

3502-470 Plant Genetic Resources

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Motivation for this course

- \cdot World nutrition depends on few crops
- \cdot The major crops need to be in good shape
- An increase in yield is required: Are plant genetic resources a possibility?
- Global threats due to genetic uniformity?



Threats from genetic uniformity



The Ug99 wheat rust pathogen FAO

Are plant genetic resources a source of new resistance genes?

Identification of resistance genes in PGR



Plant Genetic Resource

Sources of Resistance to Stem Rust (Ug99) in Bread Wheat and Durum Wheat Identified Using Focused Identification of Germplasm Strategy

Dag Terje Filip Endresen 🕿 Kenneth Street, Michael Mackay, Abdallah Bari, Ahmed Amri, Eddy De Pauw, Kumarse Nazari, Amor Yahyaoui

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Traditional versus modern agriculture

Traditional agriculture

- $\cdot\,$ Locally adapted crops; Selected for hundreds of years
- Low yield but robust; diverse systems of agriculture
- $\cdot\,$ Political movement towards preserving local crops

Modern agriculture

- High yielding, genetically homogeneous varieties
- $\cdot\,$ Need a lot of input (fertilizer etc.)
- $\cdot\,$ Suitable for large-scale agriculture
- \cdot Modern crops (and breeding companies) are viewed critically.

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Example: Modern and traditional agriculture in Peru



Modern agriculture in Peru



 \cdot Coastal region (and the rainforest area)

- Hybrid maize
- Dominant type: Amarillo duro
- For chicken feed
- \cdot Original coastal landraces only rarely grown

Amarillo duro 'The yellow hard one'

Traditional agriculture in Peru



Cusco Gigante 'The giant from Cusco'

• Mainly in the highlands

- Open pollinated maize varieties
- \cdot Highly heterogeneous varieties
- Many landraces: up to 55 varieties
- For human consumption and animal feed

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Officially recognized maize landraces of Peru



See Alexander Grobman et al. Races of Maize of Peru, National Academy of Sciences, USA (1961) [Google Books]

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Heterogeneity of varieties from a single farmer's field

Genebank record of accessions in the maize gene bank of the Universidad National Agraria La Molina, Lima



Trade-off between modern vs. traditional agriculture

- Limited area: Need to increase yield per area to beat the Malthusian trap¹
- Global change: Rapidly changing weather patterns require adaptation
- \cdot Production systems: Small or large-scale farming more resilient to change?
- Plant breeding:
 - Is it better to breed for broad climatic tolerance or local adaptation?
- $\cdot\,$ Only maintenance breeding or no breeding program at all for landraces

Possible solution: Introgression of exotic, adapted material into modern varieties?______ Thomas Malthus: An Essay on the Principle of Population

Crops need to be adapted to future climates



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Lack of breeding of 'Blanco de Urubamba' variety

- Blanco de Urubamba: 'The white from Urubamba'
- Similar to Cusco Gigante but grown at lower altitude (>2000 m)
- Highly susceptible to infections, in particular Fusarium





 $\textit{Commercial production} \Rightarrow \textit{Animal consumption} \Rightarrow \textit{Poor locals}$ 15 / 25



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Producing an improved landrace





Cultivation of Blanco de Urubamba and INIA618

Sacred Valley of the Incas Near Cusco (2900m)



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Key goals of module

- Understand types of biological diversity
- Methods to analyze genetic variation
- Utilization of diversity in breeding
- Collection and management of genetic diversity
- Political and legal aspects of plant genetic resources

A technical definition of plant genetic resources will follow...



Course schedule

- Part 1: Methods for the analysis of genetic variation
- Part 2: Importance of plant genetic resources
- Part 3: Utilization of plant genetic resources

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Course literature

- Jack Harlan: Crops and Man, 2nd ed. ASA [PDF in literature directory of webpage]
- Denis Murphy: People, Plants and Genes, Oxford University Press (2006)
- Hartl and Clark (2007): Principles of Population Genetics, 4th ed. Sinauer (2007)
- Plus assigned readings

References i

Hartl D, Clark A (2007) Principles of Population Genetics, 4th edn. Sinauer Associates