

„Entrepreneurship in the organic seeds and breeding sector“

EU LiveSeeding Webinar 14 Dec 2023

Bingenheimer Saatgut AG, Germany,
and the network of
biodynamic and organic seeds and breeding

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Funded by the European Union, the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or REA, nor SERI or UKRI.



TOPICS

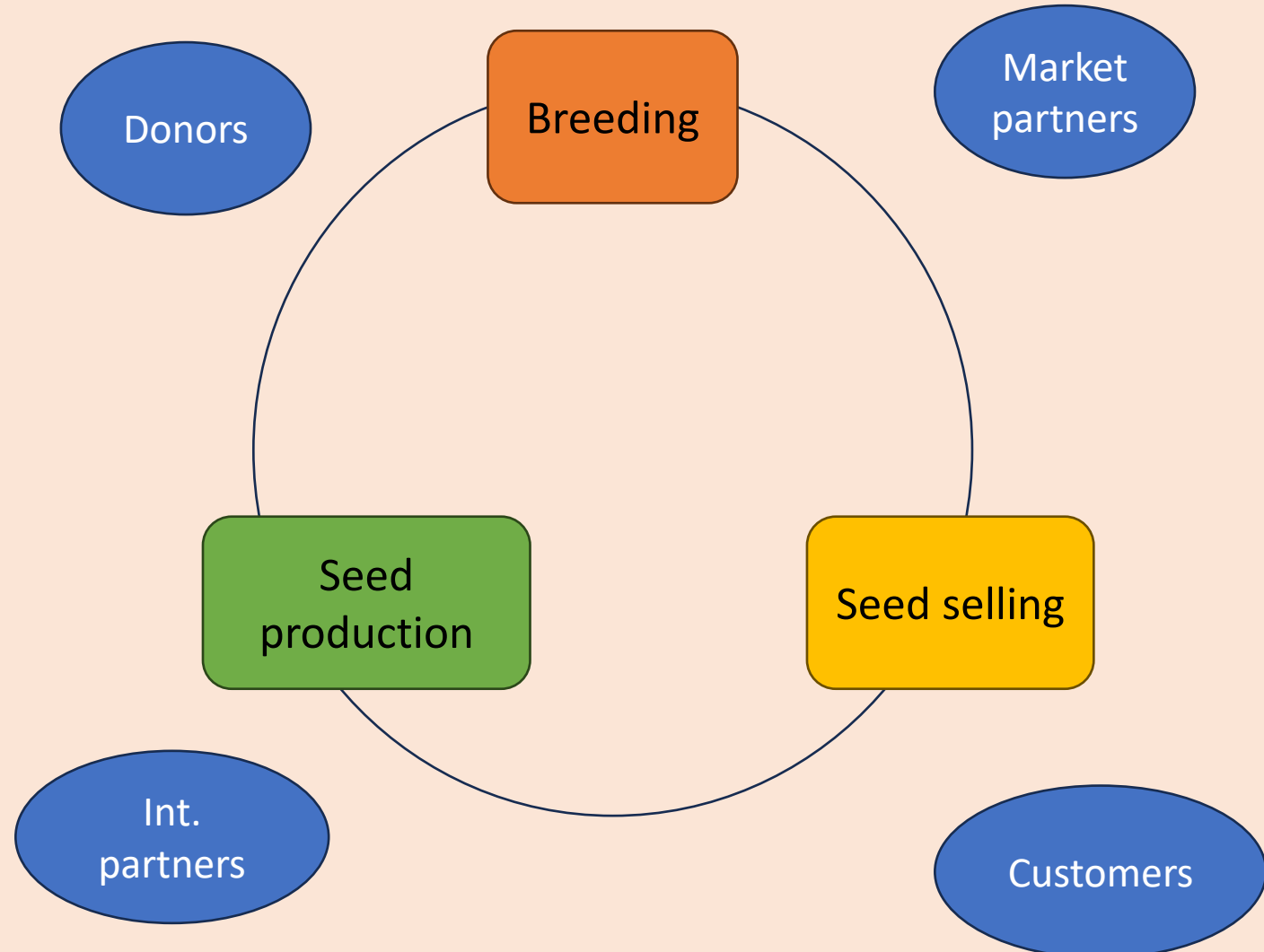
I. Reasonable for building up the network

