Inspired.
Our newsletter.
January 2026
CLAAS Stiftung
Enhancing education since 1999.

Foreword

Now also active in the USA

Dear Sir or Madam

In 2025, we were able to support numerous additional projects and young talents. For the first time, we are launching our own funding initiatives in the USA to specifically promote education, science and research in agricultural technology there as well. You can find out more on the following pages.

What are our plans for 2026? For the CLAAS Foundation, the coming year will be dominated by further international networking and scientific exchange. With vision and commitment, we are dedicated to promoting talent in agricultural technology and creating new spaces for dialogue between science and practice.

At the same time, we are embedding our proven funding programmes in Germany and Europe and consolidating them on an ongoing basis.

We would like to thank all our supporters and partners who are breaking new ground with us and working to ensure a sustainable future for agriculture.

Let us seize the opportunities offered by international exchange and actively shape the future of agricultural technology.

Warm regards

Sylvia Looks and Frank Klüsener

Board of Directors of the CLAAS Foundation

Pupils

CLAAS Foundation supports two teams of school students

Robotics competitions in Singapore and Australia

With their Green Grower robot system, which uses artificial intelligence to perform innovative soil analyses, the "ErnteElite" student team from Bad Segeberg set off for Singapore. Their destination was the World Robot Olympiad. The German delegation comprised a total of around 100 people, including coaches and accompanying persons. The WRO World Finals are not only a technical competition, but also an international exchange project: during the three days of the competition, teams from all over the world worked and celebrated together – a living example of diversity in action and global STEM promotion.

The Pelestorms robotics team from Pelizaeus Gymnasium Paderborn travelled to Australia with the support of the CLAAS Foundation. There, the team took part in the Asia Pacific Open Championship in Sydney from 3 to 6 July 2025. "In the Robot Game, we matched our performance from the last competition in the three rounds, but unfortunately we didn't beat our personal record," report the young inventors. "However, we are satisfied with the result, especially because we had to dismantle our tools for the flight and then reconstruct them again in Sydney using 3D files of the tools. Overall, this week was a complete success for us. We saw and learned a lot of new things. We also met an incredible number of new and previously unknown people," concluded the young inventors from Paderborn.

The "Pelestorm" team was able to travel to Australia.

Pupils

The CLAAS Foundation has been supporting projects here since 2024

Learning at the sawmill

In May 2025, a group of pupils from Pavenstädt Primary School in Gütersloh went on an exciting trip to the Harsewinkel sawmill. The Meier Osthoff sawmill is establishing itself as a new extracurricular learning location, which is being set up in cooperation with the Walter Blüchert Foundation and the CLAAS Foundation. The workshop offered the children the opportunity to learn in a practical way and discover important connections in the field of renewable energies.

Bioenergy – practical and tailored to schoolchildren.

Dr Eberhard Nacke, an expert in the field of biological energy production, welcomed the inquisitive children. He explained to them in clear terms how a biogas plant works and how it helps to convert organic waste into energy that promotes sustainability. The children's enthusiasm was palpable when they learned that a special process converts biomass into biogas, which can then be used to generate electricity and heat.

During the excursion, they were able to get involved themselves. They experimented with various organic substances to find out which ones were suitable as feedstock for the biogas plant. In doing so, they not only learned about the different properties of the materials in a playful way, but also about the importance of research into sustainability and sustainable energy sources.

The trip to the Harsewinkel sawmill was a successful and educational experience for the primary school pupils, sparking their interest in renewable energies and focusing on important environmental issues. They returned to Gütersloh in the late afternoon with new insights and lots of exciting impressions.

Young STEM talents visit CLAAS

Agricultural Technology Day

In October 2025, the CLAAS Foundation continued its long-standing tradition of Agricultural Technology Day and welcomed schoolchildren from the districts of Höxter and Paderborn to the CLAAS Technoparc.

The guests were the winners of the current Business Sponsorship Award, which was presented for the 19th time in September to young talents for their outstanding academic achievements in STEM subjects at the University of Paderborn.

During Agricultural Technology Day, participants had the opportunity to gain in-depth insights into the topics of technology, agricultural engineering and agriculture. A tour of the factory provided fascinating insights into the manufacturing process of harvesting machinery.

Lukas Toppmöller and Robin Settertobulte, two technical trainees, talked about their personal careers and training opportunities at CLAAS and gave helpful tips on career orientation.

