



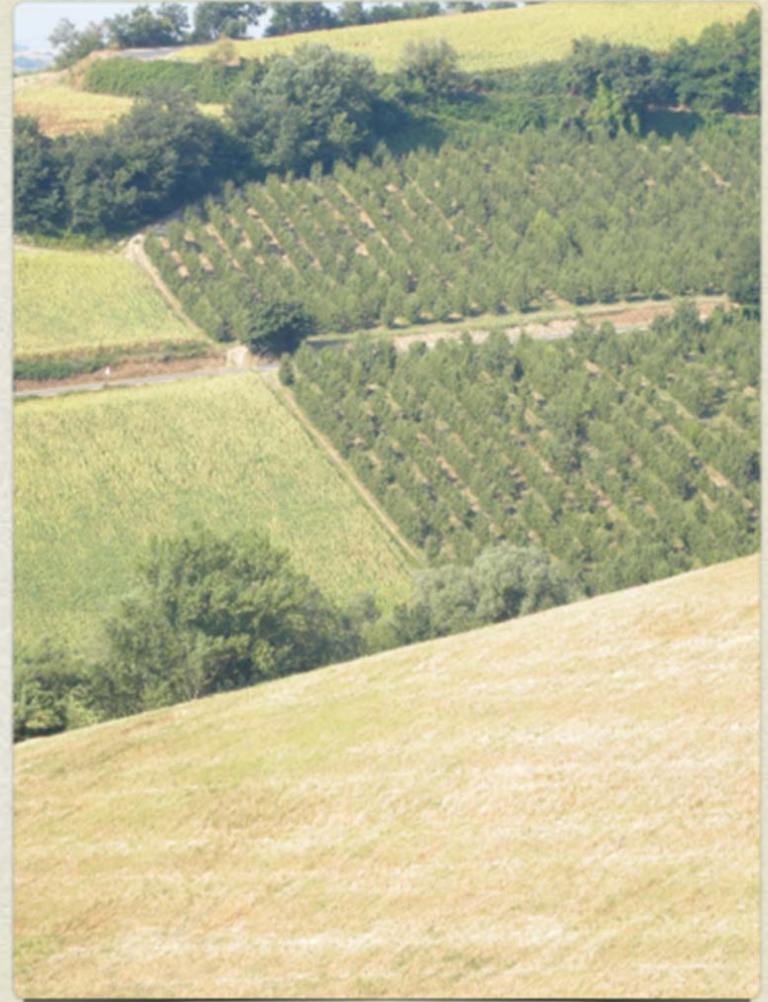
Organic farming and biodiversity: Italian policies and practices



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the plan of the presentation

- Agrobiodiversity
- Seed laws & biodiversity
- Italy
 - RDP
 - Regional laws
 - Organic seed NP
 - Agrobiodiversity NP



BIODIVERSITY

Agro-biodiversity

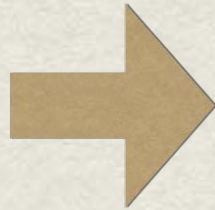
Mixed agro-ecosystems
Crop species/varieties
Livestock and fish species
Plant/animal germplasm
Soil organisms in cultivated areas
Biocontrol agents for crop/livestock pests
Wild species as landraces or with breeding
Cultural & local knowledge of diversity



how to cultivate diversity??

many constraints:

- seed laws
- ag policies
- market standardization
- food processing
- consumers' preferences
-



EU BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE

- 4.3.2. Seed legislation
- 79. The conservation and improvement of in situ/on farm plant genetic resources also depends on the effective possibility of sustainable uses and hence on legislation which makes it possible to market diversified genetic materials.



Seed laws in Europe, the state of the art



Organic seed needs a second certification!

what about organic agriculture?

Wolfe et al. (2008) “[...] varieties adapted to organic conditions that do not yield sufficiently well under conventional conditions cannot be registered. And, of course, without registration, the exchange and the production of seeds is forbidden. Another current question concerns the potential heterogeneity of, for example, populations, that are not integrated into the legislation. Indeed, varieties that do not comply with DUS cannot be registered. It is urgent that legislation at the European level evolves to take into account the new demands”.

