

Schweiz / Suisse Switzerland / Svizzera

Who is saving the diversity of cultivated plants and/or fighting for peasant rights of saving seeds in your country? Who is involved in GMO-free seed production? Are there new groups or networks that are setting up?

In Switzerland mainly three organisations are involved:

Schweizerische Arbeitsgruppe Gentechnologie

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SAG-Geschäftsstelle

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SAG is an old group that already opposed successful and was the leading force, when the Swiss public voted for the "moratorium".

Erklärung von Bern

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They are members of a working group (no official name) that deals mainly with patent-regulations...

Please give some examples for using cultivated biodiversity. How do you see the importance of peasant, local or traditional varieties for agriculture and vegetable gardening?

At the moment ProSpecieRara and Sativa Rheinau AG bring about 200 different vegetables-varieties to the market under a special label that stands for the protection of biodiversity of cultural plants and domestic animals.

For special landscapes and regions and farmers that produce regional specialities. Traditional varieties could be very interesting. Products with history are very interesting for many clients (Restaurants, regional markets, direct marketing).

Which are the main (legal) obstacles that constrain you? How can you avoid them?

At the moment we face no real legal obstacles. But that could change in the future if Switzerland is adapting EU-law.

Which are the public gene banks in your country? What is the cooperation with them like? Do the gene banks have public access? How do they assure GMO-free quality?

Agroscope Changins- Wädenswil ACW
Gert Kleijer (national coordinator for PGR in Switzerland)
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There is a institutional cooperation within a commission called SKEK. In this working group all organisations (32) that deal with PGR are present.

They work together within the national program NAP that has been worked out by the federal office for agriculture in Switzerland.

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Till now they don't have to ensure GMO-free quality because of the moratorium for GMOs in Switzerland.

What are the perspectives of public gene banks for the future in your country?

I think, there won't be striking news in the next years. Changins had to pass a time of structural change as all the other agriculture Institutes in Switzerland. The future of the genebank is out of question.

ProSpecieRara - Schweizerische Stiftung für die kulturhistorische und genetische Vielfalt von Pflanzen und Tieren

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