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# Community seed banks as springboard for food plant diversity: *Extent, variation and experiences from European community seed banks*

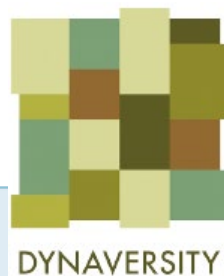
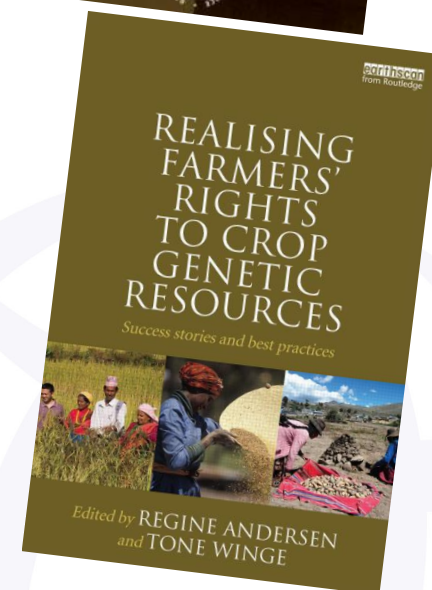
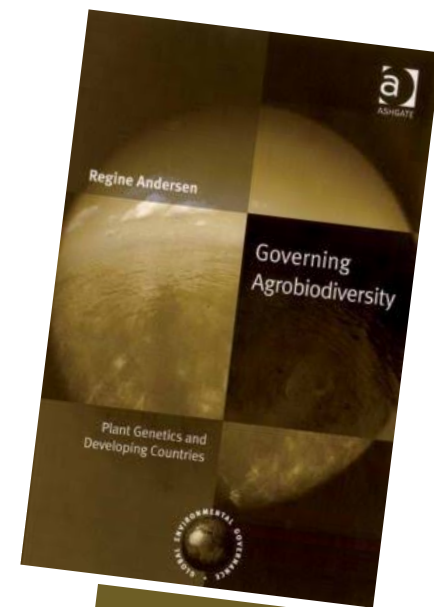
Regine Andersen  
Senior Research Fellow (Dr. Polit)

Seminar on community seed banks as springboard for crop genetic  
diversity at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, 31 October 2019

[www.fni.no](http://www.fni.no)

# Brief background

- Specialisation: The international governance of crop genetic resources (since 2000)
- Doctoral dissertation (2007): Governing agrobiodiversity – Crop genetics and developing countries
- Since 2005: The Farmers' Rights Project – providing research based guidance on implementation
- Current projects: DIVERSIFOOD, Suitable Seeds, DYNAVERSITY, Farmers' Pride



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# Contents of the presentation

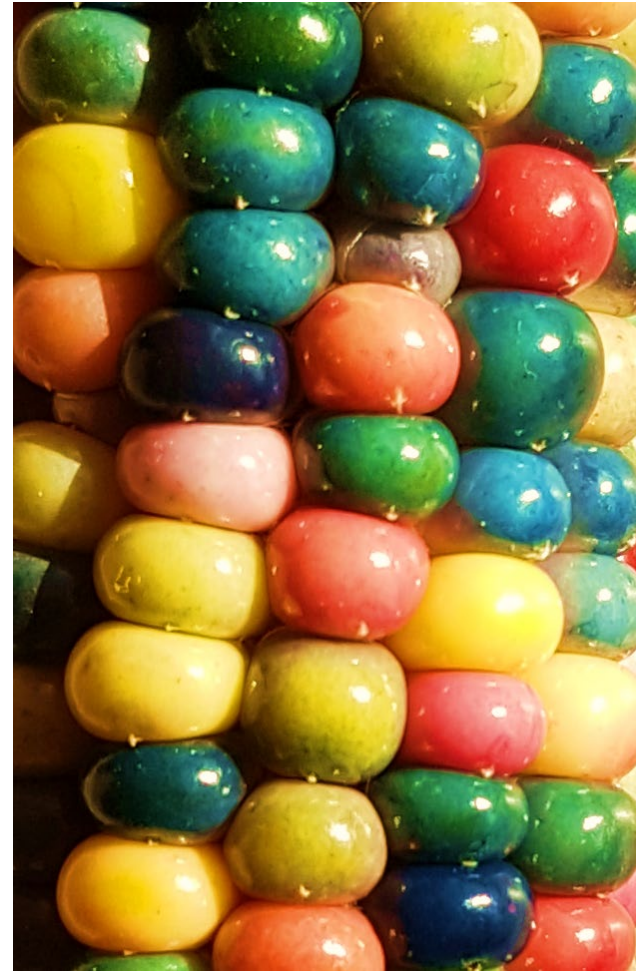
- Genetic diversity in food plants and why it matters
- Some words on the context of international agreements
- Community Seed Banks (CSBs) in Europe
- CSBs as a springboard for on-farm and in-garden diversity
- Ongoing efforts in Europe to organize the CSB initiatives



