

Press release

Leipzig, 03/04/2024

Staff change: Dr. René Backes takes over the DBFZ's "Bioenergy Systems" research department from Prof. Dr. Daniela Thrän

Change of personnel at the DBFZ in Leipzig: Prof. Dr. Daniela Thrän, who has been Head of the "Bioenergy Systems" research department and Deputy Scientific Managing Director of the DBFZ for many years, will focus on her activities at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) with effect from 1 April 2024 and hand over the management of the DBFZ "Bioenergy Systems" research department to Dr. René Backes (formerly BASF). Daniela Thrän will continue to work at the DBFZ with reduced hours until the end of 2024.

Prof. Dr. Daniela Thrän studied technical environmental protection at the University of Berlin and then completed her doctorate at the Bauhaus University Weimar. Since 2008, she has been head of the "Bioenergy Systems" department at the DBFZ in Leipzig. Since 2011, she has also headed the "Bioenergy" department at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) in Leipzig and the "Bioenergy Systems" chair at Leipzig University. She contributes her expertise on the sustainable use and production of biomass to numerous committees. As a highly respected expert in the scientific community, Prof. Dr. Daniela Thrän makes a significant contribution to the development of sustainable bioeconomy strategies. In addition to leading various research projects in the field of bioenergy and the bioeconomy, she has also developed the "Smart Bioenergy" approach and published it in a book.

The Scientific Managing Director of the DBFZ, Prof. Dr. Michael Nelles, particularly praised her personal and professional contribution: "We would like to expressly thank Prof. Dr. Thrän for her many years of highly committed and scientifically outstanding expertise, which has made a major contribution to the visibility of the DBFZ and to the successful development of our institute. At the same time, we are delighted that we have very quickly found an outstanding and very experienced successor with great expertise in Dr. René Backes, and we are sure that he will successfully continue on the path he has taken with his team and in particular further develop the material use of biomass.

Dr. René Backes can look back on an 18-year career, most recently as a Business Development Specialist for renewable raw materials in the chemical industry at BASF, of which he spent 51/2 years at the site in Gothenburg/Sweden. His work focussed on the development of new business opportunities for the chemical industry based on biogenic and recycled raw materials. In addition, his responsibilities included representing BASF at various academic and public conferences on the topics of "raw material change" and "circular economy". This led to the management of R&D co-operations of BASF business units with industry and academia in several projects.

General Management:
Prof. Dr. mont. Michael Nelles (scient.)
Dr. Christoph Krukenkamp (admin.)

Seat and competent court: Leipzig
District court of Leipzig HRB 23991

Chairman of the supervisory board:
Olaf Schäfer

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Prof. Dr. Daniela Thrän hands over the DBFZ research department "Bioenergy Systems" to Dr René Backes (left)

Smart Bioenergy – innovations for a sustainable future

The DBFZ works as a central and independent thinker in the field of energy and material use of biomass on the question of how the limited available biomass resources can contribute to the existing and future energy system with sustainability and high efficiency. As part of the research the DBFZ identifies, develops, accompanies, evaluates and demonstrates the most promising fields of application for bioenergy and the especially positively outstanding examples together with partners from research, industry and public. With the scientific work of the DBFZ, the knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of energy and integrated material use of renewable raw materials in a biobased economy as a whole should be expanded and the outstanding position of the industrial location Germany in this sector permanently secured – www.dbfz.de/en.

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