Seeds in Europe, new needs and objectives

**IFOAM position
on organic seeds**

stakeholders
expectations

3 Scenarios for the
future

New directives
on seeds

Evaluation of seed legislation

2008

2009

2010

2011

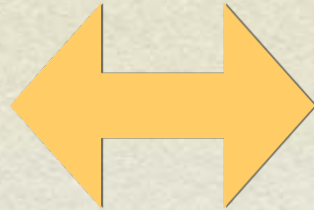
Conservation varieties directives

directive
62/2008, cereals

directives on vegetables
and mixtures

Conservation varieties

PGR Conservation



Seed legislation

The directive is an important step forward because it implicitly acknowledges that seed regulations since the 1960s have contributed to the genetic erosion of agricultural diversity and so must be amended somehow.

Organic seeds

- new needs:
 - organic varieties,
 - landraces or populations
- ➔ niche market
- new objectives:
 - conserving agrobiodiversity in the field
 - protection of the environment (low input agriculture)



Food Chain Evaluation Consortium suggests “that the two different systems of the large commercial breeding companies and the smaller market or regional breeders and producers could run side by side because they are targeting completely different markets”



Italy, between tradition and modernization

- Farms with more than 50 ha = 2.2%
- average size 7.4 ha
- farms larger than 16 UDE = 9.5%
- farmers older than 64 years = 41.4%
- 175 GIs in 2008



It is also important to stress that the largest portion of the agro biodiversity and the traditional knowledge associated is usually preserved by the group of farms not listed as “enterprises” (<8UdE) and managed by people older than 65 years. For this reason, it is of paramount importance to adopt policies to tackle these structural weaknesses by avoiding loss of know-how and seeds due to generation gaps and to promote economical, social and cultural conditions where these farms can continue to operate. In fact, the global market is not within the reach for these farmers that, without the much-needed protections, are doomed to disappear with their particular knowledge and seeds.

“Living the fate of soil and people to the market would be tantamount to annihilating them” (Polanyi, 1957).

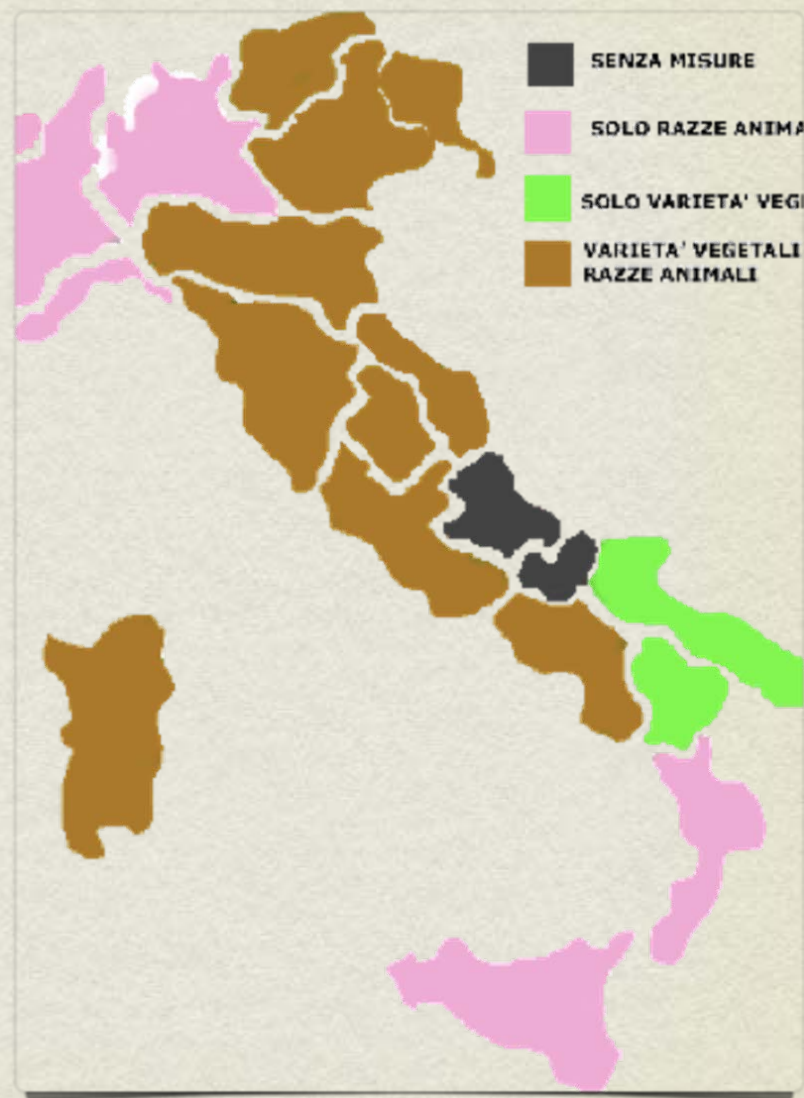
regional laws for the conservation of local varieties and races

