

### **International workshop on different models to finance plant breeding**

ECO-PB is going to hold an international workshop on ways and models to finance plant breeding especially for organic farming. The workshop is going to take place on Tuesday, 27 February 2007 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The location for the workshop is the Ökohaus KA Eins in Frankfurt which is conveniently situated for public transport. The one-day workshop starts at 9.30 and lasts to 16.30 and is carried out in English.

In the workshop different examples and models of financing plant breeding activities are presented and discussed amongst participants. The goal of this workshop is to stimulate the development and progress of alternative ways of dividing breeding costs over the different stakeholders in the food production chain.

Farmers, breeders, traders, processors and policy makers involved in the topic will be invited to workshop. To create an environment for an open and fruitful discussion the maximum number of participants will be restricted to 50. People interested in participating shall send an e-mail to the address below, with a short summary of current activities in this area and the motivation for participating. Further details and a programme of the workshop can be found under [www.eco-pb.org](http://www.eco-pb.org)

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### **Farmers as breeders: Learning from the Cuban experience**

is the title of a workshop organized by the HDRA Research Department, Heritage Seed Library and International Programme, to discuss and move forward thinking and action on organic seed production and the role of farmers as breeders. We are fortunate to have the renowned participatory plant breeder Dr Humberto Ríos Labrada from the National Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Havana, Cuba, who is visiting the UK. The workshop takes place on the 20th February 2007 at HDRA, Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry, UK.

The workshop aims to address the key issues of participatory approaches to organic seed production, which may be further advanced in Cuba than they are in the UK. It will provide an overview of current activities in the UK and of the successes of Cuba, and then lead into discussion on what we can learn and what priority issues may be taken forward. The workshop is aimed at commercial producers, researchers working on organic and biodynamic systems, plant breeding and participatory approaches, and other interest groups in the UK.

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### **Discussion on organic plant breeding techniques at the Scientific German conference on Organic Farming**

Some stakeholders especially of the biodynamic movement argue that several techniques of breeding and multiplying are not in keeping with the tenets of Organic Farming. Kultursaat (non profit organization of biodynamic vegetable breeders), Forschungsring für Biologisch-Dynamische Wirtschaftsweise and Bingenheimer Saatgut AG (Vegetables' Seed Company) created a communication concept for vegetables broken down by varieties in order to point out the issue of plant breeding methods in general. Additionally, selling choice open pollinating

varieties may be a chance for growers and traders to distinguish themselves on the increasing global market of organic foodstuffs. A workshop on pros and cons of this concept will take place during 9th German Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture at University of Hohenheim.

For detailed Information see: <http://www.wissenschaftstagung.de/de/programm/workshops.html>, WS 8

### **In France, no more derogations for corn (maize) seeds**

For species presenting a large number of varieties, French ministry for agriculture and experts had decided to establish a “special screen” on which users are informed to look at the list of varieties and, if they use another variety, that they could be especially controlled. Those species are: wheat, spring barley, triticale, corn, sunflower, soy, potato, and 10 vegetable crops. It was considered a first step.

This month, after having heard the expert group, French ministry for agriculture decided to pass corn seeds in a special list “hors derogation” (national annex). There are 47 efficient corn varieties on the database, covering different situations in north and south France. Derogations for using conventional seeds are still possible in only two cases: limited trials of a variety with a minor quantity of seed, or if there is an absolute necessity of using a peculiar variety (for a production contract).

More information: [Jean Wohrer](#), GNIS