



RED DE SEMILLAS



Resembrando e Intercambiando

10 YEARS RE-SOWIN AND SHARING

10 YEARS RE-SOWING AND SHARING



What's Red de Semillas?

On 16th to 18th of April in 1999 it took place in Madrid the first Agricultural Biodiversity Workshop organized by the “Grupo Ecologista de Agrónomos” of the Agronomical University of Madrid. Where farmers, consumers, researchers, ecological groups and organic cooperatives took part.

Since that very moment “Red de Semillas” was created

The loss of genetic resources in farming and cattle-breeding and the recovery of local varieties were the reasons for creating the “Red de Semillas” network.

An organisation of a technical, social and political nature, “Red de Semillas, Re-Sowing and Sharing” aims to bring together the various local projects in Spain and provide instruments for carrying out activities in the field of the preservation and utilisation of agricultural biodiversity, helping to coordinate activities amongst the different members and promoting their participation in national and international projects.

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Who and How?

The main assets of the Network are the people and the organisations that belong to it. They include farmers and farming organisations, agricultural experts, supporters of responsible consumption and fair trade, local action groups, germplasm banks, university staff and students, ecologist movements, research centres, etc.

Work is done via the local networks on the preservation of genetic diversity in their areas through the recovery, conservation, improvement and use of the local agricultural varieties that have been passed down by farmers over the years.

The Network's activities have been, and continue to be, closely related to organic farming and the need for the inclusion within it of the preservation of biodiversity. The Network also aims to help recover the know-how of local farmers regarding growing methods

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GROUPS BELONGING TO RED DE SEMILLAS