1. regional catalogues
2. characterization of GR
3. regional seed banks

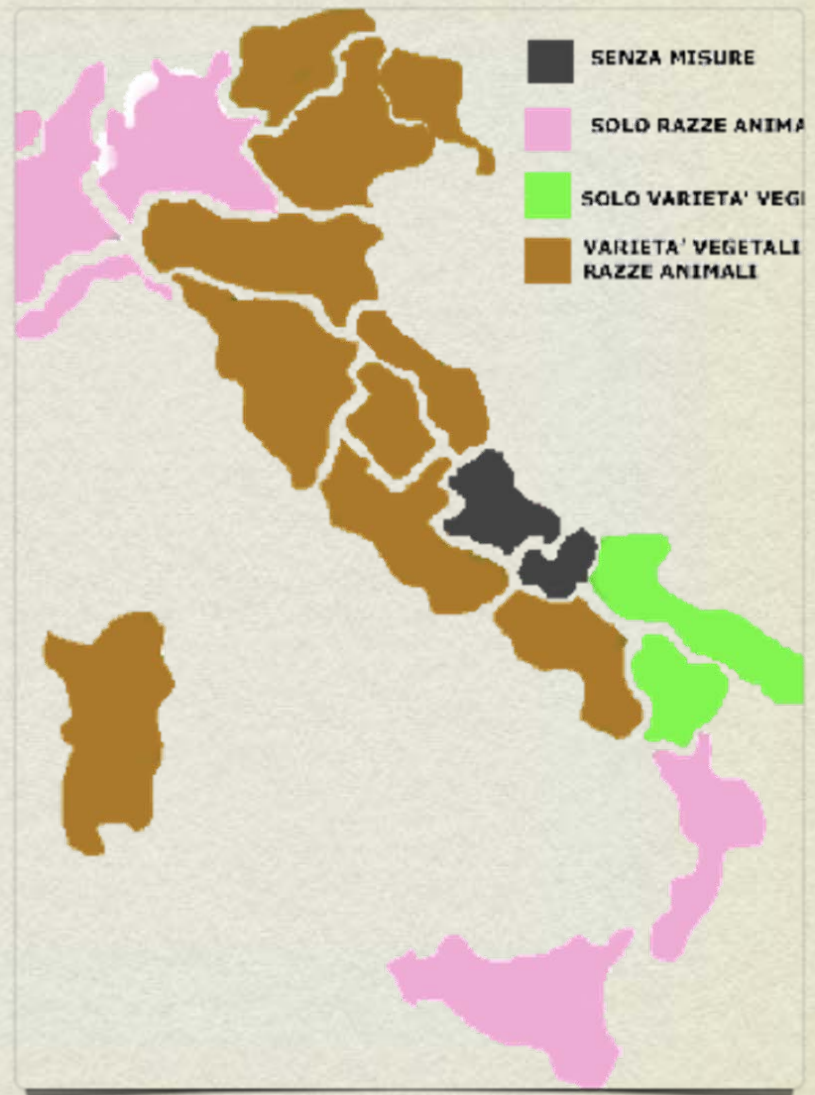


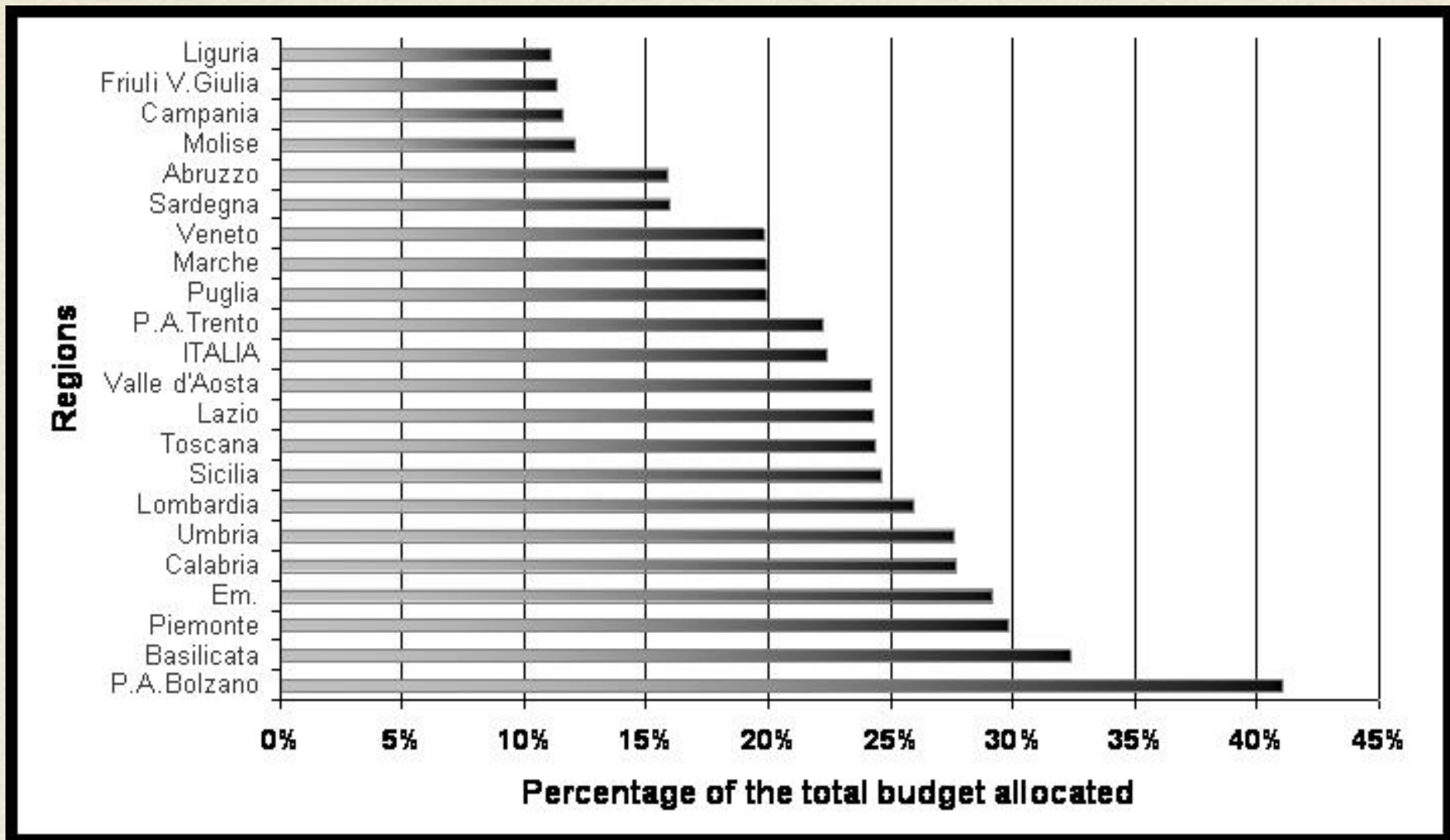
rural development plans

Specific measures for the
conservation of plant and
animal genetic resources



RDPs provide two kinds of incentive for conservation of agricultural biodiversity, namely direct and indirect. The former takes the shape of payments made to farmers for growing or raising a specific breed or variety at risk of genetic erosion (measure 214 in the Axis 2). The latter are indemnities to encourage a farming approach that is more respectful of the environment and less intensive and which, generally speaking, makes use of agricultural biodiversity.





