



Workshop: Agricultural biodiversity and local food systems 1: Collective seed initiatives

Date: February 25 (Friday) 2011, 01.00 PM-03.00 PM, Workshop session 1

Language: English, Hungarian

Room: Plenary room 1, basement

Coordinators:

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Csilla Kiss (Védegylet/Protect the Future, Hungary)

Throughout history farmers have contributed to the development of agricultural biodiversity by conserving, exchanging and using seeds of local, traditional or farmers' varieties, well adapted to local soils and climatic conditions. Since the expansion of industrial agriculture, many of these varieties have disappeared from the fields and much of the associated knowledge has been lost at the same time.

In the past decade, however, an increasing number of collective actions have been emerging across Europe for the conservation and renewal of agricultural biodiversity on farms and in gardens. The regeneration and the reintroduction of local varieties valuable for low-input and organic farming, however, is a complex process. It requires the cooperation of various actors, combining different types of knowledge and organisational methods that take into account the needs of small-scale family farmers. They link up genebanks and breeders with farmers, artisan seed producers, bakers, chefs and consumers, who are rediscovering and promoting these varieties despite the unfavourable legal, economic and institutional environment they are confronted with.

The purpose of this workshop is to :

-Show positive examples of collective actions for the conservation and renewal of agricultural biodiversity in Hungary and Europe.

-Share experiences between actors involved in collective actions around the conservation, exchange and use of seeds of local and farmers' varieties

-Based on existing field experience provide useful information to local groups and communities planning to launch such initiatives

-Identify some of the key factors that facilitate the organisation and the functioning of collective initiatives

Presentations :

- György Csányi - Bács-Kiskun County Agricultural Chamber, Hungary
- Dr. Katalin Rózsa Ráczné, Agricultural Training Center - Dániel Csapó High School, Hungary
- Claudia Kaufmann, Arche Noah, Austria
- Bob Brac, BEDE/Peasants' Seeds Network (Réseau Semences Paysannes), France