



Linda is the best potato of the year 2007

Linda is a potato variety which has many fans because of its exceptional taste. The impending loss of Linda moves a lot of people. They have become attached to this variety, and some of them even call it "Queen of potatoes". Linda almost always comes off well in test meals. On 23 February 2007, for example, the first bio-potato test meal with 120 persons took place in Lübeck, and this variety clearly took first place.

What is also at issue in the discussions about Linda is the question whether a successful potato variety can simply be taken off the market or not. The issue is whether the rights of consumers and farmers to a free choice of potato varieties are rated lower than the right of a market-leading cultivation company to removing a popular variety shortly before the end of the protection period. The election of Linda signals the displeasure at this consolidated decision as well as solidarity with the farmers and consumers who commit themselves to the survival of Linda. Application procedures for a readmission of Linda are being in progress in several European countries at the moment.

The right to making exclusive use of the plant varieties protection for 30 years is opposed by the right of the general public to use this variety free of royalties afterwards. Only if the variety then passes into public cultural possessions, the monopoly granted by the state can be accepted. This particularly applies to basic food stuff where moral reasons can among other things be said against an exclusive use.

Linda was cultivated by Friedrich Böhm, Saat-zucht Böhm (Böhm seed cultivation), Trauen, from the varieties Hansa and Clivia. Plant varieties protection was granted by the German Federal Office for Plant Varieties in 1974. Saat-zucht Böhm merged with other North German cultivation companies to become Europlant Pflanz-zucht GmbH in the 90ies. The plant varieties protection was used by Europlant Pflanz-zucht GmbH in the following years.

In the past, other breeding companies in Germany were also entitled to breed and sell the so-called "free varieties" free of royalties after these 30 years (e.g. Gloria, Sieglinde, Hansa, Nicola, Selma). Shortly before expiration of the 30-year plant varieties protection, Linda was deregistered by the management of the variety owner Europlant Pflanz-zucht GmbH. This step was met with astonishment among experts. Usually, varieties will only be deregistered if it turns out after only a few years that they have little prospect of succeeding in the market. But with Linda it is different, many farmers successfully cultivate it and many consumers want to eat the Linda variety still in future.

The Federal Institution for Research on the Growing of Cultivated Plants (Bundesanstalt für Züchtungs-forschung an Kulturpflanzen = BAZ) pointed out that negative correlations between different cultivation targets exist in the growing of plants. Changes in quality can for example be found over the decades as a result of cultivation. Transportability and storage capacity, resistance and profit have increased on the one hand, but the sensory quality, the health value and the share of active and valuable substances has decreased at the same time.

This interrelation is another important reason to support old varieties and their special taste today, taking the Linda variety as an example and thus appoint it "Potato of the year 2007".

Jury:

Thomas Dosch, President of Bioland Deutschland
Georg Janßen, Federal Manager of Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (AbL)
Walter Kress, member of the board at Slow Food Deutschland
Dr. Heidi Lorey, member of the board at Verein zur Erhaltung der Nutzpflanzenvielfalt (VEN)
Rudolf Vögel, member of the board at Verein zur Erhaltung und Rekultivierung von Nutzpflanzen in Brandenburg (VERN)
Bettina Eichblatt, Museumsdorf am Kiekeberg, Lüneburger Landgarten project
Karsten Ellenberg, Bioland farmer, potato cultivator (www.kartoffelvielfalt.de)
Wilfried Stegmann, competence centre Ökolandbau Niedersachsen (KÖN)