



This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation program under Grant Agreement n° 727848

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About CERERE

Through a balanced, multivector network of researchers and communities of practitioners, the project promotes innovation by producing and disseminating accessible enduser materials and training products for farmers, food manufacturers, consumers, researchers and policy makers.

INTERNAL RULES ON FARMERS' SEEDS: THE EXAMPLE OF A "COMMON"

PROBLEM

The absence of collective rules impede the collective management of farmers' seeds.

SOLUTION

The collective organization for the management and protection of farmers' seeds can be done within a Community Seed House thanks to a farmers-gardeners' synergy, which can be considered as an agricultural "Common". Rules set out the rights of use, use, management and disposal granted to commoners (in this case, the members of the Community Seed House). Seed samples can be distributed fairly flexibly to gardeners who are asked to give back part of their crop to feed the safety stock and redistribute the seeds. The diffusion of seeds can be ruled by a liability and multiplication agreement signed with responsible-farmers. The Community Seed House provides a sample of seeds (not exceeding a few tens of kg) and technical support to the responsible-farmers. A responsible-farmer maintains varieties by following a protocol of logging and harvesting, returns the equivalent of the quantity received in a state of cleanliness for sowing and puts a seed lot of the same variety at the disposal of a new responsible/multiplier.

Outcomes

Conservation and management of seeds as a Common are thereby ensured for example within the Petanielle association which gathers farmers and gardeners in order to preserve and develop cultivated biodiversity. The varieties are multiplied and diffused within the members of the association.



Practical Recommendation

- When providing the responsible farmer/multipliers with the quantity of seeds needed, it is also necessary to ensure the networking of farmers to allow the exchange of knowledge and know-how. Concerning gardeners, it is also important to give them cropping indications when they are given the seeds.
- It can be practical to organize the exchanges of seeds and know-how during collective meetings (sowing days, field visits, threshing days, etc.).
- It may be interesting, for the management of a seeds collection, to divide the different varieties into categories (for example: variety of educational interest, conservation variety, variety on pre-multiplication, new variety under peasant selection process, etc.). It is important to use a tool (database, spreadsheet, paper charts, etc.) to know which varieties and quantities are sown and where and what is in the safety stock.
- It is important to define the roles of each participant, especially if the farmers members of the collective are short of time.

Further Information

<http://petanielle.org/>

Theme: Internal organisation and networking

Keywords: Agricultural common; farmers seeds

Crop: Cereals

Country: France

Related CERERE case study: Pétanielle

Languages: French; English

Year of release: 2018

Project partners

The University of Reading (United Kingdom), The University of Florence (Italy), Rete Semi Rurali (Italy), Réseau Semences Paysannes (France), Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (France), The University of Helsinki (Finland), The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority (Ireland), Red Andaluza de Semillas (Spain), Formicablu (Italy), Organic Research Centre (United Kingdom), SEGES P/S (Denmark), Institut Technique de l'Agriculture Biologique (France), The University of Debreceni (Hungary).

Evaluation and sharing of the results

Use the comment section on the CERERE website to share your experiences with other farmers, processors, retailers, advisors and scientists. If you have any questions concerning this Practice Abstract, please contact the author by e-mail.