II. Presentation of the network

- The Seed producers
- The Breeder's association
- The seed company

III. The business model

IV. Outlook & perspectives



I. Reasons for building up the network

The “**Initiative-Circle**” network:

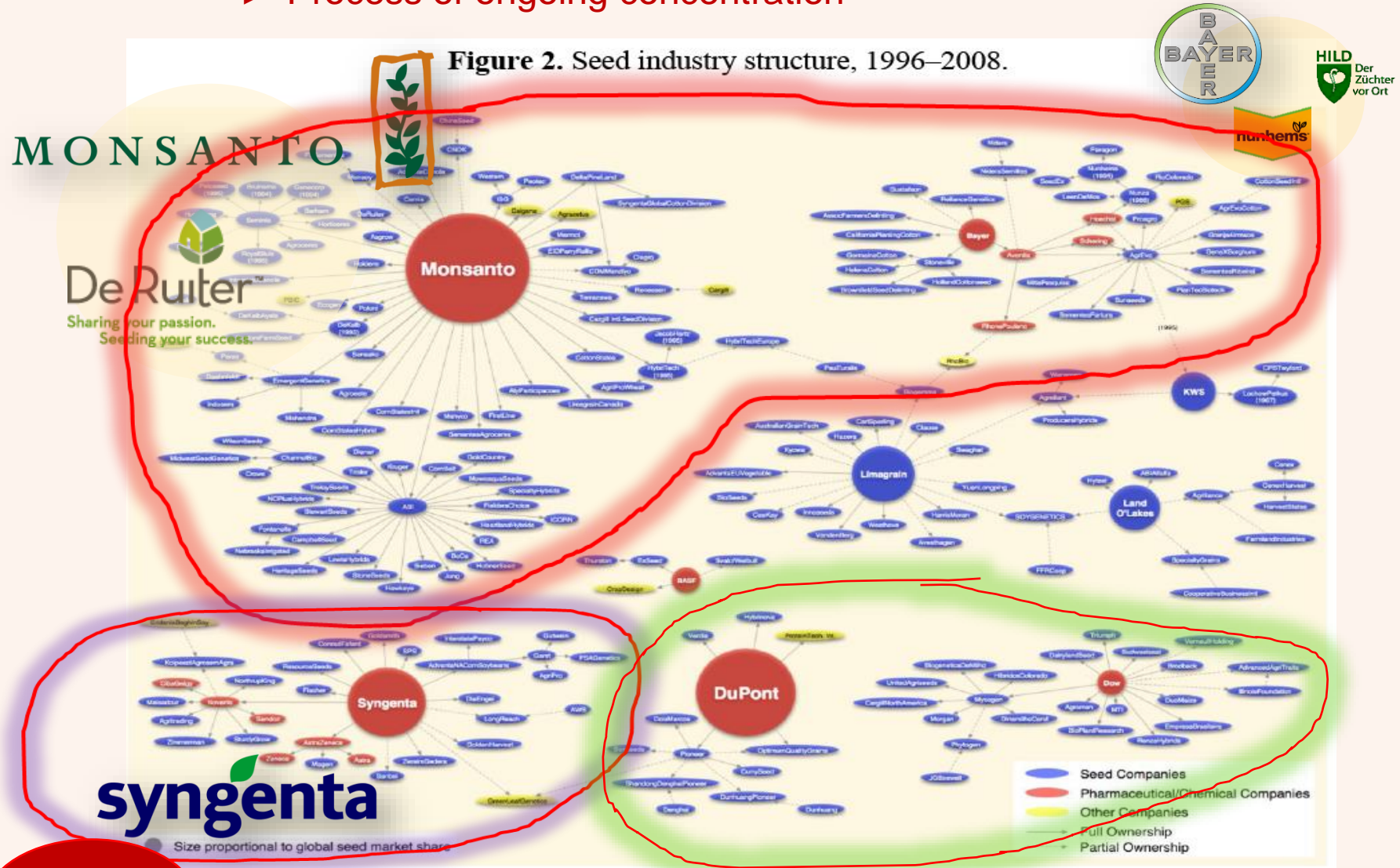
is intended to give an answer to the organic movement on ...