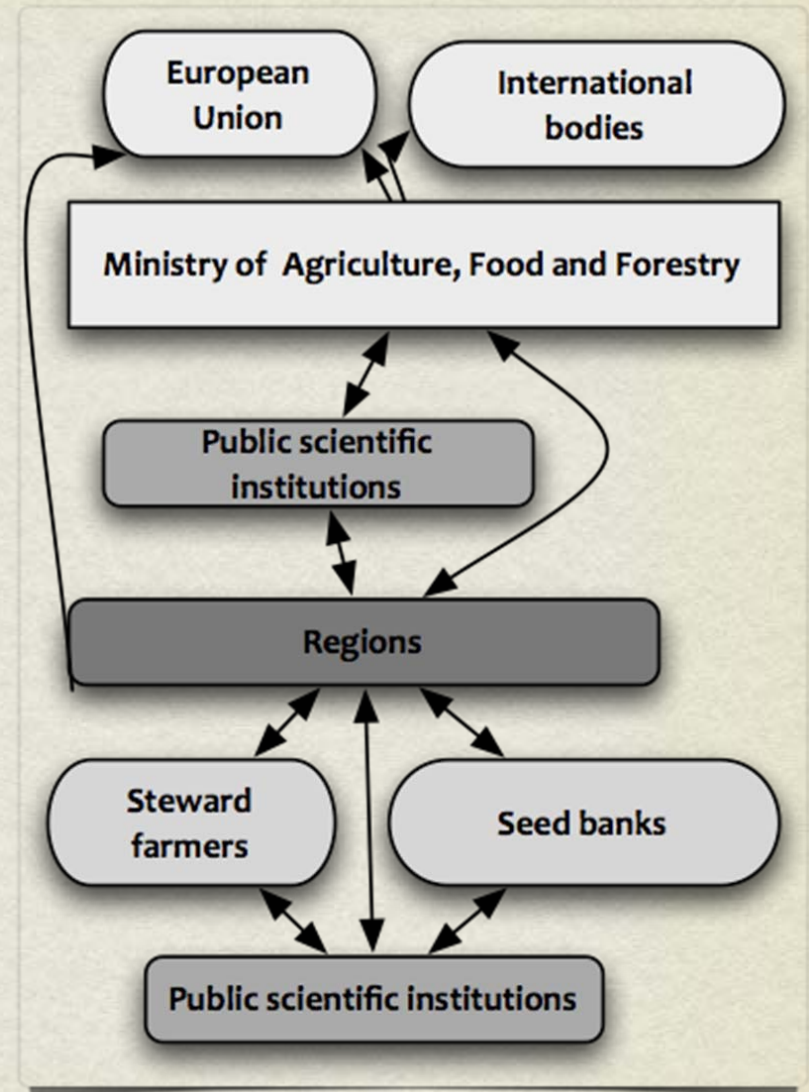
Graph 2 – Overall regional expenditure for measure 214 on the total public expenditure
 Source: Mipaaf data processed by this author based on the “Rural Development Plans 2007-2013”.

CBD ITPGRFA



The national plan for agrobiodiversity

Identify the descriptors for the various species; Define the investigative and characterisation methodologies for local breeds and varieties; Define the guidelines for proper conservation in situ/on farm and ex situ; Define the risk of genetic erosion by means of specific indicators.



