

Cultivation of traditional and less intensive varieties

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| Goal | Support of agrobiodiversity |
| Target group | Farmers who grow any kind of crop |
| Description of the measure | <p>Traditional crop species and varieties support the genetic diversity. Those and the use of less intensive varieties improve the habitat quality of wild flora and fauna as they are mostly less yielding and provide diverse structured, lighter stands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultivation of endangered crop varieties, such as “Einkorn” wheat, Amelcorn (in Germany), spelt, kamut (in Spain) ▪ Cultivation of new breeds of less intensive cereal varieties. |
| Suitable sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preferably on poor to intermediate soils |
| How a good implementation looks like | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presence of any traditional crop species and varieties therefrom and extensive varieties on the farm |
| Effects on biodiversity |  <p>Improved development of wild herbs because of lighter cultivation</p> |
| (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity) |  <p>A diverse structured and light cultivation benefits field birds and hare: more space let them move easier, higher stalks provide resting sports for birds</p> |
| Other positive effects/benefit for the farmer | Old varieties are valuable culture assets. They may be sold for a higher prize. |
| Indicator/key data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Total size of area (ha) with traditional/less intensive crop varieties ▪ Amount of different varieties |
| Risk and further recommendations | <p>Old varieties usually yield less but are more resistant against pests and extreme weathers and are distinguished with higher quality.</p> <p>This measure may be restricted by market demands.</p> |
| Timeframe (When to start a measure and anticipated time for implementation) | When to start: with sowing of the crop or the establishment of a new plantation in case of permanent cultures |

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| Additional special resources/ equipment/ skills needed | <p>Regionally, there are different initiatives which offer seeding material for old varieties (e.g. cereal). For Austria e.g., Arche Noah (www.arche-noah.at/sortenerhaltung) and Germany Pro Species Rara (www.prospecierara.de) offers them. Mapama has an official register where varieties can be found in Spanish (www.mapama.gob.es/app/regVar/default.aspx).</p> <p>Old varieties of permanent crops are usually available from specialised nurseries.</p> |
| Reference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de ▪ www.agroecologia.net/recursos/publicaciones/actas/cd-actas-xcongresoseae/actas/comunicaciones/44-recuperacion-gonzalez.pdf |

Further information: Knowledge Pool

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for advisors of standard organisations and companies and was developed within the project LIFE Food & Biodiversity (Biodiversity in Standards and Labels of for the Food Industry). The main objective of the project is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and sourcing requirements in the food industry by helping standard organisations to integrate efficient biodiversity criteria into their schemes and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include comprehensive biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.

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