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SOWING THE FUTURE!

Annual report 2012

Italy: Rome (La Storta), 14.10.12

The world in a grain

by Johannes Wirz

Last year hundreds of people experienced again the magic of sowing. Together with friends they spread the seeds with calm steps and measured shots on many fields. Most of them probably felt the indescribable emotion to be a birth helper for the next harvest and therefore of our future bread.

However, the grains in the hands of the sowers not only speak of future expectations, but also of a past of wisdom, that goes back to the pre-times of our crops. In each single grain is at first written the biography of the mother plant, which in sun and rain, with heat and soil, by day and night finalised the art work of the „grain“. In it however is also included the attentive care of the farmer and the creative intentions of the breeder.

From these thoughts and emotions it is only a small step to a barrage of images: Each grain holds in it the whole cultural history of its origin. Before nine thousand years its forebears were harvested, stored and again sown by the first tillers or rather priests. What we sow today on the fields, is the result of a non-stop succession of generations. Developed in the fertile crescent, our cereals arrived in Europe on a long and intricate path. Their bearers show besides all differences one similarity: the faithfulness and care in handling the seeds.

It is like a sad joke, that this human heritage is considered by the big seed companies as private property and with patents pulled out from the pool of common goods. All who participated on ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** are not only godparents of the future harvest, but also active partners of the long evolution of our crops. We will not get around to become from the one-day alliance on the field a permanent civil society grouping, which agitates on the political level for the next harvest and therefore for the safeguarding of a sustainable breeding and development work.



Switzerland: Feldbach, 21.10.12

SOWING THE FUTURE! on your farm?

On every farm a ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** event can take place. Following conditions should however be ensured.

- The farm provides a seed-ready field of 20 – 30 Ares
- Varieties from organic breeding should if possible be used as seeds
- The farm takes care of the crop until harvest and organises, if possible, a separate harvest
- The farm mobilises around 100 sowers
- ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** can be part of a farm festivity or of another event
- A joint event with regional partners (other farms, consumer and environmental protection organisations, schools etc.) gives ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** more emission and attention.
- The farm obligates a person of public interest to participate actively
- Before the sowing an introductory and explanatory speech is given
- ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** takes place with all sowers jointly and at the same time

The initiative

The initiative ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** is presented by its initiators Ueli Hurter and Peter Kunz, as well as all farms where already a ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** event took place. Johannes Wirz is responsible for the worldwide network and distribution work, whereas Michel Bossart coordinates the events and material distributions internally.

For the farms the initiative ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** provides following services:

- Training and advise for the practical realisation of the sowing
- Caps (or paper bags) as seed bin for all sowers and T-shirts for all helpers
- Banner on which all sowers can sign
- Basic communication: flyer, website, presentation at fairs and markets

Your registration

Can you organise a ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** on your farm? Maybe you are connected as consumer or partner with a farm in your region, and could help to organise a sowing the future event? Information and pictures you find on the homepage (www.avenirse.ch) as well as from persons and farms who already conducted a ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** We look forward to your registration on office@avenirse.ch or +41 55 264 17 89.

SOWING THE FUTURE! is financed by donations. Thank you very much for your support! (Donation account on the back side).

Practical instruction for the realisation of an event

1. Meeting and welcome of the sowers
2. Short speech of a politician or a prominent
3. Speech by the farmer
4. Distribution of the caps and seeds. For every 20 to 30 sowers a seed bag is provided on the field edge and one person is appointed to distribute the seeds. For every cap around 600-750 grams.
5. Demonstration of the sowing: One person from the farm, a venerable, prominent guest or a school class presents how it works. It is important to look that the speed is reduced. The sowing is actually only a short activity and already done, before one realises that it started. Therefore, it is important to inform the sowers repeatedly that they have enough time. The more calm and unhurried the sowing takes place, the more beautiful it is.
6. Music, singing, sowing saying: What is done can be different from place to place. Important is to prepare the joint sowing, by drawing all attention to one thing, the music, the song or the text.
7. Joint start: When all sowers are ready at the field, a person gives the beforehand agreed sign (call, wave, bell or other) and all start to sow. It was successful to position the sowers on two sides of the field, so that the two rows approach and cross each other. It is a good experience to surround the field and it also results in a regular sowing.
8. Second sowing round possibly: It is nice to sow the whole field together. Then, you can repeat it, but it is important that you start again together. If not everybody sows his or her own part and the concentration on the joint event gets lost.
9. Raking or harrowing of the seeds: The end of the sowing is the harrowing or raking, then the sown grains must be covered. It is practical to do this with the tractor. So, it becomes clear, that it was not just an event of nostalgia. ***SOWING THE FUTURE!*** wants to be of present time and setting a sign for the future. (Of course it is not prohibited to do the harrowing with horses, if offered).
10. Soup and bread or something similar.