Organic seed national plan

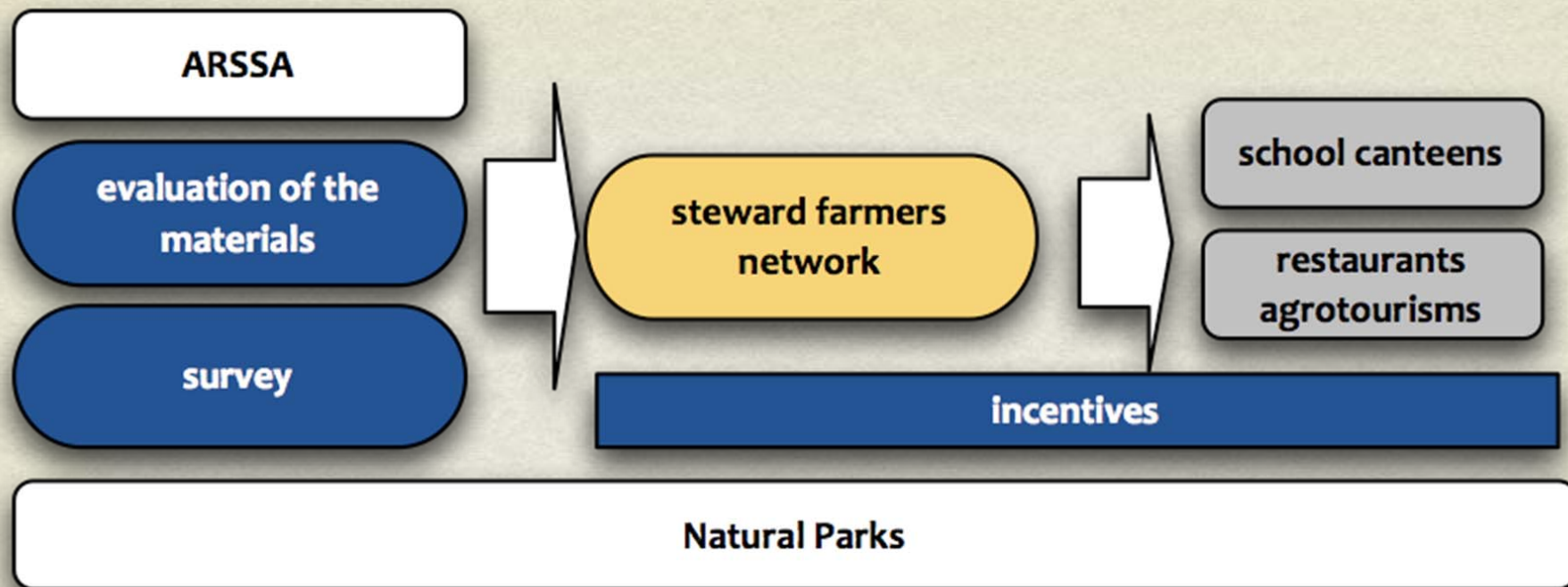
Increase the production of organic seeds

