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FROM SEED TO PLATE: CROSSING EXPERIENCES IN ORGANIC RICE PROGRAM

16-17
SEPTEMBER 2023

RICE BIODISTRICT OF PIEDMONT
VERCELLI



LiveSeeding



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Rice domestication began in China about 10,000 years ago. Today, rice is one of the three most produced cereals worldwide (together with maize and wheat), and one of the most widely consumed grains. However, the future of rice cultivation is seriously threatened in many regions of the world. Rice cultivation combines many of the environmental problems generated by industrial agriculture in general: soil salinization, superweeds, biodiversity loss, and greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, rice cultivation could be adapted to, and, in some cases, even specifically suitable for, one of the most biodiverse and fragile ecosystems on Earth: wetlands. While rice epitomizes multiple tensions that run across distinct agricultural paradigms, its cultivation can also be a source of promising agricultural practices and opportunities for habitat restoration and food security. Developing tailored rice varieties and sustainable practices in ecologically diversified farming systems can be an important contribution to the resilience of agricultural and food systems worldwide.

By bringing together different actors (rice farmers, breeders, researchers) and disciplines (agronomy, social science), this workshop aims to provide a space for the exchange of varied experiences and offer new insights into organic rice cultivation.

The transnational and cross-disciplinary range of topics covered will span from agronomic challenges to political factors influencing rice production, from seed systems and varietal selection to the plate. The workshop will include field visits and thematic discussions.

Program

15 September

20.30 Social dinner and welcome at Agriturismo Santa Teresa

16 September

07.30 - 08.30 Breakfast

09.00

Welcome at Cascina Teglio

09:30

Presentation of the Vercelli Rice Biodistrict and visit to the experimental field

11:00

Visit to the rice mill at az. agr. Una Garlanda

12:30 Lunch at Rovasenda Castle

14:00 - 18:00

Workshop at the Rovasenda Castle

Seeds and diversity

- Methodologies for conservation and breeding activities, such as the development of heterogeneous materials and mixtures adapted to diverse socio-agronomic contexts.
- Mutual benefits and limitations of the interactions between complex ecosystems (hosting biodiversity) and rice production.
- New forms of solidarity between rural areas and cities via food systems.

Presentations:

Matteo Petitti, Daniela Ponzini. Rete Semi Rurali, Italy: "Rice diversity from seed to fork: a living lab for organic rice in northern Italy"

Vlad-Dumitru Mihaila. Agricultural research and Development Station of Braila (SCDA), Romania: "The rice breeding program at the SCDA: challenges and results"

Viviane Raharinivo. CIRAD, Francia; FO-FIFA, Madagascar: "Breeding and Seed Systems in Madagascar: Rice Sector Overview, Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities"

Yvonne Fabian. Agroscope, Switzerland: "Rice cultivation in Switzerland, how to reconcile food production with species protection"

Stephan Gysi. Hof Rinderbrunnen, Switzerland: "Upland rice in Switzerland: Experimental cultivation of rain-fed rice north of the Alps"

Vicente Dominguis. Pego Natura, Valencia, Spain. "Agroecological approaches in rice paddies in Marjal de Pego-Oliva, Spain"

Andrea Magarini. MUFPP, Milano, Italy "The case of green public procurement to improve the local rice system through school canteens"

17:30 Open discussion

20:30

Aperitif at the Rovasenda castle

17 September

9:00 Breakfast

10:00 - 12:00

Workshop at the Rovasenda Castle

Rice: a global perspective

- Rice as a scientific object: Interdisciplinary perspectives on marginalized and dominant scientific approaches to, and farmers' practices around, rice in the context of modernization schemes.
- Rice as a global commodity: Entanglements between financial markets, historical and socioeconomic consequences of rice cultivation for land ownership, labour relations and resource management

Presentations:

Dominic Glover. Institute of Development Studies, United Kingdom: "Contested narratives of the System of Rice Intensification"

Harro Maat. Wageningen University, the Netherlands: "Rice, resistance and resilience from a historical perspective"

Elisa Greco. Review of African Political Economy (RoAPE): "Financialisation and rice mega-farms in the new commodity frontiers: Case studies from Uganda and Tanzania"

Gilles Narcy. Université Paris-1 Panthéon-Sorbonne: "The sanitary regulations on rice paddies in early modern Piedmont (17th-18th centuries)"

Final remarks and discussion about future collaborations and outputs of the workshop



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