Policies to Support and Protect Producers and promote traditional regional agricultural products and food in non-EU Countries - Georgia / South Caucasus

Regional FAO/NGOs-CSOs Consultations for Europe
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Caucasus - The Crossroad of Eastern and Western Worlds Located Between the Black and Caspian Sea Great & Lesser Caucasian Ranges
The Region of

VARIED AND WONDERFUL NATURE
The region presents rich diversity of Flora and Fauna, and is a place of origin of many cultivated plants.

- Georgia is one of the main genetic centres of origin of both wheat and grapevine.
Traditionally Georgia was an agricultural country with diverse agricultural production.

However, the agricultural practices employed in Georgia during the Soviet period resulted in significant erosion of biodiversity in agriculture, which undermined sustainability of crop production.

Erosion of biodiversity was aggravated after disintegration of the Soviet Union due to difficulties of the transition period, collapse of the extension system and absence of a well-thought policy in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in agriculture.
At present more than 50% of labour force in Georgia is involved in agriculture, and

Georgian agriculture is predominated by small farmers having up to 1.5 ha land
Association “Elkana” is Georgian non-governmental organisation, founded in August 1994.

Having started with 9 farmers in 1994 Elkana at present unites about 500 members.

“Elkana” aims at improvement of socio-economic conditions of Georgian Farmers through development of sustainable & organic farming and encouragement of self-help in rural areas.
Why Organic Farming?

- Georgia is a country of old agricultural traditions; its diverse environment is suitable for the production of many different crops.

- However, complex mountainous landscape and land fragmentation in the country do not allow Georgian farmers benefit from economies of scale and compete for price in commodity markets.
“Elkana” views the future of Georgian agriculture in production of high value organic products.
1996 – 2000 - The first joint efforts of local scientists from the Institute of Botany and “Elkana” farmers to start the on-farm conservation of endangered diversity of field crops (financial support – Misereor and Renovabis, Germany)

Since 2004 - A 5-year project – “Recovery, Conservation, and Sustainable Use of Georgia’s Agro-biodiversity” has been implemented in Samtskhe-Javakheti region (financial support – GEF/UNDP, co-financing – EED and Misereor, Germany, OxfamNovib and Cordaid, the Netherlands)
First products of local agricultural diversity appear in supermarkets...
First harvest of fruits is expected this year....
Products of “Elkana” members have already become popular on local market
Linking Local Life Style & Hospitality with Rural Tourism
THANK YOU!