

# Conservation Varieties in Italy

## Problems

A growing number of farmers and growers (including home gardeners) are seeking local varieties or cultivars with a higher level of intra-varietal diversity, compared to those normally available on the market (Distinct Uniform and Stable varieties).

## Solutions

The 1998 EU directive 98/95 introduced a new category of plant propagation material: **conservation varieties** (CV). This was done to expand the seed market and include historical varieties and increase the level genetic diversity. In 2008 the rules for the marketing of conservation varieties were defined:

- Directive 62/2008/CE on **field crop species**
- Directive 145/2009/CE on vegetable species, divided among **conservation varieties** and **varieties with no intrinsic value**
- Directive 60/2010/CE on **feed crops**

CVs exist only for those species, for which registration on the European Common Catalogue is mandatory. It is therefore not possible to have CVs of einkorn (*Triticum monococcum*), as the seed of this species can be marketed without registration on a variety list. CVs are registered on a dedicated section of the National variety list.

## Practical recommendations



Figure: Example of labels of a vegetable CV (ARCOIRIS, Italy)

- In Italy there are: 42 CV of vegetables, 16 vegetable varieties with no intrinsic value and 80 CVs of field crop species;
- You can find CVs on seed companies' catalogues;
- CVs are of public domain: no Plant Breeders' Rights (PBR) apply and farmers are free to save their own seed;
- CVs can represent a resource for organic agriculture due to their agronomic traits and less homogeneous genetics.

## Further information

1. Italian National variety list: <https://www.sian.it/mivmPubb/autenticazione.do>
2. RSR Notiziario #21: <https://www.semirurali.net/notiziari>

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