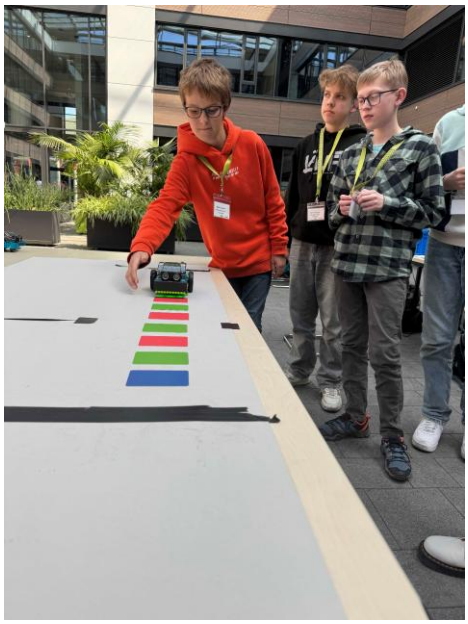
The three best participants won great prizes in an exciting rally on agricultural technology and agriculture.

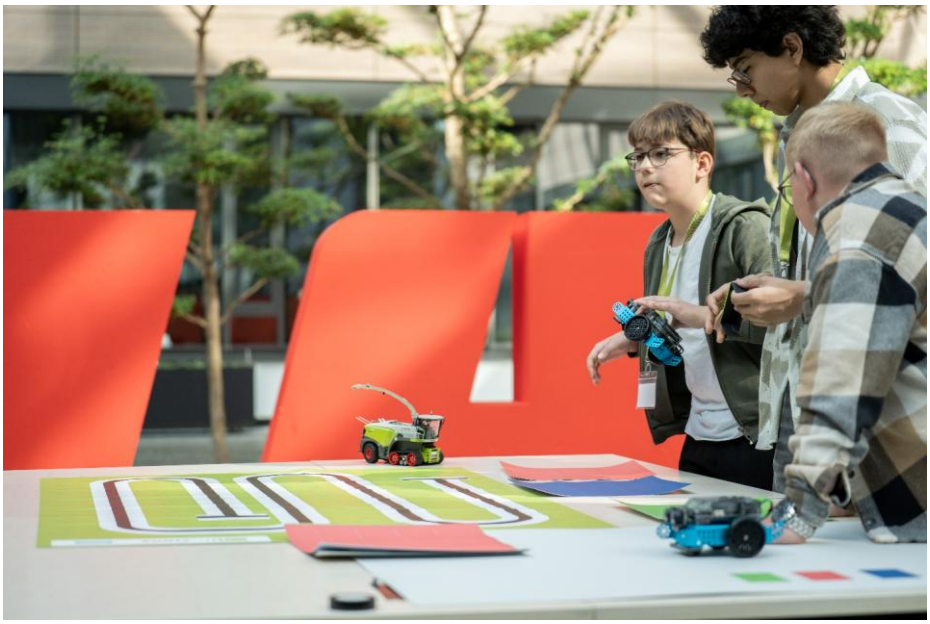
Rich in new impressions and freed from homework for the day, the participants set off for home in the late afternoon.

STEM talents visit the CLAAS Technoparc in Harsewinkel.

Experiments with organic substances for the biogas plant.

Pupils





Project-based learning with mBots

The mBot competition took place in Harsewinkel.

Teams of students get the hang of robotics competition

At the beginning of 2025, teachers familiarised themselves with the small mBot2 robots in a training course. In May, the teams of students were given the opportunity to demonstrate their programming skills.

Six schools from the Warendorf and Gütersloh districts took part. The teams of pupils competed against each other with great motivation and first had to "get the hang of it" before they could later "count peas". After refreshments and the opportunity to look around the CLAAS premises during the CLAAS Newcomers' Day, which was taking place at the same time, another exciting challenge awaited them: "Watch out for obstacles!"

All tasks could only be solved through precise programming of the robots. Only then were the small machines able to drive along a black line, recognise obstacles and stop at the right places.

Many of the participants also learned that there are different (programming) approaches to achieving their goals. The "RatsTeam" from the Ratsgymnasium in Wiedenbrück impressed in all disciplines and won first prize. Second prize went to the ErNi team from the Gesamtschule Ennigerloh-Neubeckum comprehensive school, and third prize went to the TechTitans from the Realschule Steinhagen secondary school. Over the past six years, the CLAAS Foundation has provided equipment for a total of 12 schools in the districts of Warendorf and Gütersloh with mBot2 kits. The mBot2 plays a central role in project-based learning, which many schools are increasingly promoting.

This year's competition was organised by Malte Schön's team from the Technical Education Centre in Harsewinkel. The team was supported on site by educational trainer Dr Sergej Stoetzer, who was able to provide excellent advice to all participants thanks to his extensive knowledge.

Understanding and shaping IT

The Hacker School

The non-profit Hacker School inspires children and young people to engage with the digital world. The organisation offers entertaining and creative programming courses directly at schools. The aim is for young people not only to use digital technologies, but also to understand and actively shape them. Hacker School focuses primarily on making the world of IT accessible to everyone – especially girls and disadvantaged young people – and teaching them skills for the future.

