



Interviewing landrace farmers: how to get information? - Examples from Finland

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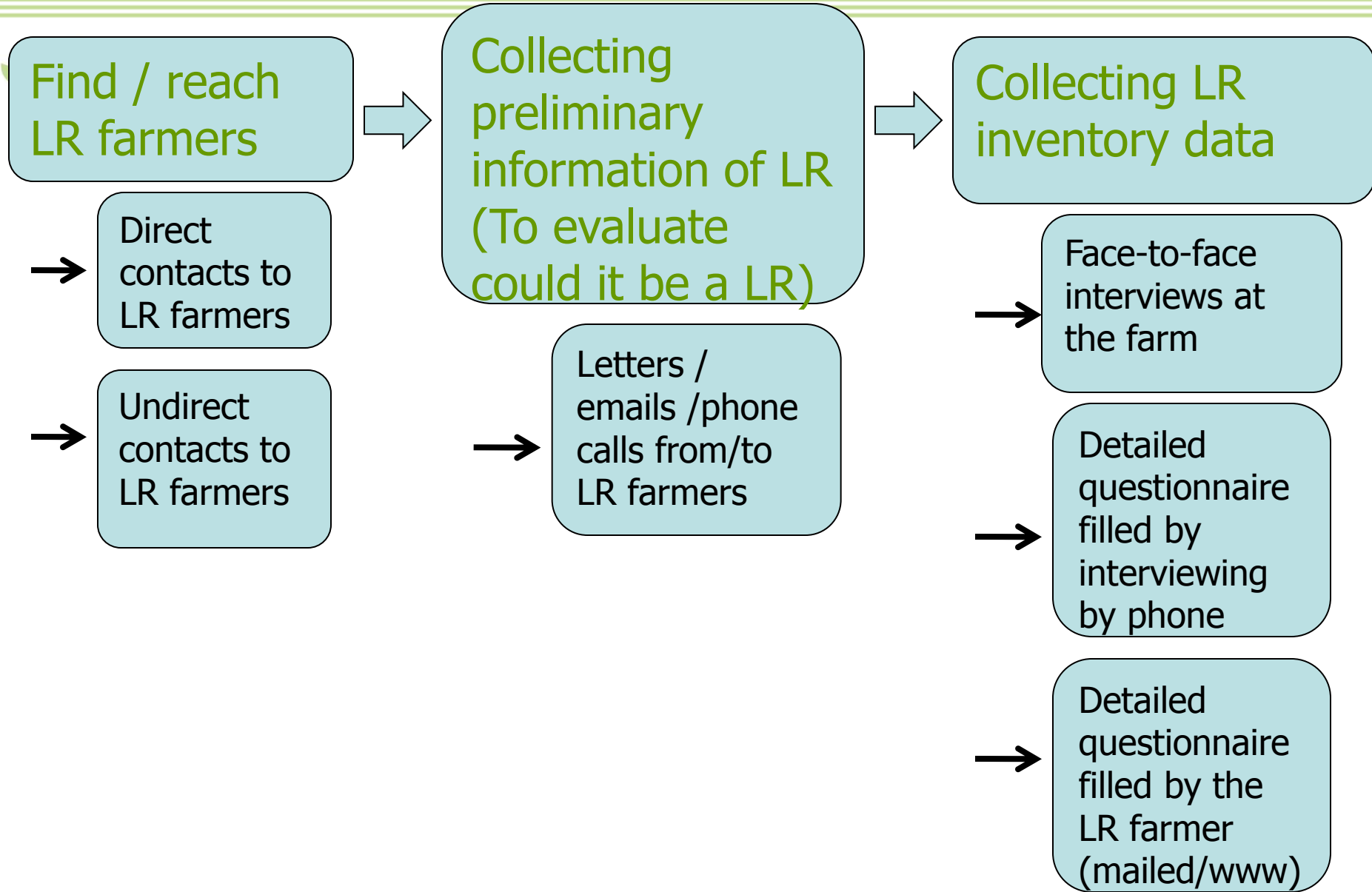
National Programme for Plant Genetic Resources