- ▶ increasing dependency of the organic sector on conventional seed companies and their varieties, developed under and for conventional conditions
- ▶ increasing use of biotechnology in conventional vegetable breeding
- ▶ increasing use of hybrids in horticulture and organic farming
- ▶ increasing deficit of food quality in conventionally bred varieties
- ▶ increasing loss of biodiversity in the agricultural systems
- ▶ the minor offer of organic seeds from the conventional seed companies

Challenge:

Big trap of conventional seed Market

► Process of ongoing concentration



II. the network



The “Initiative-Circle”

network of biodynamic and organic market gardeners

to keep and improve independence on seeds
for the organic sector

The “**Initiative-Circle**”: network of biodynamic and organic vegetable seeds

created in **1984** by biodynamic market gardeners and farmers

Guiding principles:

- 1) biodynamic / organic agriculture should be based on organic seeds and on biodynamic / organic bred varieties
- 2) biodynamic seeds and biodynamic bred varieties should reach market standards
- 3) varieties must remain our common cultural heritage



The „Initiative-Circle“ = Network for biodynamic and organic seeds (vegetables, herbs and flowers) and plant breeding

Partners

1) Seed producers



2) Breeders' associations

Kultursaat e.v.

biodynamic bred varieties



organic bred varieties

3) Seed company

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biodynamic and organic seeds

International cooperation with other biodynamic and organic seed initiatives e.g.:



CULINARIS
Saatgut für Lebensmittel

1) The seed producers

about 80 farmers and market gardeners



Choice and assignment by reason of:

- location / climate conditions (risk spreading)
- expert knowledge / facilities / infrastructure
- motivation / common values

2) The breeders association

Kultursaat e.v.

supports biodynamic breeding since 1994

30 locations of breeding projects within
biodynamic farms in
Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland



The breeding activities

Organized and financed by the association of

Tasks:

Breeding research / methodologies

Development of new varieties

Registration of new varieties

-association is responsible for the
registered varieties

Maintaining of varieties

Education in breeding

Public relations / communication



3. The seed company

History:
already since 1987
distribution of organic seeds by
the Bingenheim Community of people with
special needs,
produced by members of the Initiative Circle

In 2001 establishing of
the company
Bingenheimer Saatgut AG
by members of the circle,
the community and a
foundation - to get fit for
enlarging the organic
seed business.

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The seed company - tasks



coordination of seed production



exchange of knowledge

advice for
producers,
controlling



maintaining of varieties

The seed company - tasks

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seed processing



cleaning and calibrating



hotwater treatment



visual and manual control

The seed company - tasks



seed quality management



purity tests



germination tests /
(ISTA standard)



Seed vigor tests



climate chambers



Seed health examination



The seed company - tasks

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Packaging, distribution, marketing



Packaging by machines



Packaging by hand



Storage under controlled conditions



Distribution



Marketing

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The seed company - tasks



developments



Development of the product range



Variety testing station



Training of our purchase team



The seed company - tasks

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consulting and information

Ökologische Saaten

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Züchtungs- und Sortentag 2019

Bingenheimer Saatgut AG
In Kooperation mit der Gärtnerei
Obergrashof und
Kultursaat e. V.

Mittwoch, 25.09.2019
11:00 bis ca. 17:00 Uhr

Gärtnerei Obergrashof OHG
Obergrashof 1
85221 Dachau

Programm:

- Geführter Feldrundgang
- Forum Naturkosthandel
- Fachvortrag

Erleben Sie die Vielfalt aus dem Sortiment der Bingenheimer Saatgut AG!
Mit Sorten aus ökologischer Züchtung von Kultursaat e. V., Saatgut e. V.
und weiteren Kulturen im Vergleichsanbau.



