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Audi Environmental Foundation supports drone flights to measure and conserve mixed orchards

- **New geo-technology measures and assesses the condition of fruit orchards for the development of care recommendations**
- **Rüdiger Recknagel, speaking for the Foundation: "We are bringing new technologies and environmental protection together"**

Bad Schönborn/Ingolstadt, July 3, 2018 – Starting today, individual drones will fly at regular intervals over the mixed orchards of the district of Bad Schönborn. Their job is to act as nature conservationists. The drones are controlled by geographers of Heidelberg University of Education. They then evaluate the images scientifically using innovative geo-technology in order to develop recommendations for the care of the orchards. This ensures the long-term diversity of the fruit population of the Baden-Württemberg district and protects the habitat of native animals.

The Audi Environmental Foundation today gave the starting signal for the innovative project, together with project partners from the Geography Department of the Heidelberg University of Education, the Nature Conservation Society of the Rural Region of Karlsruhe, the Bad Schönborn Homeland, Nature and Environmental Workgroup (AHNU) and the district of Bad Schönborn. "The Bad Schönborn mixed orchard project combines the application of modern technology with environmental considerations and the conservation of local diversity of species. It therefore brings together exactly those elements that are essential for the work of our foundation," stated Rüdiger Recknagel, Director of the Foundation.

Traditional mixed orchards consist of fruit trees of various species and varieties. More than 20 types of apple trees grow in Bad Schönborn, together with pear trees and stone-fruit trees. This diversity is good for nature and offers habitat for numerous native insects. Modern fruit plantations, however, are often laid out as monocultures and can be managed industrially and thus more easily.

As the first step, the drones must therefore be able to identify the type of tree in question. They then record the health and care status of the plants and enter this data in an interactive geographical database. The aim of this overview is to develop tailored measures for the protection and maintenance of the trees. The project is initially scheduled to run for three years.

The Audi Environmental Foundation (Audi Stiftung für Umwelt GmbH) is an active promoter of research into new technologies and scientific methods for a future worth living. Its stated goal is to make a contribution to environmental protection and to create and promote ways of sustainable action. The foundation focuses in particular on the promotion and development of environmentally compatible technologies, environmental educational activities and the protection of the natural resources of humans, animals and plants. It was established in 2009 by AUDI AG as a wholly owned subsidiary and is part of its social and environmental commitment.