Partner in PGR Secure

Documenting landraces in cultivation



- Knowledge on landraces is typically
 - scattered
 - non-organized
 - oral knowledge, rarely written down
 - local knowledge
- The generation is vanishing to whom landraces has been part of the every day life
- First: locate / find the landrace (with local knowledge) and place it (with GIS-method)
- Then: gather diverse knowledge (biological, cultural, historical, local)



Find / reach LR farmers



Very time consuming
part in the inventory

Starting point in Finland in 2006:
only 5 cereal LR farmers were
registered to subsidiary system
of on-farm management

- there are more
- how to reach them

→ National call for cereal LRs and
old varieties

→ a research project to study of
farmers' motivation to grow
cereal LRs and old varieties

Received notifications of landraces and old commercial varieties of cereals

	Oats	2-row barley	4/6 row barley	Spring rye	Winter rye	Spring wheat	Winter wheat
Landrace	5	3	1	1	23	1	-
Old variety	4	2	2	-	3	1	2

Channels to find /contact LR farmers

Direct contacts to LR farmers

- **Registers** of different organisations (registered conservation varieties in the official list of plant varieties; seed savers organisations and other);
- **Contact lists** of the earlier inventories and studies (new generation may continued the LR cultivation)
- e-mail lists (NGO's)
- social media?

Undirect contacts to LR farmers

- **Local informants:** rural advisors and other local authorities; actors in local heritage work (local associations), other local informants
- Plant breeders and other scientists and **experts**
- **Announcing national/local calls for LR** via different forums

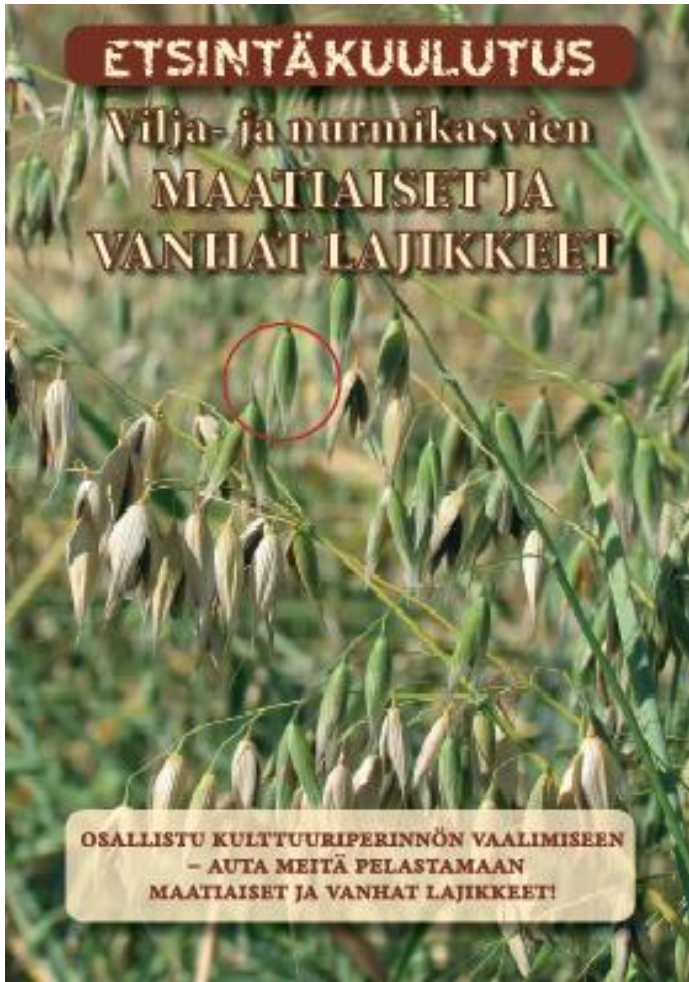
→ Parallel use

National call for cereal LRs in Finland

- Announced by the National Programme for PGR in Finland in the early 2006
- Cereals, also some other species (flax, pea, and hemp) were requested
- Interest on
 - 1) landraces in cultivation
 - 2) those old commercial varieties bred in Finland that are not yet stored *ex situ* at the genebank (gaps)



