

OPTA workshop on organic breeding

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5.5. 2021



Short presentation of Sativa

Sativa is:

- a seed company selling 100% organic vegetable and farm seeds
- based in Switzerland with subsidiaries in Germany and Italy
- active in the professional and in the amateur market (CH + EU)
- founded in 1998, today about 70 coworkers, seeds produced from more than 100 organic growers.
- an organic vegetable breeder. Breeding started in 2004

Principles of organic breeding

A grayscale photograph of a person in a greenhouse. The person is standing in the middle ground, looking down at a clipboard. In the foreground, there is a large, neat pile of white, round seedlings. To the right, there are several rows of grey plastic crates, some containing more seedlings. The background shows the structure of the greenhouse with glass panels and metal frames.

- using only material which can be grown on organic farms
- working from the beginning till the end on organic farms
- using breeding methods according to the principles of organic agriculture (single cell as smallest entire unity)

Organic breeding needs cooperation

Organic farming

- ...less fertilizers
- ... less pesticides
- ... more crop rotation
- ... work more preventively for better plant health

⇒ observe better

⇒ more interaction

⇒ more cooperation

... greater diversity of varieties needed

Organic breeding

- same logic of organic farming
- less breeding techniques applicable
- less replications
- less money

⇒ observe better

⇒ more interaction

⇒ more cooperation

... greater diversity of varieties possible

Organic breeding needs cooperation

⇒ During the last 20 years Sativa developed projects together with partners of the value chain



Cooperation supports organic breeding

- Continuous process of cooperation and exchange
- helps financing breeding activities
- Continuous feedback for important traits
- Knowledge transfer in both directions
- Tests of breeding lines already very early
- Access to growers in different areas which would not be reachable for Sativa alone

⇒ First the financial support was the main aspect

⇒ Now financial support is only one aspect of cooperation

Cooperation needs flexibility

- Differences if we talk with grower organisations, traders or processors
- Every company is organized in a different way

⇒ We have to learn to talk in the language of each company

⇒ We have to learn to make organic breeding understandable

⇒ Organic breeding as a multi-year approach

Cooperation needs flexibility

- Organic breeding is a dialog between breeder and plants.
- GMO breeding is a monolog

⇒ Cooperation with the value chain is also a dialog

⇒ Breeder tasks: tell the truth: what's possible in organic breeding – what is not possible

i.e. negative correlation between yield and taste

Cooperation with growers

sativa
biosaatgut - semences bio - sementi bio



Platz für neue Biosorten in Ihrem Garten?
Jetzt mitmachen beim Salat-Projekt!



Mit vereinten
Gärten



Ein Gemeinschaftsprojekt von

sativa



Lettuce breeding – challenge mildiou

- Breeding for monogenetic resistances is a dead-end street
- Involving growers in the breeding process
- A kind of a „participatory breeding project“
- „Citizen science project“

⇒ Building the network started in 2019

⇒ 750 – 1200 – 2500 participants in 7 countries

Organic breeding is cooperation

- We get a lot of positive reactions
- The project helps us in breeding
- We have to learn the language(s) of the participants

⇒ Cooperation and communication is very important

⇒ It needs time and also money

⇒ organic breeding is intergrated in society!



Why bioverita?



bioverita

A label to make organic breeding
more known...

Bringing organic varieties to the organic value chain

- Organic breeders cannot do marketing for their varieties
- Intrinsic values are the same in organic varieties of cereals, vegetables or fruits
- Organic varieties are often unknown
- Consumers are expecting the use of organic varieties for organic products

Bioverita cooperation projects

- First pilot project in 2018 with Rinklin Naturkost
 - Labeling several organic bred vegetable varieties at the point of sale

- Today: projects with more partners:



Bioverita cooperation projects

- Increasing sales in those projects
 - more projects with more partners are in discussion
- ⇒ Bringing new sales arguments to the trading companies
- ⇒ Intensifying the dialog between growers and traders
- ⇒ Learning to talk the language of the partners
- ⇒ Translate organic breeding approach to organic trade

Bioverita cooperation projects

=> Multilingual approach (de, fr, it)



We have to
learn new
languages

Thank you very much!

