

Seeds of regional origin in Central Europe

Status quo 2011

&

Recommendations for
European quality standards



SALVERE-Workshop
Bernburg, 18.-20.05.2011



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND



Landscapes in Germany

Wild-plant-seeds of regional origin

WHY?



North-west Germany

Economical, ecological and scenic benefits

- Durable and site-specific vegetation
- Coexistence with native fauna
- Preservation of regional genotypes
- Respecting diversity of habitats and landscapes = high recreation value



South-Germany near Nördlingen



Pre alps of Germany

Almost 20 years after the Convention on biological diversity (1992) ...



... unquestionable aim:

Stopp loss of biodiversity!

BUT: ... there is still little knowledge in EU-member states
about restoration methods for grasslands with
wild forms of herbs and grasses



Rieger-Hofmann GmbH
Samen und Pflanzen gebietsweiser
Wildblumen und Wildgräser



Seeds of regional origin in Central Europe

STATUS QUO 2011

General situation in „Central Europe“- partner - countries



In all countries **demand** for wild plant seeds

In all countries existing **grey market** with „wild“ plant seeds
of unknown provenance

In some countries **propagation and collection** of regional
wild plant seeds

In some countries **research** concerning production of wild
seeds

In few countries proved provenances by **certification**

In some countries **hindering** by national laws in collecting
wild plant seed, in all countries **restrictions in trade** by
European seed acts for some species



Rieger-Hofmann GmbH
Samen und Pflanzen gebietsweiser
Wildblumen und Wildgräser



Diverging situations in Europe

WHY?



Reasons for different states in member states:

- Different distribution of natural vegetation-types
- Necessity to solve specific problems, e.g. ...
 - erosion in the alps (Austria)
 - land-use conflicts (Germany)
- Historical evolution of awareness in nature-protection
- Government supported research in producing seeds



- **Poland:**
 - Only **one company** is offering wild seeds with declared origin
 - No scientific research in propagation methods
- **Czech and Slovak Republic:**
 - Specialised structures of propagation of wild plants are **not known**
 - Some practical researches
 - Some nature conservation institutions propagate seeds in a small scale
 - One company sells wild plant seeds but without defined origin
- **Italy:**
 - One company propagates wild plant seeds with declared origin
 - Intense seed propagation research, at present non commercial propagation in one association

- **Austria:**
 - In the late 1980th first companies started to propagate seeds for restoration purposes
 - Intense seed propagation research
 - Today about 20 agricultural seed-producing companies
 - Certification label based on a privat association
- **Germany:**
 - In the 1980th first companies started to propagate seeds for restoration purposes.
 - Until now no scientific research in propagation of wild seeds
 - Today about 100 agricultural companies partly organised in trade associations
 - Two different certification labels based on privat associations



Certificates for wild plant seeds in the „Central Europe“-area:



Country: **Austria**
 Owner of the trademark:
Association REWISA
 Company inspection by: **AgroVet**
 Certificate award:
Expert advisory committee
 Certified seeds:
**All herbs and some grasses
 of wild forms**
www.rewisa.at



Country: **Germany**
 Owner of the trademark:
Association BDP
 Company inspection by: **Lacon**
 Certificate award:
Not known
 Certified seeds:
**Most of the herbs and some
 grasses of wild forms**
www.bdp-online.de



Country: **Germany**
 Owner of the trademark:
Association VWW
 Company inspection by: **ABCert**
 Certificate award:
Independent committee
 Certified seeds:
**All herbs and all grasses of
 wild forms**
www.natur-im-vww.de

General aspects of quality in wild plant seed markets:

The most important criteria to be **documented** and **controlled** are ...



... **seed-collection in different regions of origin** approved by nature-conservation administration



... **species propagated on arable land of the same region** (keeping a wide genetic spectrum)



... **quality control of seeds** (taxonomic reliability, purity, germination rate)



... **control of product provenance** (labeling, seed-mixture-composing, flow of goods)

NATURE

Collection

Propagation

Storage

Trade

CLIENT

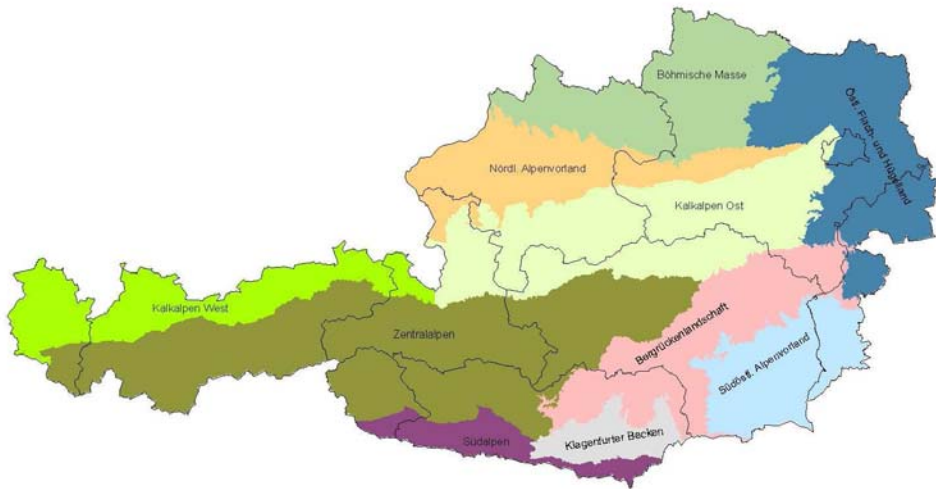
Common European standards for wild plant seeds

WHY?