News from all over the world

Poland (by Ueli Hurter)

In spring a contact between ICPPC (International Coalition to protect the Polish Countryside) in Poland and **SOWING THE FUTURE!** was suddenly made. Agata Leska, a GZPK-employee originally from Poland, is the linguistic bridge. Of 70th sowing events it was spoken, of a fight for Poland fields...whereon Ueli Hurter quickly board a plane to be present. Here his report:

“With nicest weather we performed a **SOWING THE FUTURE!** event with 20 participants and a journalist on the farm of Paweł in Wieprz in the region around Krakow. White clover as undersow in wheat, around 70a. This event was rather inconsiderable, but highly supported by the present persons. If you consider, that in whole Poland around 90 of these events took place, all together it was a big happening. On an other day, I could visit Jadwiga Łopata-Wietrzna and Sir Julian Rose. They are the responsible of the organisation ICPPC, that organises **SOWING THE FUTURE!** and publicity around GMO in Poland. They have a small eco-center from where they organise with little resources their events of high power. They are convinced to continue their fight for a GMO-free Poland, and we should give them all imaginable support.

The further developments in Poland seems to be a key issue for the GMO position of whole Europe. It is a big agrarian country and right now the change from small-scale to industrial agriculture takes place, and Monsanto and Co are not shy to visit villages with their multimedia shows. In the polish law GMO is not explicitly prohibited, and therefore is the sowing no penalty. ICPPC succeeded in all regions to effect decisions against GMO, however these declarations are not legally bound. **SOWING THE FUTURE!** and other events are therefore desperately needed.

I spoke about the GMO-moratorium in Switzerland, of the big coalition in the SAG (Swiss working group against genetic engineering) and from the developments at GZPK, Sativa and Biovertia.

I hope we can all together help our polish friends in their engagement. For the goal of a GMO-free Europe, Poland is an important country. It is a beautiful country with cordial people.”

Netherlands

Eight farms sowed in October, one in November. Thanks to the Dutch Demeter-representation (Stichting Demeter) sowing the future! was a full success. On all events around 600 persons participated with enthusiasm, even though the weather – rain and cold – was not always nice. The ones that participated, however were happier than ever, to be part of **SOWING THE FUTURE!** Also in 2013 there will be events in the Netherlands.

Italy

After the successful joining in 2011, Ecor NaturaSi organised and coordinated again in 2012 events in whole Italy. An independent event on Sicily took also place. In whole Italy around 2700 person sowed on 22 hectares 2600kg seeds. From the many positive feedbacks we conclude, that also in 2013 it will continue in a similar large scale.

Overview of all sowing

The initiative is encouraged by a steadily growing popularity. In the seventh year of events nearly 200 **SOWING THE FUTURE!** events in 12 countries took place. Around 100'000 sowers campaigned for a viable sign for a future agriculture without GM. In Poland, Belgium and the Netherlands is was sown for the first time in 2012. The other events took place in Switzerland, Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden, South Korea, Norway, Austria, England and Italy. In Germany and Luxembourg the events were coordinated by the local Demeter organisations, in Italy from the farmers association Ecor NaturaSi and in Poland by ICPPC.

	Switzerland 19 events		Germany 37 events
	Poland 88 events		Norway 7 events
	Sweden 1 event		Austria 4 events
	Luxembourg 1 event		Italy 27 events
	England 1 event		Netherlands 9 events
	Belgium 1 event		South Korea 1 event



SOWING THE FUTURE!

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