



## What is „agrobiodiversity“?

Agrobiodiversity designates the biological diversity which is important for food and agriculture and for the functioning of agricultural ecosystems, forests and fish stocks.

### This includes:

- all cultivated and domesticated species with their varieties, breeds and populations
- related wild species as well as managed populations of wild plants and animals
- plants, animals and micro-organisms that contribute to the functionality of agricultural ecosystems such as beneficial species, pollinators or micro-organisms that process nutrients for crops as well as the diversity of the agricultural, forest and water ecosystems themselves.

**In the context of agrobiodiversity, genetic resources** comprise material of animal, plant or other origin that contains functional units of inheritance and is of actual or potential value for food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. This includes, for example, also animals, plants, parts of plants, seeds, seedlings, fungi and bacteria.

## Further information agrobiodiversity:

Please have a look around the BMELV website to find out more about the subject of “Biodiversity”.  
(<http://www.bmelv.de/biodiversity>)

There you will also find the BMELV’s agrobiodiversity strategy which can be downloaded or ordered as a brochure.

The Information and Coordination Centre for Biological Diversity (IBV) of the Federal office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) offers comprehensive information on the subject of agrobiodiversity and genetic resources under Programme/Biologische Vielfalt ([www.ble.de](http://www.ble.de)) and in its Information System on Genetic Resources (GENRES) (<http://www.genres.de/en>).

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## Conservation and sustainable use of diversity

Biological diversity for agriculture,  
forestry, fisheries and food



## Actively committed to the diversity from which we live

The United Nations have designated 2010 as the 'International Year of Biodiversity'. The aim is to underline biodiversity's global importance for nature and humans, and its vulnerability. Essential components of the world's biological diversity are at risk. This applies to both natural biodiversity and to biodiversity used by humans in food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries (so-called agrobiodiversity). A fundamental basis of life on earth is thus under threat.

The diversity of the plant varieties and animal breeds is a crucial basis of our diet and supplies the growing world population with raw materials. It is also a prerequisite for adaptation to climate change.

By utilising land, forests and water bodies, people have created diverse cultivated landscapes and new habitats for flora and fauna. Utilisation and protection are therefore often interdependent and a balance must repeatedly be sought between them. For this reason, making active use of the components of agrobiodiversity is the best prerequisite for agrobiodiversity to be conserved.

## The consumers' role

Only the diversity that is actually used is considered to be of value and deliberately and actively conserved. The use of a range of plant varieties, animal breeds, tree and fish species will only be possible if the foods and products derived from them find enough buyers – consumers who pay attention to diversity and variety when shopping. Try buying something different, something special, or something new, from time to time. Your home region, too, offers something new to discover, e.g. a typical vegetable or potato variety. There are also more fruit varieties than you think. Your purchasing behaviour contributes to the conservation of diversity.

## Selected activities

### BMELV agrobiodiversity strategy

In 2007, the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) published its strategy entitled "Conservation of Agricultural Biodiversity, Development and Sustainable Use of its Potentials in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries". This comprehensive concept for action has the following objectives:

- securing and improving conservation infrastructures
- further developing utilisations systems
- strengthening international cooperation

This strategy describes the most important measures with a view to the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity.

An Advisory Board on Biodiversity and Genetic Resources was established to provide scientific advice to the BMELV.

### Technical programmes

Detailed and specific national programmes have been developed for the animal, plant, forestry and fisheries sectors.

For each sector, a national committee with representatives of the federal government, the Länder, the scientific community and relevant associations coordinates the implementation of these programmes.

### The International Year of Biodiversity 2010

During the year 2010, the BMELV is launching a large number of consumer-information events, campaigns and competitions. This includes, for example, an adventure tour in schools entitled "Diversity on tour: a mobile classroom in the tour bus" and the drawing up of a "Map of diversity" on the internet.

<http://www.hier-waechst-vielfalt.de>



## Pilot and demonstration projects

These projects develop and implement innovative concepts that are designed to serve as examples. The aim is to reduce deficits in the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in Germany and to strengthen biodiversity. The BMELV supports a broad range of projects, e.g. in areas relating to forestry, horticulture, arable farming, farm animals, aquatic species and game animals.

## Support in the agricultural and forestry sectors

With the financial support of the federal government, the Länder and the EU, the programme entitled "Joint Task for the Improvement of Agricultural Structures and Coastal Protection (GAK)" contributes, among other things, to making farming more environmentally sustainable and to conserving genetic resources in agriculture. Every Land has the opportunity to offer support that is tailored to meet the specific regional requirements.

Agri-environmental programmes are an important instrument for conserving biodiversity in agricultural ecosystems. They reward, for example, the conservation of varied crop rotations, the preservation of regionally adapted varieties and breeds and the extensification of grassland. The conversion of pure stands into stable deciduous and mixed stands is also supported.