# GENETIC DIVERSITY IN FOOD PLANTS



# Genetic diversity in food plants





# Genetic diversity in food plants



# Genetic diversity in food plants



# Genetic diversity in food plants





# Genetic diversity in food plants



# Genetic diversity in food plants





# Genetic diversity in food plants



# Genetic diversity in food plants



Mangfold av plantesorter

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# Genetic diversity in food plants



# Genetic diversity in food plants



**Crop wild relatives**



**Wild food plants**



# WHY IMPORTANT?



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# Basis of all food and agriculture





# ... in times of climate change...



# Life insurance for many farmers



# Central in organic agriculture





# ... basic for nutrition





# ... as for traditions and identity



# ... and for our senses



# But the diversity is eroding





# The Plant Treaty

## Objectives:

*The objectives of this Treaty are the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their use, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity, for sustainable agriculture and food security.*

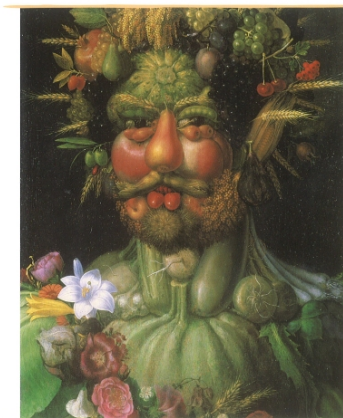
(Plant Treaty, Art. 1)



**The International Treaty**  
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

A GLOBAL TREATY FOR FOOD SECURITY  
AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

**THE INTERNATIONAL  
TREATY ON PLANT  
GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD  
AND AGRICULTURE**



The Habsburg Emperor Rudolf II as Vertumnus,  
by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, 1591.  
Skokloster Castle, Sweden



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# COMMUNITY SEED BANKS IN EUROPE







Arche Noah;  
Austria



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# CSBs: Some common features

- Saving/storing seeds for conservation, maintenance and making them available
- Jointly managed by the people involved, as networks, cooperatives or organizations
- Work mostly on a non-profit basis, with an aim of improving seed and food security and the livelihoods of farmers (DCs)
- Are often platforms for community based-agrobiodiversity management in a broad sense, including capacity building in seed selection, breeding and agricultural methods





# Background

- Seed savers in the North, from the 1970's
- CSBs in the South from the 1980s, different forms and functions
- Aimed at maintaining plant genetic diversity and provide access for farmers and gardeners who cannot find what they need or wish in the formal seed sector



# Background

- Several studies on CSBs in the South; few from the North:
- Thus, **DIVERSIFOOD** survey



Réseau Semences Paysannes, France, 2003



# Background

- **CSBs in Europe have evolved as grassroots initiatives from networks/organizations of farmers or gardeners**
- **Represent an important contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of crop genetic diversity in Europe, and to make this available for farmers and gardeners.**
- **Thus an important contribution to the implementation of the Plant Treaty in Europe.**







# COMMUNITY SEED BANKS IN EUROPE

**Results from a questionnaire survey**  
*Carried out by Beate Koller, ARCHE NOAH, Austria  
in collaboration with DIVERSIFOOD-partners*

*Presentation by Regine Andersen, Senior Research Fellow,  
Fridtjof Nansens Institutt/DIVERSIFOOD*



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Embedding crop diversity and  
networking for local high quality  
food systems

# Further reading



[www.diversifood.eu](http://www.diversifood.eu)



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# CSBs AS SPRINGBOARD FOR CROP DIVERSITY



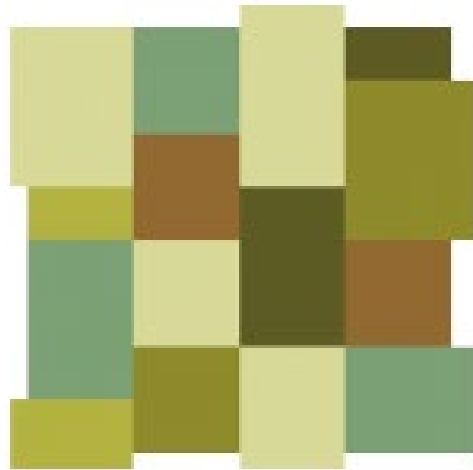


# Community seed banks

- Are bridges between national gene banks and farmers/horticulturalists/gardeners
- Promote the management of crop genetic diversity on-farm – expand diversity
- May provide a platform for cooperation with breeders and scientists – for more capacity
- May enable the expanded use of crop genetic diversity along the value chain
- Promote enthusiasm for crop diversity and increased popularity



# Efforts to organize initiatives



DYNAVERSITY

[www.dynaversity.eu](http://www.dynaversity.eu)



[www.farmerspride.eu](http://www.farmerspride.eu)



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*Thank you for your attention!*



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