Pupils

Vegetable Academy

Knowledge grows along with the vegetables

At GemüseAckerdemie, schoolchildren learn that vegetables don't have to come from the supermarket, but can also be grown in their own gardens. The CLAAS Foundation is on board, having provided financial support for the four-year educational programme run by the non-profit social enterprise Acker since 2022, currently at five schools across Germany.

By planting, tending, harvesting and tasting together, children in grades 3 to 6 develop a greater appreciation for nature and food and learn the basics of sustainability in nutrition on the school's own field.

The field, as a space for experiencing nature, can be integrated into lessons in a variety of interdisciplinary ways: the subjects of agriculture, nutrition and sustainability, biology, chemistry, politics and geography can be directly integrated. Computer science, STEM, robotics and physics can be added at a later stage.

The supervising teachers are actively supported by GemüseAckerdemie, so that participation in the programme is possible even without previous gardening experience. "The cross-curricular and cross-year cooperation also promotes teamwork and comprehensive learning," confirms the GemüseAckerdemie team.

Students

Field Robot Event in Italy

Students demonstrate excellence in agricultural robotics

In June 2025, the eagerly awaited Field Robot Event took place near Milan, organised by the Politecnico di Milano University. Fifteen teams from ten countries competed against each other to master challenging tasks with their innovative agricultural robots. The event was held under the patronage of the CLAAS Foundation, which not only supported the organisation but also specifically promotes new student teams. This competition is not only a platform for technological developments but also an exciting arena for creative solutions in autonomous agriculture.

Every year, the Field Robot Event (FRE) brings together student teams and robotics enthusiasts from all over Europe to tackle real-world challenges in autonomous agriculture. In Italy, 130 participants from leading universities across Europe took part. The competition consisted of five challenging tasks designed to test the capabilities of autonomous robots in various agricultural scenarios. These included autonomous navigation in a cornfield, recognising strawberry plants, counting fruit, detecting bioluminescent fungi and a creative freestyle category. >>>

The robots demonstrated their capabilities in practical use.

Students

The most successful inventors were rewarded with a place in the winners' photo.

>>> This year's Field Robot Event was particularly special as it was the first time it was held in Italy, thanks to the support of our colleagues at CLAAS Italia," said Sylvia Looks, Chair of the CLAAS Foundation. "The organisation of the event, the intensive, open interaction between the participants and their high level of motivation contributed to an unforgettable experience. We would like to thank all participants for their innovative work and their great commitment. This event further underlined the crucial role of robotics in promoting sustainability in agricultural practices.

At the end, the teams were ranked as follows:

• Acorn – Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences and Osnabrück University, Germany

• CULS Robotics – Czech University of Life Sciences, Czech Republic

• FREDT - Technical University of Braunschweig, Germany (ex aequo)

• FarmBeast - University of Maribor, Slovenia (joint second)

• Grasslammer - Politecnico di Milano, Italy

• Robatic - Wageningen University, Netherlands

Exchange and stand tour

Alumni at Agritechnica

In November 2025, Agritechnica not only provided a platform for innovations in agricultural technology, but also a special opportunity for a reunion: around 20 alumni of the CLAAS Foundation met for an exchange followed by a CLAAS stand tour. Many of them have remained loyal to the agricultural industry and are actively shaping its future.

Dr Thomas Barrelmeyer, Deputy Chairman of the CLAAS Foundation, took the time to personally welcome the former scholarship holders. Sylvia Looks and Frank Klüsener, from the Foundation's Executive Board, were impressed and emphasised the invaluable importance of a vibrant network: "We are delighted to see how many of our alumni continue to be committed to progress and innovation in agricultural technology," said Sylvia Looks.

Agritechnica 2025, with its theme of "Touch Smart Efficiency", enabled the alumni to experience the latest trends and developments first-hand and to strengthen their joint network for future challenges.

It was a joyful reunion: the CLAAS Foundation invited alumni to a gathering at Agritechnica.

Students

Ceremonial award for the agricultural experts of tomorrow

From plant protection to AI – CLAAS Foundation honours young talent

During a ceremony held in the greenhouse at the CLAAS site in Harsewinkel on 26 November 2025, particularly committed and talented students were once again honoured for their forward-looking research work.

First, the CLAAS Foundation's current projects, which focus on innovative approaches in the field of agricultural technology, were presented. "Our commitment is aimed at promoting sustainability and strengthening the exchange between science and practice," explains Sylvia Looks from the Foundation's Executive Board. "In doing so, we focus particularly on internationally oriented initiatives in order to promote scientific exchange worldwide."

