Tübingen Environmental Researcher Lars Angenent Receives the Leibniz Prize

Tübingen biotechnologist Lars Angenent is being awarded the Leibniz Prize by the German Research Foundation (DFG) in appreciation of his outstanding work in the field of environmental biotechnology, it was announced in Bonn on Thursday. The DFG said: "In view of climate change and the resulting need to develop a sustainable food, chemistry and energy economy, his work is highly relevant." Lars Angenent has held the Humboldt Professorship at the Environmental and Geoscience Center (GUZ) of the University of Tübingen since 2016. He develops innovative bio-processes for the conversion of organic waste and industrial waste gas into renewable fuels, green chemicals and sustainable foodstuffs. For example, using recycled carbon dioxide he produces edible proteins that can be used as a meat substitute.

In another of his research projects, he "feeds" carbon dioxide and hydrogen to microbes, thereby producing methane which can be passed into the gas network. The energy needed for this comes from sustainable sources such as wind power. If used at an industrial level this could eventually reduce the CO_2 content of the atmosphere. Lars Angenent has already tested the process with a start-up, Electrochaea, that he co-founded.

"Science can make a decisive contribution to solving the urgent problems of our time. The awarding of the Leibniz Prize to Lars Angenent honors his groundbreaking efforts in environmental research," says Professor Karla Pollmann, President of the University of Tübingen. "What is especially impressive about Lars Angenent's work is his ability to research globally relevant processes from their microbiological principles through to industrial application and break new ground."

Lars Angenent was born in the Netherlands in 1969 and studied environmental biotechnology at Wageningen University. He took his doctorate at Iowa State University in the USA. In 2002 he went to Washington University in St. Louis as assistant professor, after which he was called upon to move to Cornell University. In 2016 he received the Humboldt Professorship and moved to Tübingen.

The USA National Science Foundation has already honored Lars Angenent with a Career Award. This summer he also became a Fellow of the International Society for Microbial Electrochemistry and Technology (ISMET).

The Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize is the most important research funding award in Germany. The Leibniz program was established in 1985 and aims to improve the working conditions of outstanding scientists, expand their opportunities for research, relieve them of their administrative burden and make it easier to engage highly qualified junior scientists. The prize brings with it up to 2.5 million euros. Since 1985 a total of 18 researchers from the University of Tübingen and the Tübingen Max Planck Institute have been awarded the Leibniz Prize.

Press release

08-Dec-2022
Source: University of Tübingen

Further information

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