Field days



visits of customers

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The seed company



Structure of customers:

- ▶ more than 4.000 organic certified market gardeners and farmers
- ▶ more than 50.000 home gardeners
- ▶ 40 seed companies (offering organic seeds)
- ▶ 20 organic wholesalers and about 400 organic retailers



Network cooperation in practice

important fundamentals:

information exchange at the meetings two times a year:
about seed production, costs and prices, projects,
varieties, strategies



Summer:

meetings on the farms (practical education, focusing on certain crops)

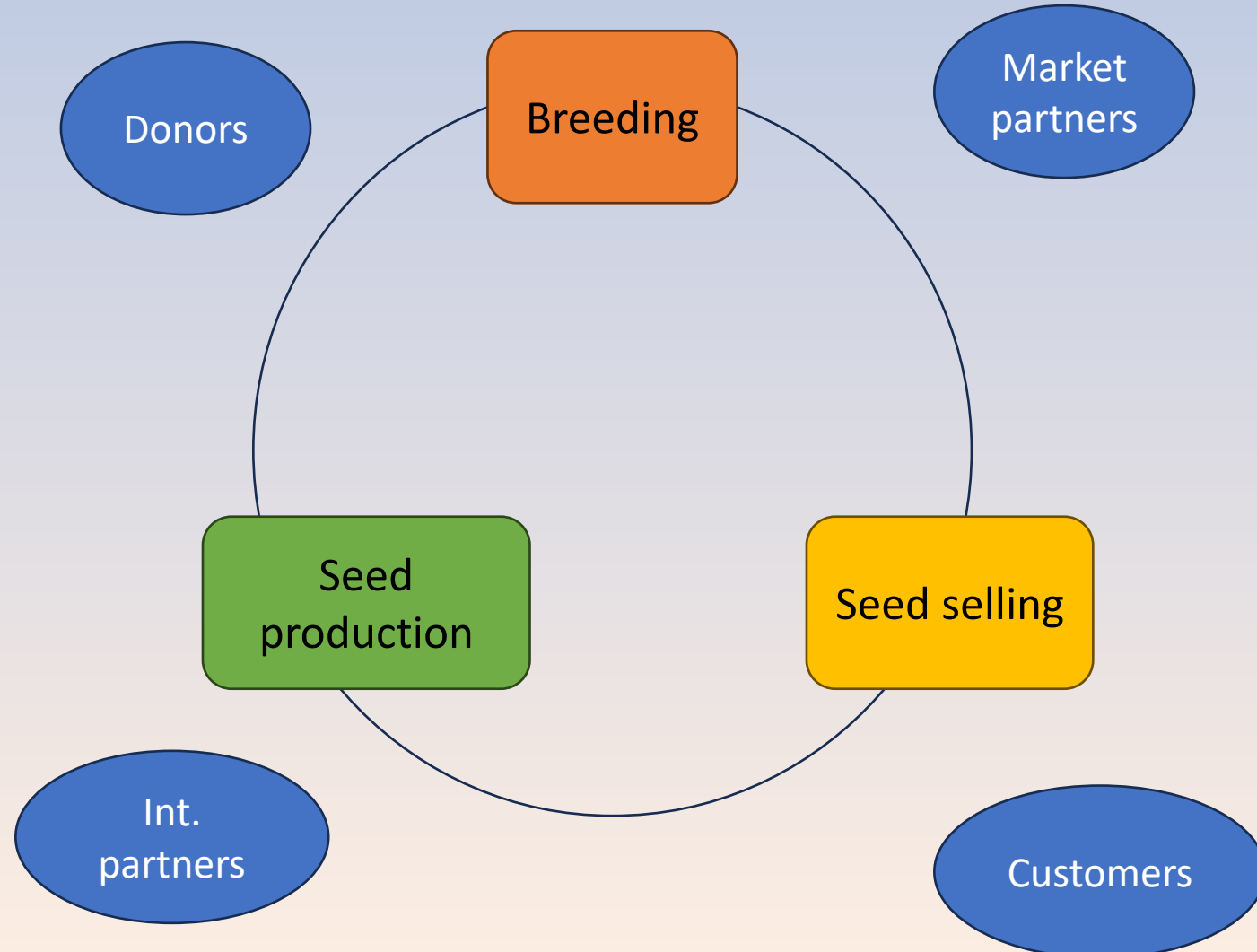
Autumn:

general assemblies of Kultursaat and Bingenheimer Saatgut AG (strategies, theoretical education)

