



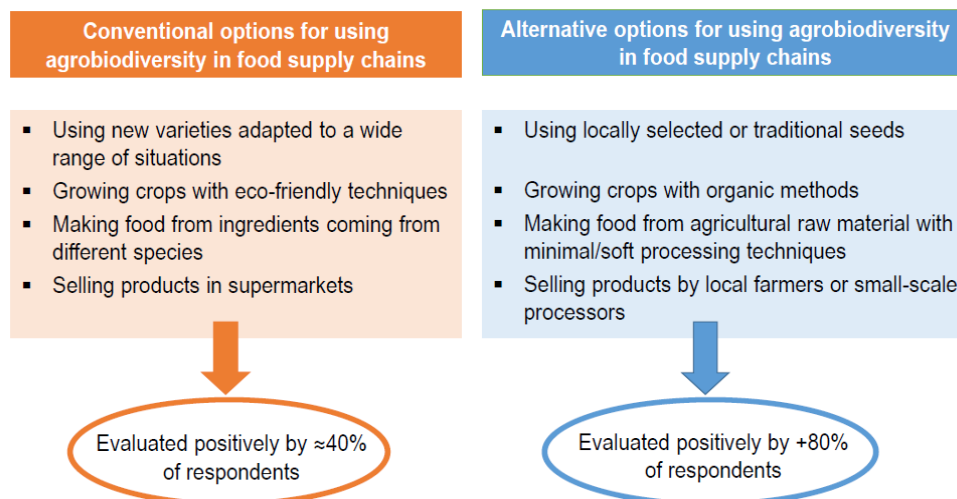
# Do consumers support farmers and food supply chains promoting agrobiodiversity?

## Issue

Agrobiodiversity, including all the plant species and varieties used for food, is in decline. Just three crops account for 60% of the calories consumed worldwide: wheat, maize and rice (FAO). Consumers are sensitive to the disappearance of insects and birds, but do they support the farmers and food supply chains that promote other crops, and, especially, neglected and underutilised crops (NUCs)?

## Solution

As part of the DIVINFOOD project, a wide-ranging online survey was launched in June 2022 covering 7 European countries (Denmark, France, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland), in the national languages. Among other questions, respondents were asked to evaluate 'conventional' and 'alternative' options for using and promoting agrobiodiversity in food supply chains, using a scale ranging from 'excellent' to 'bad'. An important clarification is that respondents did not have to choose between the two options, but could like or dislike both. In addition, workshops of 8-15 consumers were organised in the different countries to better understand why they prefer particular ways of using or promoting agrobiodiversity in food supply chains, taking the minor cereals or legumes studied in DIVINFOOD as concrete examples of NUCs. Both in the online survey and in the workshops, alternative options, highlighted as favourable to agrobiodiversity in the scientific literature and by farmers themselves, have been better evaluated than conventional options (Fig.1).



**Figure 1.** How consumers evaluate options for using agrobiodiversity in food supply chains? (results of the online survey; 1,724 respondents, DIVINFOOD project, June-July 2022)

The workshops made it clear that different supply chains and venues were useful and complementary for valorising NUCs: farmers' markets and restaurants provide consumers an opportunity to discover some NUCs for the first time, short and local chains help to develop the reputation of NUCs. Supermarkets and collective catering were also found to be useful for city dwellers who are distant from farms and for developing the NUC market on a larger scale.

## Benefits for farmers and other practitioners

Consumers support agriculture and food supply chains that promote agrobiodiversity: this result is very encouraging for farmers, small-scale processors and retailers who are making a great effort, or would like to commit, to ensuring that our future food does not depend solely on 3 plant species. However, beyond species or varieties, what matters for consumers is knowing the impact of using agrobiodiversity. They are seeking information from seeds to plates, particularly in terms of nutrition and health, and attenuation of climate change. It is also important for them that the products made from neglected and underutilised crops are tasty, convenient and accessible, both economically and in a variety of shops and restaurants.



**Figure 2.** Farmers' market in France (© J.-P. Divet)

Valorising NUCs-based food in a diversity of food supply chains (short, local, regional, etc.) and venues (farmers' markets, restaurants, collective catering, food fairs, supermarkets, etc.), and highlighting the impact of using agrobiodiversity to make food, are concrete ways for practitioners to both meet consumers' expectations for healthy and climate-positive plant-based food and to capture added value. Practitioners and consumers can collaborate to diversify food by diversifying crops, and thus to reverse the decline of agrobiodiversity. The latter is a common good that is essential for the future of everyone and the planet.

## Further information

- **Access the summary of the study, in 8 languages**

- Danish: <https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/D1.1-Comm-Diss-Denmark.pdf>
- English: <https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/D1.1-Comm-Diss-English.pdf>
- French: <https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/D1.1-Comm-Diss-France-20230116.pdf>
- German: <https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/D1.1-Comm-Diss-German.pdf>
- Hungarian: <https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/D1.1-Comm-Diss-Hungarian.pdf>
- Italian: <https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/D1.1-Comm-Diss-Italy.pdf>
- Portuguese: <https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/D1.1-Comm-Diss-Portugal-.pdf>
- Swedish: <https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/D1.1-Comm-Diss-Sweden.pdf>

- **Access the full study report (in English)**

[https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/DIVINFOOD\\_D1.1-White-paper-for-food-chains-actors-for-using-agrobiodiversity.pdf](https://divinfood.eu/divinfood/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/DIVINFOOD_D1.1-White-paper-for-food-chains-actors-for-using-agrobiodiversity.pdf)

- **Access the scientific publication (open access)**

Chiffolleau Y., Dourian T., Enderli G., Mattioni D., Akermann G., Loconto A., Galli F., Emese G., Perényi Z., Colombo L., Massari S., Desclaux D., 2023. Reversing the trend of agrobiodiversity decline by co-developing food chains with consumers: A European survey for change. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 46, 343-354, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2024.02.032>, <https://zenodo.org/records/13620047>

## About this practice abstract and DIVINFOOD

**Publisher:** INRAE

**Authors:** Yuna Chiffolleau

**Permalink:** [10.5281/zenodo.13998523](https://zenodo.org/records/13998523)

This practice abstract was elaborated in the DIVINFOOD project, based on examples provided by the EIP AGRI.

DIVINFOOD - Co-constructing interactive short and mid-tier food chains to value agrobioDiversity IN healthy plant-based FOOD, is running **from March 2022 to Feb 2027**.

**The overall goal** of DIVINFOOD (a multi-actor, participatory project) is to facilitate the use and increase the value of Neglected and Underutilised Crops (NUCs) in food chains to foster healthier diets and more sustainable food systems.

**Project website:** [www.divinfood.eu](http://www.divinfood.eu)

© 2024