RED ANDALUZA DE SEMILLAS

RED DE SEMILLAS DE CASTILLA Y LEÓN

RED CANARIA DE SEMILLA ECOLÓGICA

RED DE SEMILLAS DE CATALUNYA

RED DE SEMILLAS DE LA ZONA CENTRO

RED DE SEMILLAS GALLEGA

RED DE SEMILLAS DE EUSKALHERRIA EKONEKAZARITZA. EL KADI

RED DE AGROECOLOGÍA DE LA REGIÓN DE MURCIA

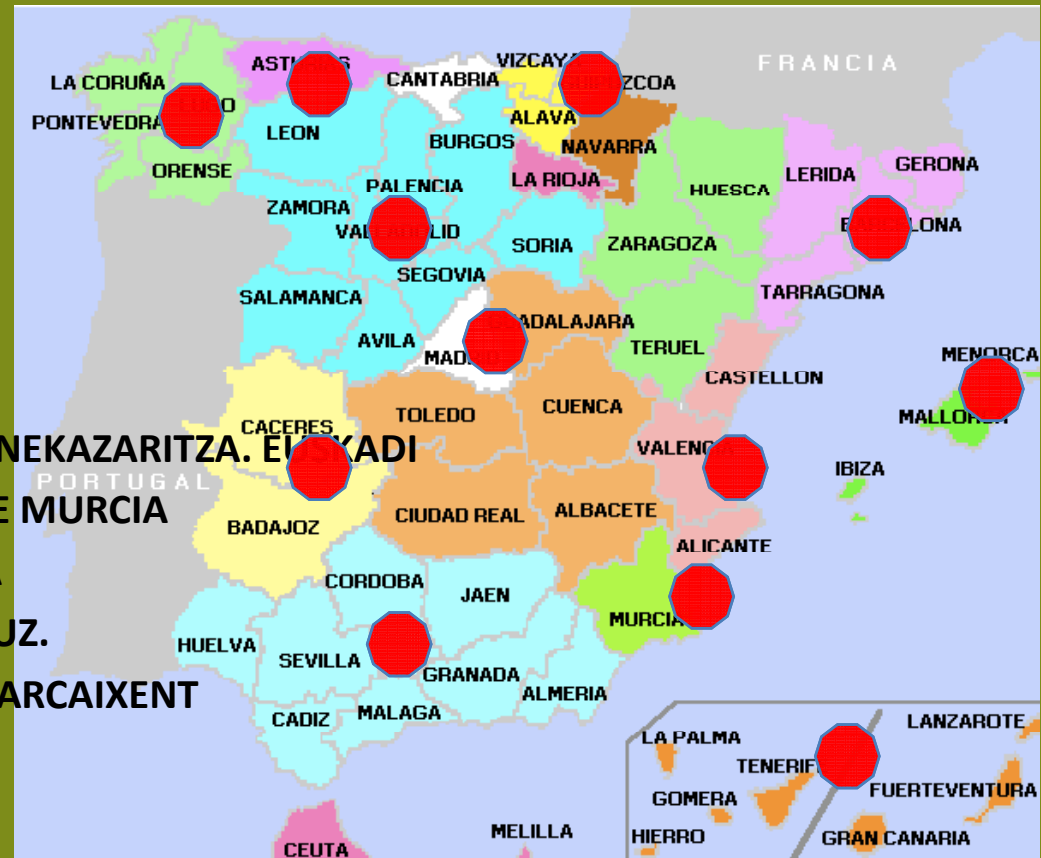
COMARCA DE TENTUDIA. EXTREMADURA

RINCÓN DE LA BIODIVERSIDAD DE ADEMUZ.

VALENCIA ESTACIÓN EXPERIMENTAL DE CARCAIXENT

APAEM, MENORCA

APAEMA, MALLORCA



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Scope

Local: long before the RdS was set up, the many groups that belong to it had been working on the preservation of local diversity, and farmers were actively providing materials and participating in exchange networks. In addition, research centres have been carrying out on-site programmes using local materials and producers

National: the RdS carries out political activities and provides information, including:

- the report entitled Agricultural biodiversity, farmers and genetic erosion;
- lobbying and legal amendments aiming to unravel the complex legislation on seeds and ascertain its effects on farmers;
- the campaign on the rights of farmers to the use and preservation of biodiversity, and the declaration on the rights of farmers to the use and preservation of biodiversity

International: the RdS has been present at several international events including Frick, Brussels, Villarceaux, Paris, Frankfurt, Toulouse, Rome and Florence. It is participating, alongside fourteen other EU groups, in the European project to enhance the genetic diversity of plants grown on organic farms in Europe and it also belongs to the International Community Organic Seed Network.

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

Anyone interested in collaborating in the projects and activities of any of the groups that belong to the Red de Semillas can contact:

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Local varieties

Genetic resources for farming and food (agricultural biodiversity) are the source of the food, clothing and medicines needed by mankind.

Agricultural biodiversity is therefore an essential resource for guaranteeing food safety and the sustainable development of farming.

At present, no more than 120 cultivated plant species provide 90% of food, and only 12 plant species and 5 animal species provide over 70% of food. Only 4 plant species (potatoes, rice, maize and wheat) and 3 animal species (beef cattle, pigs and chickens) provide over the half.

Over the last hundred years, there have been enormous losses in agricultural biodiversity **(75%)**. This has been studied and proved by all the organisations and institutions working in this field, such as the FAO (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation). The recovery of local varieties and farmers' knowledge is essential for ensuring not only their number but also their usefulness in agro-ecosystems.

In organic farming, one of the main strategies for achieving the necessary ecosystemic balance with sufficient productivity but without the use of chemical treatments is the use of varieties that have adapted to the local environment. **Local varieties meet these needs best and this is what makes them so valuable.** Moreover, by using local varieties, it is possible to recover the local culinary and gastronomic culture, restoring land use and preserving landscapes.

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Characteristics of local varieties

- **Cultural, gastronomic and locally integrated.**
- **Known by the local consumers and farmers.**
- **Part of the cultural heritage.**

Local varieties are very well-known and valued in their region and municipality. They represent an important source of local trade. They belong to the cultural heritage of their region. Their use, cooking, breeding and exchange are handed down to generations, creating strong social ties within families and communities.

- **Well adapted to local weather, soil and breeding**

They are completely adapted to the particular characteristics of their environment.

- **Not dependent on chemical fertilizers or pesticides due to their natural resistance to pest.**

They respond better to low agricultural supplies conditions than the commercial varieties do.

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Characteristics of local varieties

- **Promote steady regional trade and dynamic local economy.**
- **Respect farmers rights and the environment.**

They promote steady regional trade obtaining long lasting stable yields at a low risk without any intermediary involvement, directly between the producer and the consumer, generating confidence between them.

Fair prices and benefits for the local community will follow. As a result, local growers can continue their work maintaining the landscape, respecting the environment and minimising the use of chemicals.

- **Genetical diversity.**

Local varieties have a permanent usefulness as possible sources of genetic variations for use in the programs to improve and select new varieties.

