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Syngenta, AmoÃ©ba forge European Cereal Biocontrol Alliance as fungicide options shrink

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Exclusive agreement will bring a next-generation biofungicide targeting septoria and yellow rust to wheat and other cereals, with first market launches expected from 2028â??29

amoéba
Fight pathogens
Respect nature

Syngenta Crop Protection AG and French biocontrol company Amoéba are moving to commercialise a next-generation biological fungicide for European cereal growers, as tightening regulation and rising resistance threaten to narrow the conventional crop protection toolbox. The companies have signed an exclusive supply and distribution agreement covering a new biofungicide formulation, AXP20, derived from the lysate of the amoeba Willaertia magna C2c Maky. The agreement converts the companies' November 2025 memorandum of understanding into a binding, long-term commercial and development partnership.

Once registered, the product will be marketed under a Syngenta trademark. Under the agreement, Syngenta will hold exclusive distribution rights for cereals, excluding corn, across the EU-27, the UK, Ukraine and Switzerland. First market registrations are targeted for the third quarter of 2028, with sales expected to begin in core EU markets by the end of 2028 for use during the 2029 season.

Targeting two of Europe's biggest cereal disease threats

The partnership is aimed initially at two major fungal diseases affecting European wheat: septoria tritici blotch and yellow rust. Together, the diseases are estimated to affect 9 million to 12 million hectares of cereals annually. Septoria can cause wheat yield losses of 5 per cent to 50 per cent in Germany, with annual economic losses estimated at up to €1.5 billion. Yellow rust can reduce yields by 10 per cent to 70 per cent and, in susceptible varieties, can result in complete crop failure.

The commercial opportunity comes against a backdrop of diminishing conventional treatment options, driven by regulatory restrictions and growing pathogen resistance. For Syngenta, the agreement adds another potential product to its biologicals

portfolio while giving Amoéba access to the commercial scale and cereal-market expertise of one of Europe's leading crop protection companies. “With conventional crop protection facing mounting regulatory and resistance headwinds, this next-generation biofungicide arrives at exactly the right moment,” said Matthew Pickard, Syngenta's Head of Seedcare and Biologicals for Europe.

An unconventional biological route

AXP20 is differentiated by its biological origin. The technology is based on the lysate of Willaertia magna C2c Maky, a single-celled amoeba. The product primarily works by inhibiting fungal spore germination. Field trials have demonstrated efficacy against septoria and yellow rust, while also activating the plant's natural defence mechanisms.

That combination could make the technology particularly relevant to integrated crop management and resistance-management programmes. The Fungicide Resistance Action Committee classifies the lysate under FRAC Group BM02, covering biologicals with multiple modes of action. The companies say the technology has no known resistance and carries a low to very low resistance risk.

The active substance received EU approval in 2025 following an assessment by the European Food Safety Authority. In June 2026, Amoéba received French marketing authorisation for AXPERA, a biofungicide based on the same technology. The French approval is expected to support national authorisation processes in other European markets.

From laboratory technology to commercial platform

The agreement also represents a test of whether a biological technology can move beyond niche applications and compete at scale in one of Europe's most important crop segments. Amoéba has positioned AXP20 as a key technology in its biosolutions portfolio, while Syngenta's distribution network could provide access to a large established cereal market.

Jean-Marc Petat, Managing Director of Green for Agro, Amoéba's biosolutions subsidiary, said the agreement marks a defining milestone for the company and described Syngenta as a strategic partner for launching and marketing biocontrol products to European cereal growers. The companies are already investing in the next stage of development. In 2026, Syngenta and Amoéba are conducting more than 70 field trials jointly, making the programme one of the larger validation efforts currently under way in the biocontrol segment.

A long runway to commercialisation

Despite the strategic significance of the agreement, the commercial payoff remains several years away. First registrations in core EU markets are targeted for Q3 2028, with first sales expected towards the end of that year and farmer use beginning in spring 2029. Registrations in the UK and Switzerland are expected around 2029.

The partners also see potential beyond the initial cereal applications. The agreement envisages expansion into additional crops and geographies as the product's efficacy profile develops. That could turn AXP20 from a single-product opportunity into a broader biological crop-protection platform.