

New FiBL-Dossier: Techniques in Plant Breeding

Which breeding techniques are compliant with the principles of organic farming? A new Dossier provides the foundation for decision maker in the organic sector for a transparent judgement of novel as well as traditional breeding methods.

Suitable cultivars are a fundamental requirement in order to further increase efficiency and yield stability of food production. In order to achieve this, a type of plant breeding that is orientated to the specific breeding goals of organic farming is required. Alternative approaches of plant breeding are also necessary since the internal seed market is further consolidated and the share of genetically modified varieties still increases. Additionally, patenting of living beings leads to a restricted use of genetic resources.

This new Dossier describes on 50 pages traditional and novel breeding methods that are phased-in in commercial plant breeding soon. Based on clearly defined criteria the appropriateness of such breeding techniques with regard to organic farming is being evaluated. This outline of methods is being completed by principals for organic plant breeding, which have been worked out and discussed in an expert workshop. The production of the Dossier has been financially supported by Foundation Mercator Switzerland and Mahle Foundation Germany.

The dossier is available in German and can be purchased under: http://bit.ly/eco-pb_dossier

Plead to allow for more biodiversity in the European seed law

In a position paper directed to the EU Commission ECO-PB together with organic farming organisations and seed producers stresses the need for an appropriate and proportional legal framework to encourage the work of breeders and seed suppliers working in special markets or agro-systems like organic farming.

The full position paper can be found under http://bit.ly/eco-pb_position

First "scientific" book on Organic Crop Breeding recently published

As organic breeding is a quickly emerging field both in practical sense as through scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals, the publisher Wiley-Blackwell estimate a market for a book on Organic breeding. Therefore they invited Edith Lammerts van Bueren, professor Organic Plant breeding at Wageningen University and attached to Louis Bolk Institute in the Netherlands, to write a book on organic crop breeding for crop breeders, geneticists, crop science professionals, researchers and students. She compiled the book together with Jim Myers, professor plant breeding at Oregon State University in the US, and very much involved in organic breeding in the US. Altogether 50 authors have shared their knowledge with a thorough review of the latest efforts by crop breeders and scientists to develop improved varieties for organic production. The book opens with chapters looking at the values of organic agriculture and the consequences for breeding, next to issue dealing with specific valuable traits such as weed suppression, nutrient efficiency, pest and disease resistance, genetic diversity, participatory approaches and finally law and policy issues. The second part of the book is a series of crop specific case studies that look at breeding efforts currently underway

from around the world ranging from wheat, maize, rice, soybean, faba bean, potato, tomato, brassica's, and onions.

ISBN 978-0-470-95858-2, hardcover, 312 pages.

see <http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470958588.html>.

Organic Participatory Plant Breeding – downloadable brochure

In recent times organic plant breeding has gained more momentum. This brochure gives an overview on some current issues of organic plant breeding together with portraits of altogether eleven breeders active in the German speaking area. The portraits show which commitments, motives, expertise and personalities that are behind these peoples work. In a situation characterized by underfunding and legal and administrative hurdles these people virally contribute to increase the choice of well adapted cultivars for organic farming.

The making of the brochure has been financially supported by the German Federal Scheme of Organic Farming and other sustainable forms of Farming (BÖLN) and can be downloaded (only in German) free of costs under http://bit.ly/eco-pb_ppz

ECO-PB Board elected at the General Assembly

Attached to the SOLIBAM conference ECO-PB held its General Assembly in Rome on April the 19th. The president of ECO-PB, Monika Messmer chaired the General Assembly. During the ECO-PB GA a new board was elected. The elected board members are Monika Messmer (FiBL-CH), Karl-Josef Müller (ABDP, D), Maaïke Raaijmakers (Stichting Zaadgoed-NL), Frederic Rey (ITAB-Fr), and Thomas Döring (ORCEF-UK). Klaus-Peter Wilbois (FiBL-D) withdrew from the board.

By Klaus-Peter Wilbois ([Klaus.Wilbois\(at\)fibl.org](mailto:Klaus.Wilbois(at)fibl.org))

Seeds of freedom by The African Biodiversity Network and the Gaia Foundation

A new short film launched online on Tuesday 12th June charts the story of seed from its roots at the heart of traditional, diversity rich farming systems across the world, to being transformed into a powerful commodity, used to monopolise the global food system. The film highlights the extent to which the industrial agricultural system - and genetically modified seeds in particular - has impacted on the enormous agro - biodiversity evolved by farmers and communities around the world.

<http://seedsoffreedom.info/>