Provide adapted varieties to organic farmers

Set up a pilot project on PPB



The Abruzzo conservation system - a case study

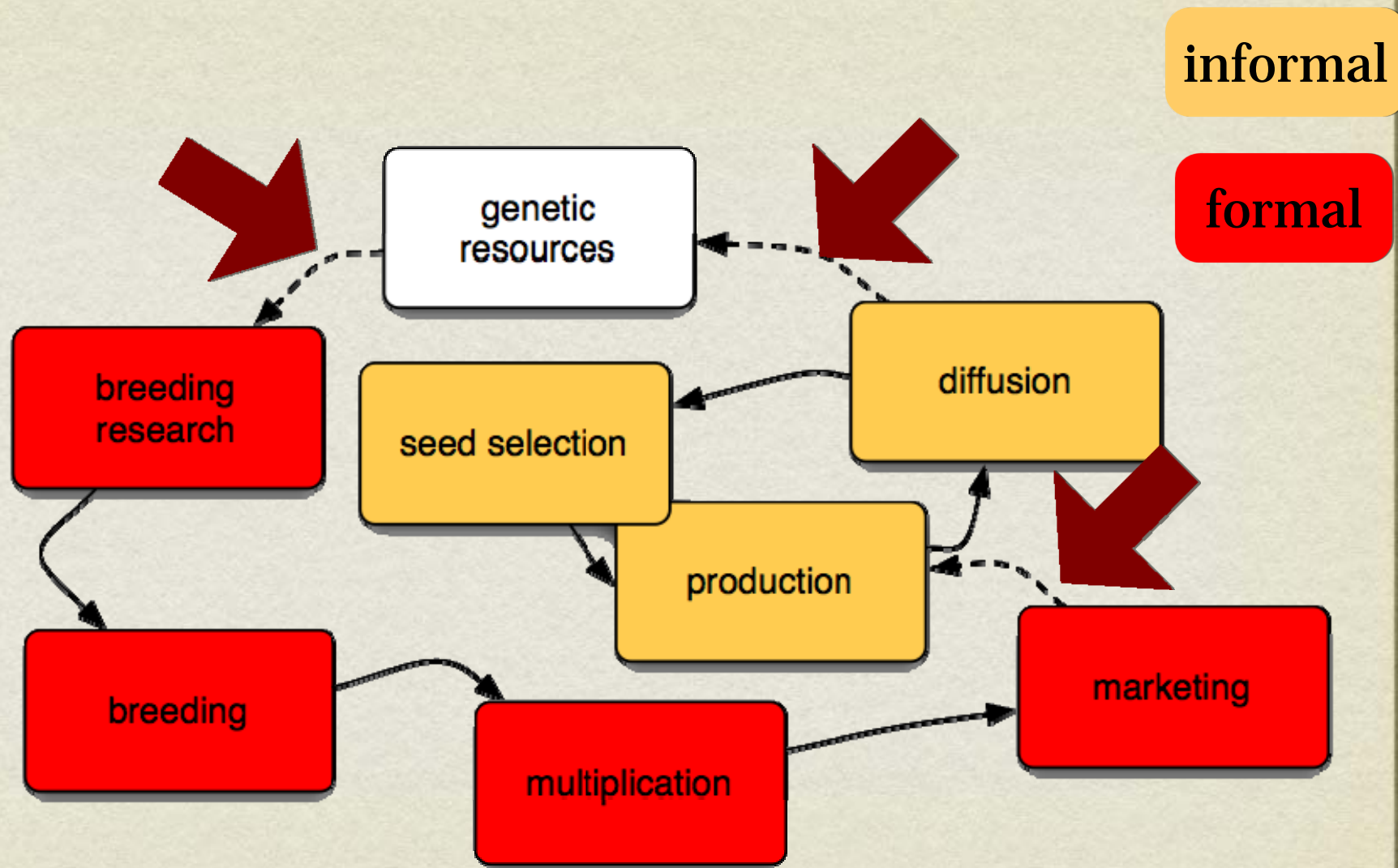


“The challenge in this project lies in bringing back old varieties which have been conserved thanks to the tenacity and stubbornness of a few to become the new heritage of all” Dalla Ragione et al. (2004)

conclusions...?

Experience proves that sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity can develop into the premise on which to base a more general programme that includes the moral development of an entire territory. Indeed, the final result of the activities described show that it was not only keeping certain local varieties in cultivation or supporting on-farm conservation but creating the conditions for continuing to farm and therefore maintain the complex system of values and relations without which agricultural biodiversity would no longer make sense and simply disappear.

Seed Systems





The man made by corn produces the corn. The man created by the corn substance and the colour makes a crib for corn, covers it with fertile land, weeds the field, waters it and says words of love. And when the corn grain is grown, the corn peoples grind it on a stone and rise it and applaud it and lie it on top of the fire and eat it so the corn peoples might continue growing the corn and it will not die on the earth (E. Galeano, Palabras andantes)



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14 - 15 October 2009 Marseille

International Conference

Presentation of the outcomes of the European Project FSO

North/ South exchange on experiences on seed laws

Farmers' forum with farmers involved in the field trials



FarmSeed Opportunities



Farm Seed Opportunities (FSO), a specific targeted research project in the FP6 European programme (2007-2009), was conceived to support the implementation of seed regulations on conservation varieties (directive 98/95/EC and new directive 2008/62/EC for agricultural species).

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Thanks!