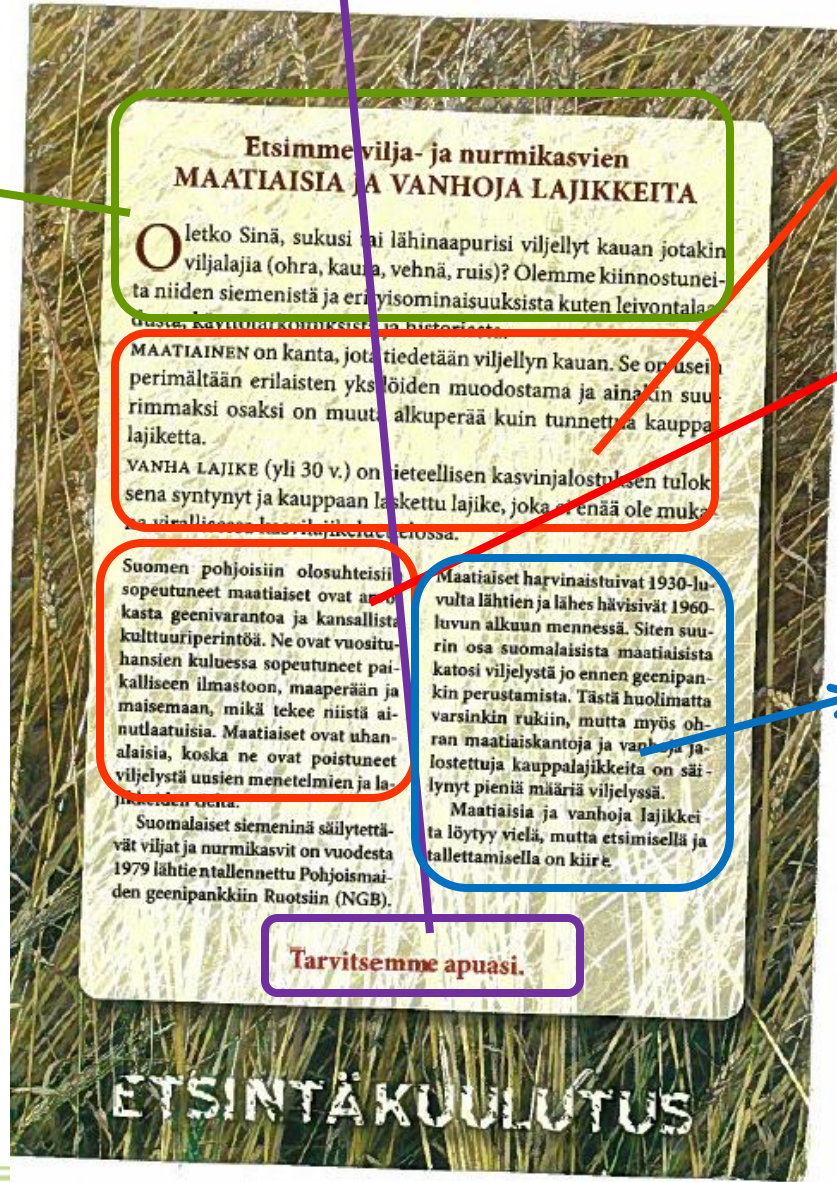
WANTED: CEREAL LANDRACES



- make visible the search for landraces
- In Finland: A poster and a leaflet (both in pdf format and paper format)

Main message: Finnish National Programme for Plant Genetic Resources need citizens' help to save landraces

What we are searching for: List of target species. In this case landraces and old varieties of barley, oats, wheat and rye.



What is a landrace: Definition of a landrace in (in this case also a definition of and old varieties) **written popularly**

Why the inventory is important: Landraces have become rare but possibilities to find still them in cultivation

How to contact: "write us about your landrace". NOTE: we asked not to send seeds.

Asked for preliminary LR information:

- Where and for how long it has been cultivated?
- Where it has been originally obtained?
- Is it still cultivated?
- How does it look like?
- Is there a story or event linked to it?