- **Wild-forms compete against cultivars** of the same plant-species, but indicators of quality are different (e.g. genetic spectrum, origin)
> **each market should have its own standards all over Europe**
- Biogeographical areas do not stop at national borders
> **need for transnational seed zones (collection, propagation and trade)**



10 natural landscape units in Austria



Production areas and regional origins in Germany:

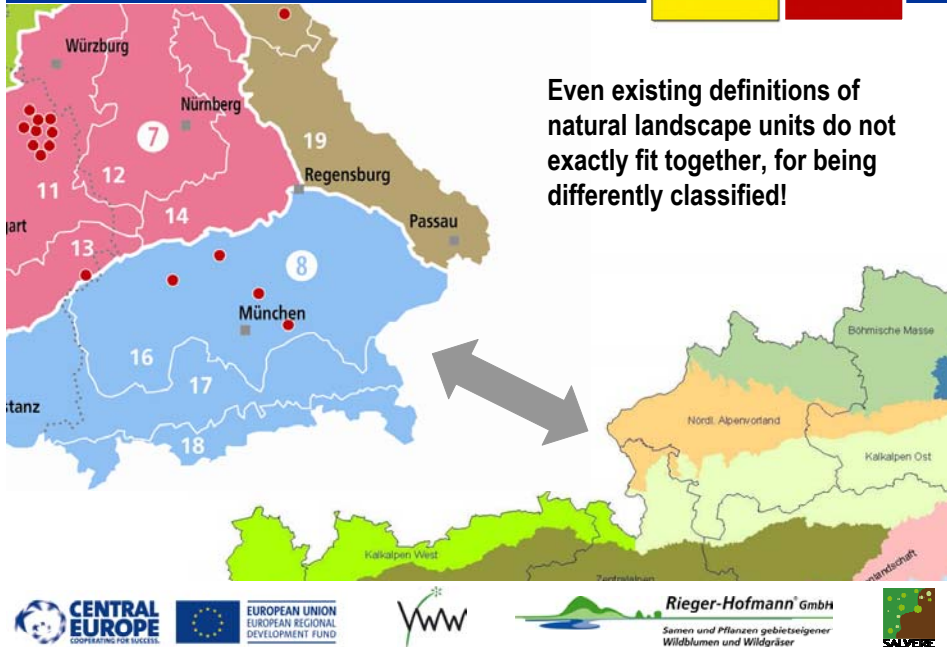
Collection of indigenous seeds in
22 provenience regions

Propagation of collected seeds in
8 production areas / seedzones

Revegetation of agricultural reproduced
seeds in the **22 provenience regions**



Need for multinational seedzones - EXAMPLE



Recommendations for European standards

Common European standards

How to get there?

- Define ...
 - common technical **terms**
 - **regional** and **transnational seedzones**
 - common **minimum-standards** for collecting, producing, trading and utilisation of wild plant seeds
- Create ...
 - nationally adapted **trademarks** to assure defined quality standards
 - mechanisms to **control** them and to impose sanctions
- Adjust ...
 - **laws** to open a legal production and growing markets

Just to give you an idea ...

- **Compliance with nature conservation**
Guarantee inviolacy of existing stocks and **accordance to conservation laws**
- **Spatial relation**
Find a **balance between** an **economically functioning size of seedzones** without losing the relation to **regional landscape units**.
- **Avoidance of genetic losses**
is guaranteed e.g. by a **wide range of donorsites** and **limited generations in propagation** on farmland
- **Verifiable declaration (certificate)**
Find a **balance between** a **framework of rules and control** and an **economical production**



Legal framework in Europe

*Commission directive 2010/60

In 2010 a new Commission directive* has been passed, which allows trade of a small amount of **5%** of "**wild**" **seeds** among the **cultivars**.

Estimated seed-amounts in Germany = **2.000 t** versus **40.000 t** / year

The European member states have to implement the directive until **end of November 2011**.

To protect wild plant seed markets or native-seed-initiatives in the process of emerging, member states should carefully transfer the directive into national law.

Note:

!! The lately started **review of the European seed legislation** should critically be attended by farmers, stakeholders and administrative bodies!!



German nature protection law since march 2010:

§39 Allgemeiner Schutz wild lebender ... Pflanzen ... (Textauszug):

➔ Collection of wild seeds for agricultural propagation should be allowed by conservation authorities due to positive results for landscape and nature-protection

§40 Nichtheimische, gebietsfremde und invasive Arten (Textauszug):

➔ After the year 2020 regional seeds must be used in free landscape.
Untill 2020 they should already be used in free landscape if available.

§§

