us all by adopting more measures specific to local conditions. This is indeed one of the strengths of Naturland as an international community of farmers”, Weissang added. She herself is the owner of an arable farm in Italy which is a member of a Naturland co-operative.

With this in mind, Naturland intends to increase further its involvement in projects such as training in the area of organic farming methods or in simplified access to organic certification, thereby helping smallholders to enhance their skills and expand their range of knowledge. Furthermore, Naturland will be campaigning to educate consumers about the benefits of organically produced fair-trade products in other countries besides Germany and has already started to do so with an initial project in Vietnam.

Naturland board of directors: Bartelme re-elected as vice-president

The new Naturland board of directors will be composed of three men and two women. Besides Frauke Weissang, who was already once a board member, from 2005 – 2014, Marion Bohner, a dairy farmer from the German state of Baden-Württemberg, will be joining the board for the first time. Hans Bartelme, also from Baden-Württemberg, has been re-elected as vice-president of Naturland for a further four years. The longest serving board member is Peter Warlich, an arable farmer from the German state of Sachsen-Anhalt, whom the delegates re-elected to the board for his fourth term.

The six members of the **World Advisory Board** were designated by Naturland's international members in early May, 2021, in an election online. According to its statutes, this body advises the Naturland board of directors in all matters pertaining to the international development of Naturland and it represents Naturland farmers from every continent where there are Naturland farms.

The following members of the WAB were re-elected: Jan Bernhard (Peru), Arvind Narula (Thailand) and Dr Ahmed Sief El-Nasr (Egypt), whilst Frauke Weissang (Italy) will transfer to Naturland's board of directors. Three new members were also elected: Nicodemus Bamuhangaine (Uganda), Sekar Arumugam (India) and Zeno Piatti-Fünfkirchen (Austria).

Naturland goes digital: amendment to the statutes to allow online meetings post-COVID too

One of the motions the delegates passed at the assembly which took place in the form of a hybrid meeting in Frankfurt, Germany, combining personal attendance with a web conference, was an amendment to the statutes providing a legal framework permitting the association to hold meetings online post-COVID. "As does everyone else, we particularly miss the personal contact we enjoyed with each other before this extraordinary year. Nevertheless, this year has also at the same time brought us closer together", said Heigl, the president of Naturland.

Heigl was making reference to numerous successful assemblies of delegates online and web conferences with members which demonstrated the great benefit digital conference tools have brought particularly to the work of such international associations as Naturland. The passing of this amendment to the statutes ensures that all elections and other meetings requiring decisions to be taken by Naturland can in principle also be held by voting online in future and not just during exceptional situations such as the COVID pandemic.

About Hubert Heigl, president of Naturland

Hubert Heigl (56) has been the president of Naturland since 2017. He is, among many other appointments he holds, a member of a government commission dealing with the transformation of animal husbandry in Germany; there he represents the organic sector. As a farmer, he has been a member of Naturland since 1991. He manages the family-run organic farm together with his wife, Eveline, where they rear piglets, with 90 sows, and have 70 hectares of arable land, mainly for the production of fodder for their own animals.

About Naturland

Naturland is one of the largest organic associations both in Germany and world-wide and is recognised as a non-profit organisation. The fact that there are over 100,000 Naturland farmers in 60 countries throughout the world goes to prove that mutually beneficial economic activity based on organic, social and fair-trade concepts is a recipe for success. Most of Naturland's farmers outside Germany are members of smallholder co-operatives and producer organisations. Its global presence makes Naturland unique as an organic association representing a coherent two-pronged approach by combining regionalism with international activity in a globalised world.

