DIVERSIFOOD Newsletter #3

DIVERSIFOOD hands-on

Summer is a busy season for agriculture, and DIVERSIFOOD followed the mood. Many farm days and trainings in the field are organized in different countries, summing up the first results of the project.

All the public events were organized with a multi-actor approach, to involve different stakeholders within the local actions to promote food diversity and quality.

DIVERSIFOOD is a European project funded under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Programme. The project main goal is enriching the diversity of cultivated plants through a multi-actor approach. Find out more on the project website (LINK)

This DIVERSIFOOD newsletter aims at informing about the project development and results. It is published twice a year

VIDEOS: DIVERSIFOOD in pills

What is DIVERSIFOOD all about? Who are the actors involved? And what are the challenges we are facing to promote a new way of thinking agriculture? Find it out watching the “DIVERSIFOOD in pills” video interviews.

Recent events

Hungary: Enabling Crop Biodiversity on the Market

Arche Noah (Austria) organized a workshop in Budapest at the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary on June 7th 2016 to discuss and try out different methods for the selection of good fruit quality in breeding populations. The overall goal was to bring together different perspectives, including the DIVERSIFOOD project experience. Policy makers, scientists, farmers, food producers, authorities and NGOs were involved.

France: Training on PPB

RSP (France) organized three training sessions on Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB). The sessions were held on February 2nd 2016 in Poitiers; on March 21st 2016 in Tours; and in May 31st 2016 in Bellegarde du Razès. These training sessions aimed to present the methodology of Participatory Plant Breeding to new groups willing to start a PPB programme, with a specific focus on cereals and tomatoes.
The third training session (May 31st) was co-organized and hosted by ITAB. JL. Brault, a French organic seed producer, initiated the twenty participants into practicing pollination for controlled crosses of tomato varieties. A controlled cross entails making, emasculating immature flowers by removing the male structures of the chosen female parent (pollen acceptor) and collecting and transferring pollen from mature flowers of the chosen male parent (pollen donor). Pierre Rivière (RSP) presented the theoretical basis of dynamic management of cultivated biodiversity and new diversity generation. The discussions highlighted the diversity of the various breeding objectives among the involved actors.

“Promoting the resistance to fruit cracking in variety X” or “Improving tomato flavour of variety Y”: these were two of the main common problems highlighted, but there was no share consensus on the proposed solutions. During 2016 summer, everyone has been invited to perform their desired controlled crosses and to record their procedure to ensure traceability. The group will meet again in late august.

Italy: Wheat biodiversity

The University of Bologna (Italy) organized a training session on May 31st 2016 in Argelato (BO). The goal was to spread the knowledge about participative breeding and similar approaches for the selection of durum and soft wheat new varieties across rural community (farmers, green operators, students). A discussion about the adaptation of these new varieties to organic farming was held, with a particular emphasis on their potential beneficial health effect for human nutrition. Approximately 40 people attended the meeting. The participation was really interactive and the speakers were stimulated to explain the different issues at great detail.

Spain: Vegetables

In Spain the Red Andaluza de Semillas (RAS) organized many public events on participatory description of local varieties: 3 trainings, 3 stakeholders forum and 9 share shops were held in various parts of Andalusia.

In particular, the trainings focused on a crucial need raised in different occasions, including the Network of Farmers Researchers: increasing technical knowledge in the production of vegetable seed. These important sharing occasions were organized on April 4th in Arahal (Sevilla), on May 7th-8th in Ronda (Málaga) and on May 13rd-14th Porreres (Mallorca). The training activities reached their goals and raised great interest among the participants.
Online training

The University of Pisa (Italy) organized a DIVERSIFOOD online training on July 1st 2016. The training aimed at familiarising partners with the methodology for case studies implementation defined by UNIPI as well as at adapting the methodology to case-specific needs.

Forthcoming events

Finland: Buckwheat trials

A farm day will be organized on August 18th 2016 in Jokioinen, Finland, to show DIVERSIFOOD field experiments and to discuss on buckwheat cultivation, yield improvements, upgrading food products, health aspects, sustainability. The aim is to put together farmers and consumers, in order to improve networking and discussion on the different challenges and possibilities.

Austria: Tomato diversity

In spring 2016 seeds of almost all 600 tomato accessions from the ARCHE NOAH (Austria) seed bank were sent to home gardeners. The fruits of this work will be seen in Wien on September 3rd 2016: within the public event Vielfalt auftafeln home gardeners, seed savers and consumers will gather to compare the diversity of grown plants. It will be an opportunity to enjoy tomato diversity with direct experience, and through parallel lectures and workshops on agrobiodiversity.