

Growing agricultural biodiversity: knowledge and practice in Europe

GROW

Report of the event

Note 1: Report of less than 5 pages including photos.

Title of the activity	CEREAL WORKSHOP
Organizers	PELITI (ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY PELITI)
Date of the activity	June 27 and 28, 2014
Place of the activity	Mesohori, area of Paranesti near the city of Drama, and POMAC area Rhodopi Northern Greece
Participants	Four persons from RED DE SEMILLAS, Spain, and three persons from RESEAU DES SEMENCES PAYSANNES, France, two translators from Peliti(French and Spanish) and one coordinator from Peliti, In total, 10 participants
Topics of the activity	Cultivation of rare, disease - resistant varieties of cereals
Crops related to the visit	Spring Rye
Verification of the activity	Panagiotis Sainatoudis (panagiotis@peliti.gr)
A/ Contents of the activity	<p>WORKSHOP ON CEREALS</p> <p>June 27 2014. Arrival of participants at Paranesti at midday. During the afternoon: visit to the Peliti land where the festival takes place and briefing on the preparation and organization of seed exchange festivals. This was followed by a visit to the Peliti seed bank which is located in the premises of a village school building. Briefing on the function of the bank and on the problems and challenges for the future.</p> <p>The accessions of the bank include a variety of cereal seeds. The participants were able to take samples with them in order to assess the possibility of cultivation in their country.</p> <p>June 28 2014. Departure from Paranesti at 6.00 am and drive towards the POMAC villages on the Rhodopi mountains. Arrival at the DIASPARTO village at 8.00am where the "Leonardo Grow" team was received by the POMAC farmer Mr. Ahmed ZOMBRE. The village is located on a 1000 meters high mountain zone with forests.</p> <p>As this workshop was focusing on cereals the briefing focused on the "spring rye" cultivation practices. Spring rye is a very old traditional variety. The briefing took place in front of the spring rye fields which had not yet reached harvesting time. Mr. Ahmed informed us that he sows this particular variety of rye every April once the threat of frosts has passed. He harvests after three months in July and of course he saves seeds for the following year.</p> <p>Referring to wild undesirable herbs, Mr. Ahmed said that no such problem exists with the spring rye crop because the planting is very dense and there is no room for other plants. He also added that this is a very good disease resistant seed and no diseases are observed as long as you do not plant it on the same soil every year. So in each piece of land he plants spring rye for the first year, the following year he plants potatoes and at the third year he replants the spring rye. This alteration permits the soil to "recover". The only additive on the soil that he uses is the manure from his animals. No spraying is applied.</p> <p>In the case of an occasional frost after sowing in April, the seed that is saved is not suitable for the spring rye any more. It can only be used for winter rye crop, but Mr Ahmed prefers spring rye as the spring climatic conditions are more supportive for his</p>

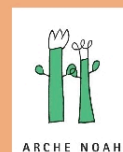
Socios del proyecto

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	<p>work.</p> <p>The spring rye was originally used for making bread from rye flour, for direct animal feed as well as for construction purposes (making water resistant roofs for the buildings). To day the rye roofs have been replaced by metal roofs and the preparation of the flour for bread is very difficult because the water mills in the neighbouring villages were shut down. Accordingly, they make only a small quantity of flour to add to the home made wheat bread. Today, the cultivated rye serves specifically for animal feed.</p> <p>The grain is separated from the plant by hitting the plant with a wooden tool while it is placed on a large cloth or nylon sheet. When he harvests, Mr. Ahmed wears a wooden glove at the left hand to avoid injuries. During conservation time, the crop is kept indoors without the need of any additives.</p> <p>Spring Rye Output: One kilo of seeds gives him 10 kilos during the favorable years, or something less during the less favorable years.</p> <p>After the briefing on this rare variety of cereal, several participants asked for rye seed and Mr. Ahmed kindly offered it to them. This seed is going to be tested in other countries by cultivators and bakers who participated in the Leonardo-GROW programme in order to evaluate its adaptability and use potential.</p> <p>Following the end of the briefing on cereals, the participants were welcome to the other areas of the farm to see the milk producing animals (output 100 kg per day sold to the milk industry) and the family vegetable garden where various agro-ecological methods are applied, one of them similar to American Indian methods. The animals consist of sheep (old and modern breeds) and cows (A special free range traditional cow breed which is disease resistant and needs small amounts of food). The traditional agroecological methods used in the POMAc area have been lost from most parts of Europe including Greece. Finally Mr. Ahmed showed us how he bakes the homemade bread, in a pan on the stove, with a metal lid on which he places some hot coals.</p> <p>Following the end of the briefing of cereals at around 14 hours, the team visited other villages of the traditional POMAC area on the Rhodopi mountains in order to look at the fields and discuss with the locals and taste traditional food at the village of KOTANI. The free local hot baths were also tried by the group before leaving the area. The workshop ended with discussions on the experience of exploratory missions for identifying "unknown" local varieties that can still be found in local villages, usually at the hands of elderly people who do not have the possibility to pass this wonderful heritage to the new generation.</p>
<p>B/ Interesting points of the activity</p>	<p>Participants were able to learn the various agro ecological tools successfully applied to the cereal Spring Rye and to take various local cereal seeds with them in order to test them in their countries</p>
<p>C/ Proposals to improve these kind of events</p>	<p>more follow up is needed after the event</p>
<p>D/ Materials prepared for the event</p>	<p>✓ Detailed program of the meeting.</p>
<p>Photographs of the activity</p>	<p>Two photographs from June 27 and 28, 2014 are attached and for additional photos please see http://www.peltiti.gr/index.php?option=com_phocagallery&view=category&id=58:pomak</p>

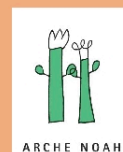
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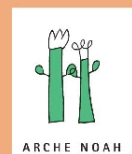
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