

*'Fagiolina' (cowpea) from the Trasimeno Lake area, Perugia, Umbria **



Area:
Trasimeno Lake, Perugia, Umbria, Italy

Main actors in conservation:

- Local farmers
- Consorzio produttori 'Fagiolina del Trasimeno'
- Regione Umbria
- Provincia di Perugia
- Parco del Trasimeno
- DBVBAZ, University of Perugia

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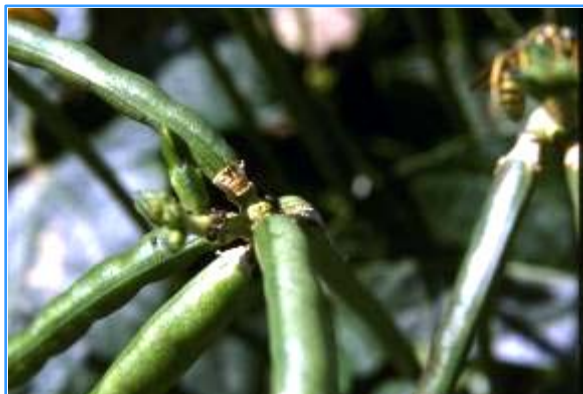


Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* subsp. *unguiculata* cv gr. *Unguiculata* (L.) Walp.)



Cowpea is the *phaseolus* grown by the Romans (Pliny).

The fresh pods and the seeds of this species are both traditionally used for human consumption in Italy.



Clearly distinguishable cowpea landraces (LRs) are still present in Italy.



Morphological variation in 'Fagiolina' from Trasimeno Lake



Research to promote on-farm conservation



Morphological variation in 'Fagiolina' from
Trasimeno Lake

Farmer populations of this LR were different for morpho-physiological and agronomic traits.

They also showed better organoleptic characters (taste, visual appealing, crude protein content and total carbohydrate percentages on dry matter) than commercial varieties commonly found on the market.

Studies carried out with molecular markers showed that this LR appears to be a structured population in which a substantial differentiation is maintained at the subpopulation level (i.e. at the farmer population level). As a consequence, the best strategy for maintaining LR diversity in the area appears to be to preserve each population on the farm from which it came.

The investigations carried out up to now confirm the impressive role of farmers' selection in accumulating important variation in crops which deserves to be maintained on-farm in a dynamic situation.



Actions to rescue

12 years ago: 50 kg/year sold on the town market (Perugia)
only one farmer was growing it for the market
very high price 6 euro/kg

***Provincia di Perugia funded a project for cowpea collection, characterization, multiplication and diffusion among farmers.
This project promoted the cultivation of the crop in the area.***

presently: over 3000 kg/year sold , also outside Umbria
a *consortium* of fagiolina growers established
still very high price 18-22 euro/kg (steady increased)
a request for quality mark (PDO) in progress



Marketed boxes of 'Fagiolina del Lago Trasimeno' in 2005



Further promotion of on-farm conservation

Local authority support has been efficient in rescuing this LR.

The genetic and organoleptic characteristics of this LR suggested the request of a quality mark.

This could further promote on-farm conservation of the LR increasing the market value of the crop.

Presently, the farmers are evaluating the possibility of applying for the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) quality mark.



‘Fagiolina’ from Trasimeno lake crop

References

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