

Some of the wheat varieties propagated in Georgia



1. გვაწა ზანდური / Gvatsa Zanduri
(*T. monococcum* L.) Local Variety of Spring Hulled Wheat



2. ჩელტა ზანდური / Chelta Zanduri
(*T. timopheevii* Zhuk.) - Variety of Georgian Endemic Hulled Wheat



3. კოლხური ასლი / Kolkhian Emmer
(*T. palaeo-colchicum* Men.) - Variety of Georgian Endemic Hulled Wheat



4. შავი დიკა / Shavi Dika
(*Triticum carthlicum* Nevsky) - Variety of the Georgian Endemic Spring Mountain Wheat



5. წითელი თავუჭი / Tsiteli Tavtukhi
(*T. durum* Desf.) - Local Variety of Spring Hard Wheat



6. ჩელტა მახა / Chelta Makha
(*T. macha* Dek. & Men.) - Variety of the Georgian Endemic Hulled Wheat



7. ახალციხური წითელი დოლი
Akhaltsikhuri Tsiteli Doli
(*Triticum aestivum* L. var. *ferrugineum*) - Local Variety of Winter Soft Wheat



Biological Farming Association ELKANA Georgia

Caucasus region belongs to the Western Asian center of the origin of the cultivated plants. Among others, according to the historical, archeological and biological findings Georgia is considered to be one of the main genetic centers of origin of wheat species. Georgia is a homeland of 5 endemic wheat species out of 14 and of a large number of local varieties of all 14 species. But this great diversity of genetic resources has been under threat for almost one hundred years, especially due to the Soviet agricultural politics of concentration and specialization and after that due to the political instabilities in the country...

Elkana has been working on recovery and re-introduction of local wheat varieties for several years. Within the framework of the project entitled Recovery, Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Georgia's Agro-biodiversity (2004-2009), financed by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Elkana addressed the survival of indigenous cultivated plant varieties through their re-introduction, conservation and dissemination to the farmers. Dika and Akhaltsikhe (Meskhetian) Tsiteli Doli wheat varieties are among the wheat and legume crop varieties recovered and re-introduced with the project's support.

Since 2009, ELKANA has been proceeding to work on the conservation of Georgian wheat varieties within the framework of the EcoAward Program, which is initiated and funded by BP and its partners – BTC and SCP and administered by Eurasia Partnership Foundation. The farmers of Samtskhe-Javakheti region have been supplied with the seed material of Tsiteli Doli wheat within the framework of the project. The yield of these farmers made possible to provide customers in Tbilisi with Tsiteli Doli bread regularly, though in small quantities.

ELKANA is planning to continue its work on the recovery and conservation of other local wheat varieties in future...

Since April 2009 Elkana is also involved in the collaborative research program funded by the European Commission and coordinated by the University of Bologna - BaSeFood (Sustainable exploitation of bioactive components from the Black Sea area traditional foods). In the frame of BaSeFood, traditional foods of the Black Sea area are being thoroughly documented with the coordination of Hellenic Health Foundation (HHF, Greece). Bioactive of 33 selected foods are being scientifically investigated by means of rigorous analytical and biological assays, carried out in coordination with the Instituto Nacional de Saude (INSA, Lisbon, Portugal), Institute of Food Research (IFR - Norwich, UK), Institute of Medical Research (Belgrade), Uzhhorod National University (Ukraine) and UNIBO. Considering a vast array of characteristics of traditional foods and consumers issues, project aims to put health claims in a favorable context, to be properly understood by people and exploited by processor stakeholders. In the frame of this project a traditional Georgian Bread from Tsiteli Doli will be also investigated.

Elkana works not only on conservation of wheat varieties, but also on their popularization and promotion of Georgian bread baking traditions in and outside of the country through publications, media and various events:



Bread Festival in Samtskhe-Javakheti region, 2010



Tsiteli Doli Bread in organic shop "Bio Valley"



International Bread Festival in France, 2009



Bread baking and food tasting at Elkana office, 2010



Dika and Tsiteli Doli wheats at Elkana demonstration plot in Tsnisi



Exhibition of local wheat varieties at the Bread Festival 2010