**Kirjoita ja kerro
MAATIAISISTA JA VANHOISTA LAJIKKEISTA**

MISSÄ ja kuinka kauan maatiaistasi on viljelty?
KUKA sitä on viljellyt?
MISTÄ se on alun perin saatu?
VILJELLÄÄNKÖ sitä edelleen?
MILTÄ se näyttää?
LIITTYYKÖ maatiaiseen joku tarina tai tapahtuma?

Mitä meiltä puuttuu?

Todellisten maatiaisten lisäksi vanhoista lajikkeista seuraava (suluissa kaupanlaskuvuosi)

KAURA: Ilolan kaura (1903), Eespäin, Runsas I, Runsas II, Helmi, Musta sulkakaura, Warma ja Toveri (1910-luvulta), Sapeli, Kerttu (1919), Pohjola (1919), Tuotto (1920), Veikko (1920), Louhi (1928)	SYYSVEHNÄ: Elsa ja muut Laborin kaupanlaskemat linjat (1920-luvulta)
VEHNÄ: Rusopäävehnä (1920), jalostettu villavehnä (1921)	RUIS: Ilolan ruis (1910-luvulta)
	KEVÄTRUIS
	OHRAN MAATIAISIA
	VILJOJEN LISÄKSI olemme kiinnostuneita herneestä (Nord 1904), pellavasta, tattarista ja hampusta.

Tule mukaan pelastamaan vihreää kulttuuriperintöämme!

ETSINTÄKUULUTUS

WANTED OLD VARIETIES

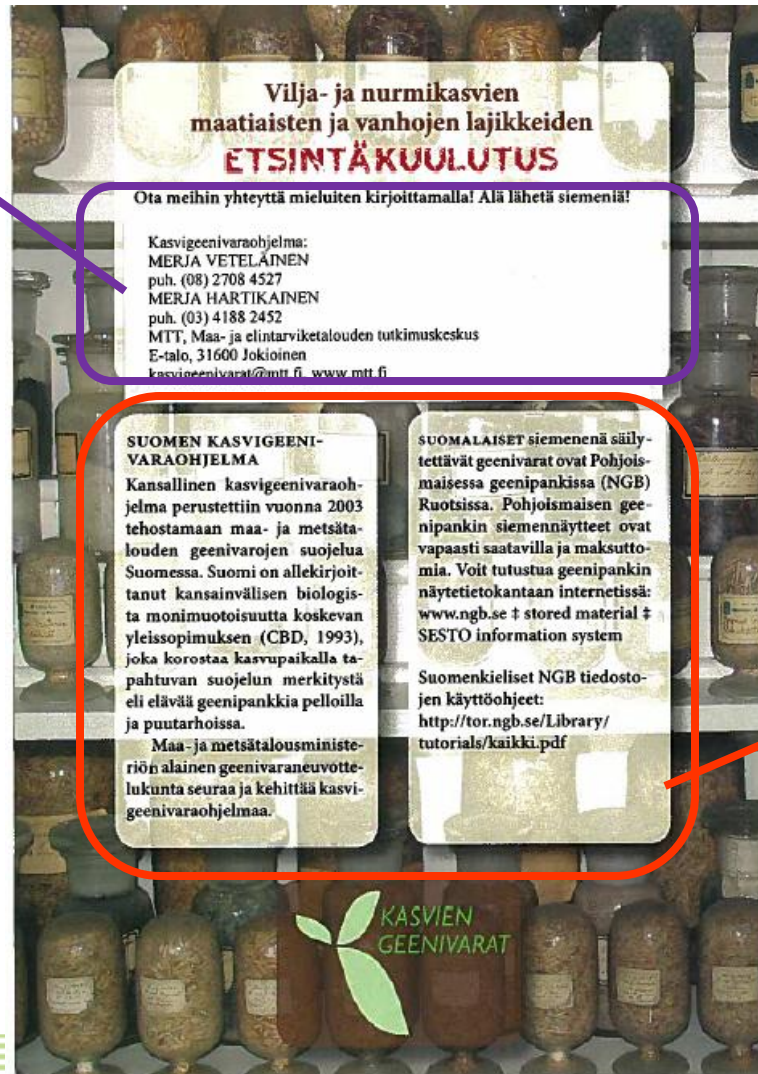
List of those old varieties bred in Finland in early 20th's, which are still missing from NordGen (genebank)

