

# Recovery and Conservation of Pulses in Georgia



**Biological Farming Association Elkana**  
**World Food Day and International Year of Pulses in Georgia**  
**Tbilisi, Georgia, 20 October 2016**

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# Briefly about Elkana



- ❑ **The **Biological Farming Association Elkana**, a non-governmental Georgian organization, was founded in 1994.**
  
- ❑ **Having started with 9 farmers, at present **Elkana** works with more than 1000 farmers throughout Georgia**
  
- ❑ **Main fields of **Elkana** activities include:**
  - **Agricultural extension/training**
  - **Supporting farmers' economic development**
  - **Rural tourism**
  - **Advocacy**
  
- ❑ **Since 1996 **Elkana** has been involved in conservation & sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity**

[www.elkana.org.ge](http://www.elkana.org.ge)

## Need for the Recovery, Conservation and Sustainable Use of Indigenous Crop Varieties



- ❑ **Great diversity of indigenous cultivated plant varieties, **pulses among them**, has been under threat for almost one hundred years in Georgia, especially due to the agricultural policies of concentration and specialization carried out in Georgia's agriculture during the Soviet period.**
  
- ❑ **The specialization had a negative impact on **indigenous crop varieties, pulses among them**. Many cultivated plant varieties were not only forgotten, but in some cases, completely lost.**

## Recovery, Conservation, and Sustainable Use of Georgia's Agrobiodiversity



- ❑ **The protection of local agricultural diversity has become one of the strategic goals of Elkana since 2002 and with the UNDP / GEF project - Recovery, Conservation, and Sustainable Use of Georgia's Agrobiodiversity (2002-2010) has started conservation works with smallholder farmers that continues up to present times.**
- ❑ **Since 2002 Elkana has also started its cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on issues of plant genetic resources, farmer knowledge and information systems, and agricultural policies.**
- ❑ **Elkana has been involved in the FAO Family Farming Knowledge and TECA platforms.**

## International Year of Pulses



- ❑ **The 68th UN General Assembly declared 2016 the International Year of Pulses (IYP)**
- ❑ **FAO has been nominated to facilitate the implementation of the Year in collaboration with Governments, relevant organizations, non-governmental organizations and all other relevant stakeholders.**
- ❑ **In the frame of the International Year of Pulses Elkana participated in Regional Dialogue for Europe and Central Asia organized by FAO in Rome 11-13 October, 2016.**
- ❑ **The Regional Dialogue has emphasized the important role that pulses play in sustainable food production and healthy diets, food security and nutrition.**

## Recovery and Conservation of Pulses in Georgia



- ❑ **Through its activities Elkana has reintroduced on farmers' fields local landraces of following pulses: *Chickpea, Faba Bean, Lentil, Cowpea, and Grass Pea.***
- ❑ **Public awareness on the **reintroduced pulses** has been raised – trainings, consultations, information meetings, workshops, farmers' days, festivals, tasting events were organized. Elkana has participated in various fairs and exhibitions to promote the **reintroduced pulses.****
- ❑ **Having started with 12 farmers in 2002, today the program unites about 200 families directly involved in **on-farm conservation program.****



## Recovery and Conservation of Pulses in Georgia



- ❑ **Most farmers use reintroduced pulses for their own consumption. By reintroducing these traditional landraces the nutritional intake of farmers has been improved, and the families have a greater range of pulses.**
- ❑ **A recipe book was published and widely distributed to raise consumer awareness and dishes prepared from indigenous pulses were promoted through food tasting events and media.**
- ❑ **At present we collect information about farmers' practices on cultivation of pulses as well as recipes of diverse Food they prepare from recently introduced crops.**
- ❑ **We will share this information with FAO TECA platform which collects agricultural technologies and practices – to help small producers in the field.**



# Indigenous Pulses



- ❑ **Cultivation of indigenous pulses has an important role in conservation of Georgia's agricultural biodiversity.**
  
- ❑ **They are well adapted to local conditions:**
  - **they give stable harvests without agrochemical inputs, and are resistant to biotic and abiotic stresses such as disease, extreme temperatures, lack of moisture, etc.**
  - **cultivation is cheap, requires low- or no-input, does not have negative impact on environment**
  - **are good predecessors for almost all the field crops in crop rotation**
  - **can be used as green manure to improve the soil fertility**
  
- ❑ **They are used for human consumption as well as forage crops**

# Indigenous Pulses



- ❑ **Indigenous Pulses** have potential for contributing significantly to our **food** - as they make diverse, tasty and nutritious dishes, as well as to our **health** - as they are useful and healthy products containing significant amounts of proteins, some of them containing calcium and carbohydrates.
- ❑ Due to the high level of protein content, **pulses** are excellent food sources where meat is scarce.
- ❑ **Indigenous pulses** along with the other local crops have more chances to survive climate change than the introduced ones. Thus, they should be actively propagated, Elkana is proud to have been contributing to this very crucial process.

# Seed Multiplication Plot in village Tsnisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti Region



For **BIO**tiful Life!  
Organic product. Rural diversity.



# Farmers' Day at the seed multiplication and demonstration plot in Tsnisi



For **BIO**tiful Life!  
Organic product. Rural diversity.



# Farmers cultivating indigenous pulses



For **BIO**tiful Life!  
Organic product. Rural diversity.



# Farmers cultivating indigenous pulses



For **BIO**tiful Life!  
Organic product. Rural diversity.



**Thank you for attention!**



**Chickpea on the seed multiplication and demonstration plot in Tsnisi**

**For BIOtiful Life!**  
Organic product. Rural diversity.