Prof. Matteo Matteucci from the University of Milan and Dr Jan Schattenberg from the Technical University of Braunschweig presented the "Field Robot Event" team competition. Prof. Harald Strating from the Osnabrück Student Research Centre (SFZ) presented the diverse initiatives for promoting STEM skills among children and young people. The SFZ offers ongoing programmes in areas such as robotics and 3D printing, as well as regular STEM events that facilitate local access to scientific and technical education.

Cathrina Claas-Mühlhäuser, Chair of the Board of Trustees, concluded by presenting the awards and praising the scholarship holders' commitment:

1st prize: Laura Eckhardt from the University of Hohenheim showed how artificial intelligence can help make agricultural work processes not only more efficient but also more sustainable. Her research compares tried-and-tested methods with AI-supported speed control in tillage – an approach with potential for the agriculture of tomorrow.

2nd prize: Flora Lucy Gray from Durham University (UK) investigated how maize cultivation and nitrogen-fixing plants can serve as indicators for different farming systems. Her comprehensive analysis of the effects of regenerative and conventional agriculture on soil quality provides valuable insights for sustainability practices.

3rd prize: Lukas Musser from Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences impressed with his innovative development of an adaptive welding device for chassis, which can be supplemented with a welding robot in the future – a highly relevant response to increasing automation requirements.

4th prize: Bendix Markus Sommer from Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences presented a particularly practice-oriented contribution with his work on the evaluation of alternative machine concepts for systems of sustainable arable farming, which addresses the challenges and opportunities of technical innovations in agricultural operations.

In addition to the scholarships, further bonus prizes were awarded.

Cathrina Claas-Mühlhäuser congratulated the four winners of the Helmut Claas Scholarship.

CLAAS Foundation supports Nuffield Farming Scholarship Germany for the first time:

Nuffield Scholar Jenny Matthiesen introduced herself at the get-together on the evening before the award ceremony. Her topic: How can research findings on crop production be transferred into practice? As part of the scholarship, the KWS employee will travel to various countries around the world for around 16 weeks over a period of 12-18 months to learn about innovative approaches and best practices in agriculture, expand her network and gain new inspiration. Jenny Matthiesen is the third scholarship holder of the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Germany, which was launched in 2022.
The CLAAS Foundation supports this scholarship together with the Dieter Fuchs Foundation, Dissen.

Universities

With Wageningen University (Netherlands) and Göttingen University (Germany)

CLAAS Foundation announces new university partnership

In the centre of last year, the CLAAS Foundation announced an exciting new partnership programme between Wageningen University in the Netherlands and Göttingen University in Germany. The aim of this partnership is to promote innovation, research and excellence in education in the fields of agricultural engineering and life sciences. The project partners from the participating universities are the Agricultural Biosystems Engineering Group (Prof. Dr. Ir. Peter Groot Koerkamp) in Wageningen and the Agricultural Engineering Group (Prof. Dr.-Ing. Frank Beneke) in Göttingen.

Sylvia Looks, member of the CLAAS Foundation's Executive Board, emphasises: "We are delighted to support this partnership between Wageningen University and Göttingen University. Both institutions are renowned for their contributions to agricultural science, and we are convinced that this collaboration will lead to significant advances in research and teaching that will ultimately benefit the global agricultural economy."

This collaboration is an important milestone in the CLAAS Foundation's ongoing commitment to promoting academic development and the advancement of agricultural technology.

Main objectives of the partner programme:

1. Promotion of joint research initiatives:

The partnership will facilitate joint research projects that leverage the strengths and expertise of both institutions to address global challenges in agriculture and sustainability.

2. Improving educational opportunities:

Students and faculty will benefit from exchange programmes, joint seminars and workshops that enrich their academic experiences and broaden their perspectives.

3. Promoting innovation and technology transfer:

By pooling resources and expertise, the collaboration aims to accelerate the development and implementation of cutting-edge agricultural technologies.

4. Strengthening international networks:

This initiative will not only strengthen the links between the partner universities, but also expand their networks worldwide and create new opportunities for collaboration with other institutions and leading companies.

This new partnership is in line with the CLAAS Foundation's mission to support educational and research initiatives that promote agricultural innovation and sustainability. The foundation continues to play a central role in connecting academic institutions and promoting excellence in the agricultural sector.

Prof. Peter Groot Koerkamp (right), Wageningen University, and Prof. Frank Beneke, University of Göttingen, seal the new partnership.

Brief notes

+++ Prof. Dr. Patrick Noack, Professor of Information Technology and IoT in Agriculture and Environment at Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences, will be a new member of the German jury of the CLAAS Foundation from 2026. He succeeds Prof. Dr.-Ing. Cornelia Weltzien.