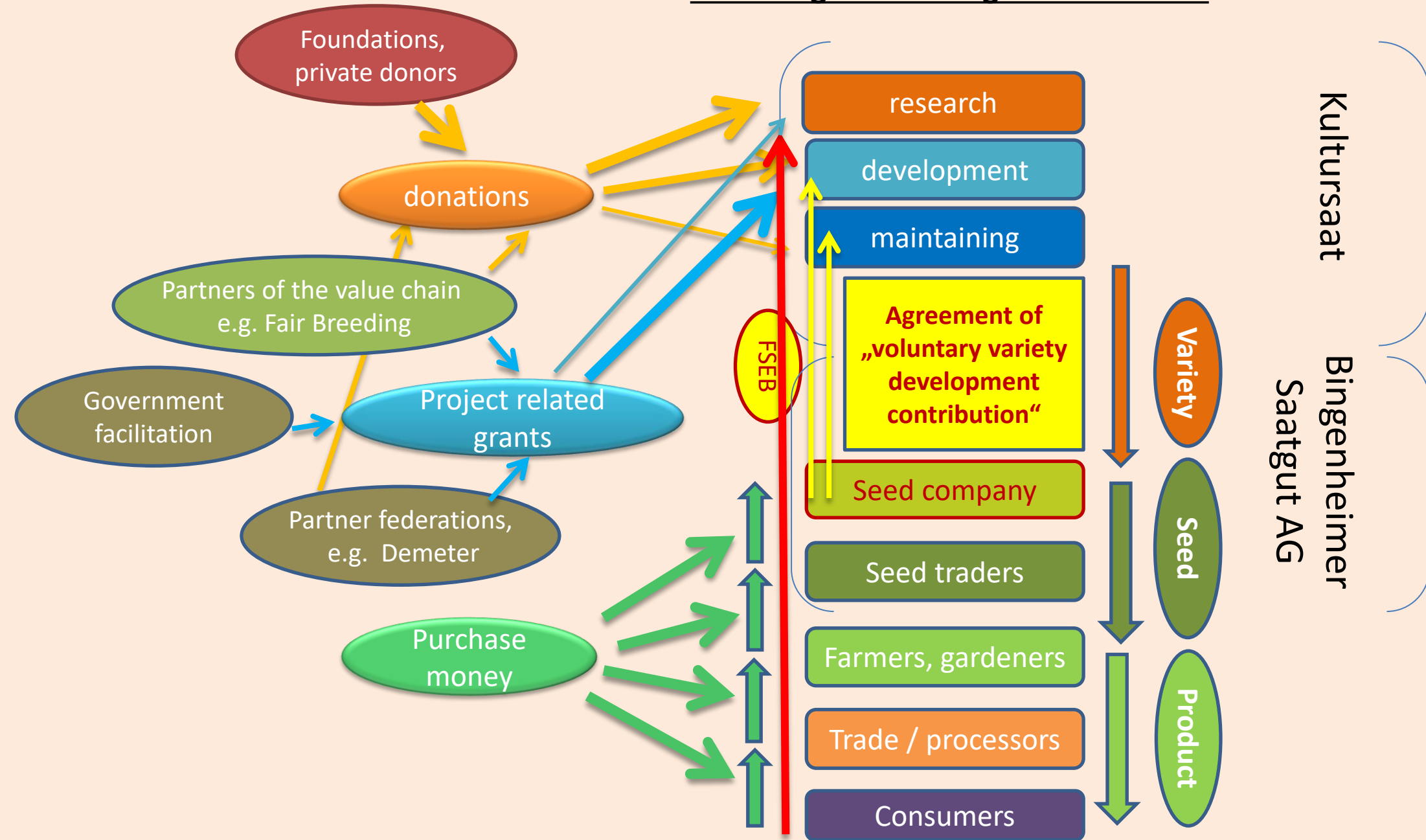
Winter:

Breeders' conference (exchange, education, meeting of crop groups)

