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FROM SEED TO PLATE: CROSSING EXPERIENCES IN ORGANIC RICE

PROGRAM

16
18^{JULY}
2023

SOUTHERN PARK COMMUNITY FOOD
DISTRICT - MILANO

DISTRICT OF ORGANIC RICE -
VERCELLI



UNIL | Université de Lausanne

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RICE is one of the three most produced cereals (together with maize and wheat) worldwide and its growth rate raised about 32 percent since 2000 (FAOSTAT 2022). Developing tailored rice varieties and ecologically diversified farming systems is a crucial contribution to the resilience of agricultural and food systems worldwide. Rice has received little attention in Europe despite being one of the most consumed grains. Its production in Italy, the largest producer of rice in Europe, epitomizes the multiple tensions crossing distinct agricultural paradigms: on the one side monocultures relying on the intensive use of chemical inputs and water; on the other side small organic productions based on the self-organization of farmers and complex dynamics within the ecosystems (such as wetlands). This latest approach is still neglected by dominant agricultural research initiatives and is also confronted with difficulties in finding an adequate production outlet. This is particularly relevant for the production of heterogeneous rice populations, a promising alternative to face climate change.

Bringing together different actors (rice farmers, breeders, processors, consumers) and disciplines (agronomy, social science), this workshop aims to exchange and analyze different experiences about organic rice cultivation (seed selection and management, cultivation in diversified ecosystems, post-harvest) and identify the limits and possible opportunities along the value chain. The discussions will span from agronomical and organizational challenges to political aspects influencing rice production from seed systems and varietal selection to the

plate. The workshop will include field visits, disciplinary insights, and thematic discussions. The transnational and cross-disciplinary reflections will draw on the experiences of partners (including Risolo, Live seeding, Masipag, French and Swiss initiatives) on four main topics:

- 1) Methodologies for conservation and breeding activities, such as the development of heterogeneous materials and mixtures adapted to diversified socio-agronomical contexts.
- 2) Benefits and limits of rice production interacting with ecosystems rich in biodiversity.
- 3) Social and economic aspects touching on the lack of institutional technical assistance for experimental efforts and the relationship with the supply chain.
- 4) Legal aspects concerning the circulation of seeds and their conservation within the rice living lab.

Where

Cascina Forestina - Cisliano, Milano.
<https://www.laforestina.it/it/>

Società Agricola del Parco, Marco Cuneo-
Cascina Gambarina, Abbiategrasso, Milano
<http://www.birradelparco.com/orti-del-parco/>

Una Garlanda - organic rice farm in
Rovasenda, Vercelli.
<https://www.unagarlanda.it/>

Program

16 July

20.30 Dinner and welcome from the organizers; presentation of the Field Day

17 July

07.30 - 08.30 Breakfast

09.00 Welcome Coffee at the Società Agricola del Parco, Marco Cuneo-Cascina Gambarina.

9h30 Presentation of the experience of the rice supporting schemes led by consumers inside «Southern Park Food District».

Discussion on organic rice seed management (UNIMI - UNIPV).

Visits to multiplication plots of local Lombardy varieties of the Risolo project.

11:00 Departure to Una Garlanda

12:30 Welcome from the Organic District of Vercelli and Una Garlanda

13.00 Lunch

14:30 - 18:00

Introduction of the meeting by Riccardo Bocci/Marianna Fenzi

Presentations:

Gurbir Singh Bullar. *Approaches to mitigating GHG-emissions from Rice farming*

Stefan Graf. *Evolutionary breeding: working with students on small projects*

Stephan Gysi. *Upland rice in Switzerland: Opportunities and hurdles for rainfed rice farming north of the Alps.*

Georie Pitong. *MASIPAG's experience with rice: Breeding, farmer development and education within agroecosystems*

Harro Maat. *Rice, Resistance and resilience from a historical perspective*

Open discussion on four topics

18:00 - 19:00

Visits to experimental plots at "Una Garlanda" organic rice farm

19:00 Departure to La Forestina

20:30 Social dinner

18 July

9:00 Breakfast and Final remarks



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