

# Seed conservation in Latvia



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# History



- Kolhozes- centralized production
- Small garden plots
- Ex situ conservation – St. Petersburg and specialized institute
- 1990s large influx of foreign seeds
- Long history of seed certification

# Legislation

- UPOV
- EU Seed marketing laws
- Organic law
- Farmer seeds downgraded to “germinating grain;” exchange outlawed
- Few registered seed growers due to bureaucracy



# Ex situ conservation



- 1990s expeditions
- Repatriation from gene banks
- Gene bank – descriptors, molecular marking
- Public selection station projects – varieties for organic
- Farmer evaluation of old barley varieties

# In situ conservation

- Biologically valuable grasslands with medicinal herbs and flowers
- Old varieties of cucumber, onion, potato, beet, garlic
- Farmers reproduce potatoes, onions, beets, wheat, oats, barley, herbs, cucurbits, peas, beans, hemp, radishes
- Many old fruit orchards, countless varieties
- 6 animal breeds
- BUT no concerted efforts to encourage in situ conservation



# Conclusions

- Little cooperation and respect between scientists and farmers
- Lack of seed-saving and selection knowledge or sense of value
- Prejudices that seed-saving is primitive and breeding is domain of experts
- Over-emphasis on ex-situ conservation
- ...but interest in learning and joining networks!