- **Agricultural biodiversity.**

FAO declares: “genetic resources sustain the survival of everyone on the planet. It is the first material used in the production of new cultivars and species and make up our reserve of genetic adaptability which we can use as protection against economical and environmental changes that could be detrimental. The loss of these resources would be a serious danger for the security of food production in the long run”

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Characteristics of local varieties

- **Added value and quality products, high nutritional and organoleptic properties.**

Ecological agriculture in particular is acting as a stimulus for the conservation and cultivation of autochthonous material, as much for their organoleptic characteristics as their nutritional value. This promotes the stamps of origin and quality for differentiated products leading to sustainable agriculture.

- **Versatility: use of the whole plant, different parts of the same variety are used for both human and animal feeding.**

For example: we obtain excellent grains from ancient varieties of wheat for human feeding and at the same time, we obtain a very high quality straw for animal feeding, however this is impossible to do it with the commercial varieties.

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Achieving objectives on the conservation of local varieties

- **Farmers re-sowing, sharing and cooperation.**

The principal conservors of the locals varieties are the local farmers. For generations they have been doing what we now know as conservation “in situ”. However, this method is not sufficient to guarantee the conservation of heritage varieties.

The death or retirement of a farmer could result in the irreversible disappearance of material.

- **Local genetical resources banks**

For this reason germoplasm banks are necessary to conserve and catalogue all the available material and stimulate farmers and amateurs to continue cultivating by sharing it with them.

- **Local varieties and trade promotion**

The main promotors of these varieties are farmers organizations, researchers and the civil service.

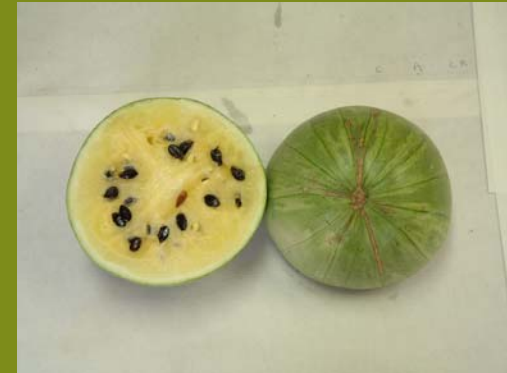
- **University research, training collaboration and support**

Nowadays, Spanish universities include organic agriculture at their undergraduated and graduated programs where the use and preservaton of local varieties seeds play an important role. There are also research programs carrying out improvement, selection and description of local varieties.

- **Fair local agricultural policy and local Government commitment**

It is essential that the local, regional and central government support local varieties with accurate legislation to ensure their preservation and protection.

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FAO: ITPGRFA

Through this treaty, countries agree to establish an efficient, effective and transparent Multilateral System to facilitate access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, as in a long term, their preservation allows to guarantee the future of food and agriculture.

That's what GMO are not respecting

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GMO threats

- Principals of caution
- Safety and health: demonstrated harm to human and animal health.
- GMO depend on high doses of inputs to be productive: multiplying the use of chemicals.
- They polluted the environment. The harm to the environment has been proved.
- Threatening organic and conventional farmers rights
- They provoke the loss of agriculture biodiversity, favoring privatization and the seeds control by few multinationals, endangering the future of the world agriculture.
- For more than 12 years, GMO has been used as an excuse to reduce hunger and poverty in the world. Obviously, they haven't achieved it.
- Nobody evaluate damages and assume responsibilities
- No transparency and control on GMO breeding.
- In Spain still breeding forbidden GMO varieties such Bt-176
- Consumers has no defense against GMO introduction. There's no clear information about them on products labels.

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MENORCA, Local strategies

In order to protect our agriculture and land, the " Consell Insular de Menorca" (the local government) in cooperation with farmers associations and local action groups have created many tools to achieve it..

- **CARP "Contracte Agrari de la Reserva de Biosfera"**

Local government give incentives for many good agricultural practices such sustainable cropping, preservation of the landscape, the use of clean energies, use of local varieties, training, etc.

Obviously, GMO breeding is not allowed in this contract.

- **Banc de Préstec de Llavors de Varietats Locals de Menorca.**

Local varieties seeds loan service, farmers assistance and training

We are also taking part in **European GMO-Free Regions Network** (since 2006) formed by the GMO-free regions that give support to local sustainable agriculture and works to maintain biodiversity giving an added value to local products.

- **Local product campaign**

Promotion and support of the Balearic and organic local products.

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