Motivation to answer to the Call:

With your help we can save together the cultural heritage of cultivated plants (PGR)

Contact addresses

Preferably contact by a letter or an email



Presenting the context: General Information about the National Programme for Plant Genetic Resources and about *ex situ* conservation in genebank

Distributing/Announcing the Call

- Different forums in parallel use
- Finnish Call was distributed nation wide through:
 - municipal libraries (a dense library net in Finland → reached every municipal)
 - local rural advisors and other local informants (turned out important and efficient, because they may already have or will have direct contacts to LR growers)
 - NGOs and their e-mail lists and magazines (promoting articles)
 - websites and seminars

Preliminary information of LR



- First hand information of LR: cultivation history, site of cultivation
- Important to select out those which are definitely not LRs (it can be a bred variety)
- Cost effectiveness

Collecting LR data by interviewing

- preliminary LR information → select the farmers to be interviewed
- Interviews at farms: face-to-face contact
 - possibility to ask further questions
 - observation
 - possibility to motivate to continue on-farm conservation
 - possibility collect seed samples



Not only the LR farmer has
the knowledge about the LR

- The old farmer (e.g. father of the farmer) may have the best knowledge on the origin, cultivation history and traditional cultivation methods
- silent knowledge
not written down, not always passed to or remembered by the next farmer generation



Female farmers may know more about the use of harvest (recipes; cooking; baking) and ritual or traditional use



- Questionnaire form to ensure that all questions will be asked
- Interviewer fills it, not the LR farmer
- Also recording of the interview is useful → much other information
- Photographs: farmer and the family, landrace, seed storage, farm buildings, fields → may provide useful information

Collecting LR data by questionnaire

- Also web-questionnaire available in www-sites
- Especially young LR farmers may prefer
- In Finland only few case of LRs found or data collected this way
- Mailed questionnaire (paper format) if direct contacts to LRs

Promotion and information materials



In Finland:

- LR Brochure (presenting LR examples);
- website of PGR programme; including landrace information service for general audience

- to increase the understanding about LRs in general
- also helps to reach LR farmers
- get press/media interested in (e.g. articles in magazines and newspapers, TV news and a TV programme promoting calls)

Historical data as background information

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Use of historical data

- To evaluate what LR groups can be still in cultivation
- To locate the LR
- To evaluate the LR (origin)

- As LR (passport) data itself (origin, use etc)
- As promoting, demonstrating LRs, LR based products and services

Example: Historic knowledge of a local apple tree



Diverse sources:

- **old scientific literature:** pomological, plant breeders publications (studies on landraces as breeding material)
- **other old literature:** about the site (e.g. manor), cook books etc.
- old **photos** and **maps**
- **archive documents**
- Statistics (varieties in cultivation)
- interviews of **local informants**

Share of cereal landraces in cultivation in Finland, 1902—1955; %

	1902	1920-1921	1930	1935-1939	1950	1951	1955
Winter wheat	~ 100	100	~ 60-70	30,1	2,3 / < 5,0	< 5,0	0,7
Spring wheat	~ 100	94,3	~ 5	2,9	0,1	~ 0,1	0,1
Barley	~ 100	69,8	~ 25	23,1	3,9	3,6	1,0
Oats	~ 100	33,8	~ 5-10	7,2	0,9	2,1	0,2
Winter rye	~ 100	100 / 81,9	~ 70-80	23,4 / 35,9	28,9	34,3	18

Sources: compilation of statistics of national agricultural fairs, official statistics, and plant breeders evaluation of the bred varieties in cultivation; Heinonen 2001

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Local apple variety called "Huvitus"

- in a local project we located its original place
- garden was disappeared/abandoned for decades ago, only the apple tree (a part of it) was left and some traditional perennials
- compared local knowledge (to find it) and historical data (about the variety) with DNA-fingerprinting data in variety identification





Demonstrating landraces

- Landrace plants (heritage plants) in public place (in museum garden) allows them be visible and reachable
- To find out and test different ways to present historic garden and old plant varieties to visitors → more knowledge on landraces to citizens