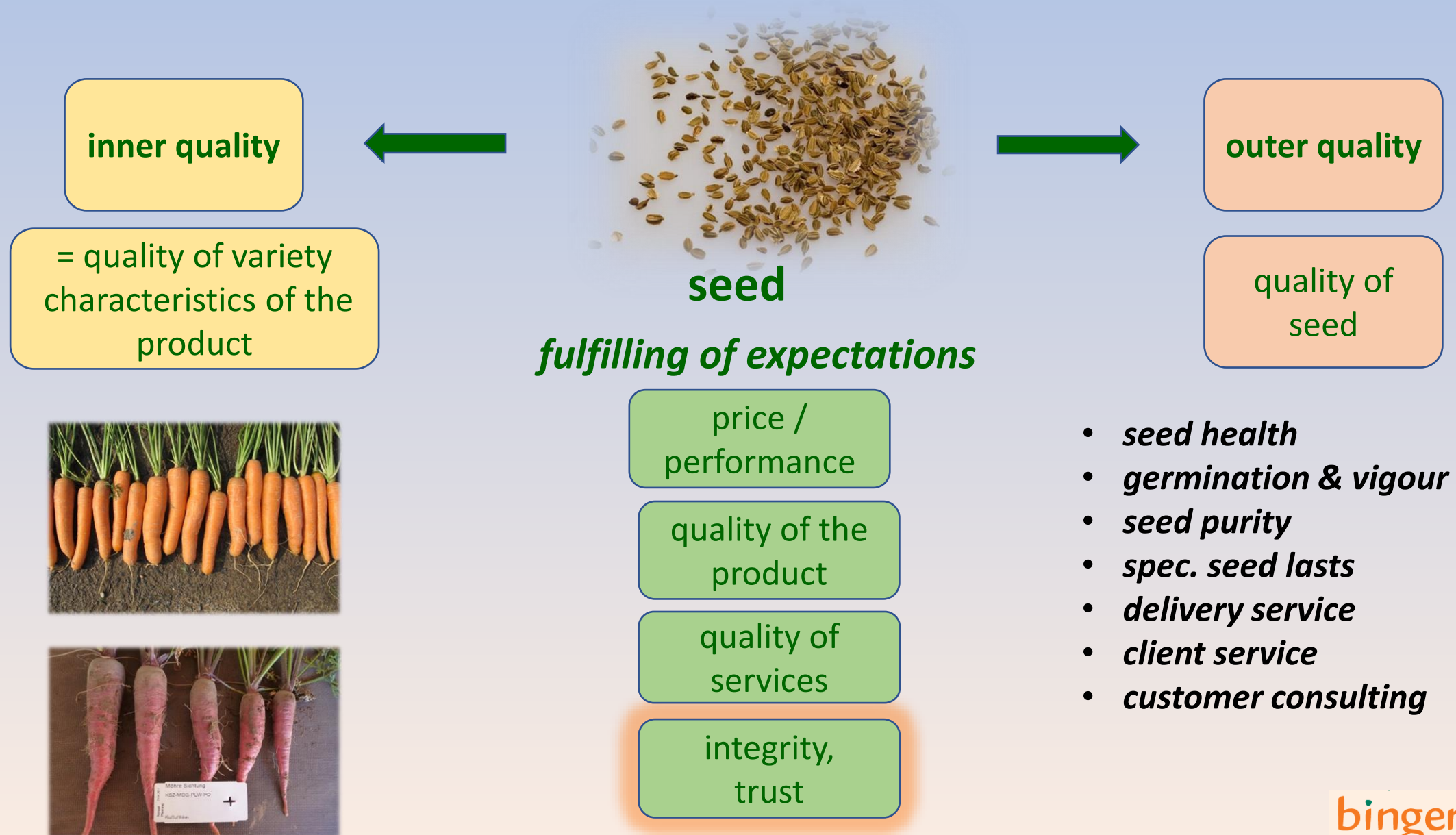
III. The business model



Financing of breeding and seedwork



successful seed production and marketing of varieties



successful partner oriented marketing of varieties

breeding
development of varieties

needs

use of varieties
production / trade / consumption

offer of performance

mediation
instead of separation

demand / needs

possibilities,
feasibility

communication and
listening

requirements / expectations

methods / ideas

agreements instead of
requirements

common targeting

realization

committment instead of
dependency or arbitrariness

enabling

Advice and information for farmers, traders and processors

fairs / exhibitions
e.g. Biofach
regional exhibitions
wholesaler fairs



special exhibit of organic breeding

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Advice and information for end customers



Indication of an organic variety
at the point of sale



variety
marketing by naming



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IV. Outlook & perspectives



Challenge:

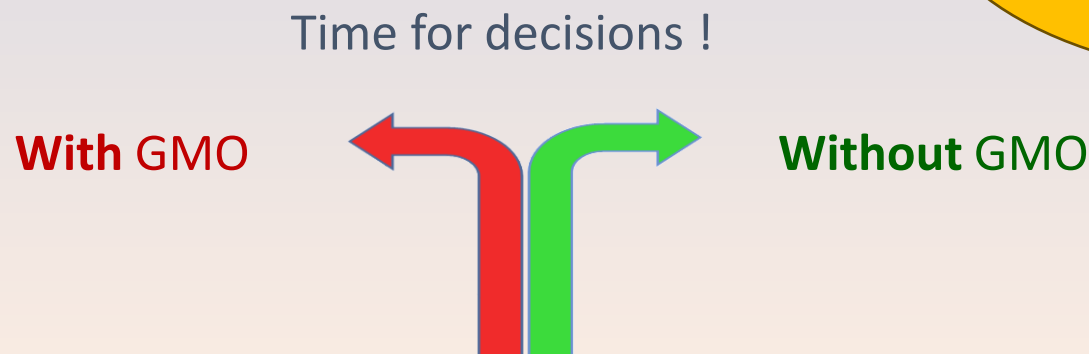
The New Genetic Engineering - Genome Editing - NGT

Impact on Organic Agriculture and the whole Organic Sector

Summer 2018 - ECJ decision: everything is genetic engineering! - and must be regulated as such.

If deregulation of NGT will be realized, as proposed actually by the Commission:

- ➔ No traceability
- ➔ No information for growers
- ➔ No information for trade and processing
- ➔ No information for consumers
- ➔ The end of freedom of choice
- ➔ Loss of confidence for the GMO-free sector



Our work will be important and we have to be prepared!

Main topics for the future:

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Improvement of seed production

- enlargement of production on member farms
- new partners in suitable regions of Europe
- education in production methods and techniques
- developing of social investment models



Improvement of service

- enlargement of logistics and space for processing, storage and distribution
- integration of new employees
- developing of social enterprise models



Improvement of our network

- integration of all stakeholders into developing processes
- developing of social network models for seeds
- common projects with partners of other countries



Main topics for the future: Kultursaat e.v.

Stand for a fair and transparent legal framework!

Enlarging the range of new varieties

Enhancing education in breeding methods and techniques

Improvement of Breeding



Development of partnership – and new financing models



FAIR-BREEDING®
Bio-dynamische Pflanzenzüchtung als Teil assoziativen Wirtschaftens

our responsibility:

Agro-Biodiversity!

Maintaining old varieties is a very valuable task, but it does not suffice at all.

There is a need of permanent developing new varieties in adaption to changing environment conditions, needs of farmers and consumers.



Advantages by growing varieties derived from biodynamic/organic breeding :

- Keeping transparency and trust of consumers
- Maintaining and developing the diversity of taste, regional specialities, adaptable crops
- maintaining and ensuring of best food qualities for consumers.
- Stop / reduce the dependency of agriculture and livelihood on few global conventional enterprises!

Our responsibility for future:

a consequent sustainable, holistic organic agriculture, based on biodynamic/organic bred varieties, biodynamically/organically maintained, reproducible and fertile.

our global responsibility:

Europe as an example impacts the whole world, in particular to emerging and developing countries.

Consequent Organic Breeding stands for:

- Protection of breeders right and the chance to use varieties for new breeding
- Protection of farmers rights to use their own seeds

Preconditions:

- **Appropriate legal framework**
- **Suitable varieties, not sterile but fertile and reproducible**
- **No GMO, neither transgenetic nor cistgenetic or genome editing**

in many parts of the world free access to seeds of suitable varieties is existential for the survival of rural population. This to save is also our task in Europe.



Who owns the seeds?



Thank you for your attention!



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