**Hellenic Republic**



**The Agricultural University of Athens,**

**The International and Public Relations Office,**

Address: 75 Iera Odos Str.

GR-118 55, Athens, Greece

Information: Rania Hindiridou,

Tel.: (+30) 210 5294841,

e-mail: [public.relations@aua.gr](mailto:public.relations@aua.gr)

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**Press Release**

**The Agricultural University of Athens has undertaken the initiative for the inscription of the element “Local and** **indigenous agricultural varieties: knowledge and practices” on the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greece, in collaboration with Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources – Greek Gene Bank of the Hellenic Agricultural Organisation – DIMITRA.**

On Friday, June 24 2022, according to the Ministerial Decree Reference Number 300792, the inscription of the element “Local and native agricultural varieties: knowledge and practices” on the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greece was approved, because it forms an expression of the long-term human-nature interaction, which has led to the food products manufacture and the production of other goods, highlighting their crucial role for the survival of local populations during the past, inasmuch their significance for the formation of cultural practices, as far as their production and consumption is concerned.

The Agricultural University of Athens in cooperation with Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources – Greek Gene Bank of the Hellenic Agricultural Organisation – DIMITRA has undertaken the initiative for the inscription of the element “Local and indigenous agricultural varieties: knowledge and practices.” The local and native agricultural varieties constitute a fundamental feature, not only of the inhabitants of the rural area, but also of the memory and gastronomic experience of the urban space. These are the varieties the farmer has co-created, along with each natural place in the depths of the ages, thus contributing to their biodiversity, on the choices made and the invention of growing methods.

The local and indigenous agricultural varieties pertain to many agricultural species, for example “Rodi Ermionis”, “Prespa beans”, the dried figs “Taxiarchis” of northern Evia, Einkorn wheat “Kaploutzas”, exquisite Greek vine varieties , “Englouvis” lentils from Lefkada Island, oily and table olives, Fava “Feneou” and “Santorinis”, “Corinthian” raisin-currant, the pea cultivar “Katsouni” of Amorgos Island, are local and indigenous varieties.

The previously mentioned inscription on the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greece bears the following title: “Local and indigenous agricultural varieties: knowledge and practices.” This inscription is indeed, the “fruit” of a scientific research work all over Greece and the experience of tens of years of the two Institutions in collaboration with a large number of farmers bodies, besides individual farmers forming a valuable acknowledgement of the great contribution of people living in rural societies to the agricultural culture of our country.

It is worth mentioning that towards such a step, on behalf of the Agricultural University of Athens, several people have done their utmost, namely the Head of the Laboratory of Plant Breeding and Biometry, Professor Penelope J. Bebeli, the Head of the Viticulture Laboratory, Associate Professor Katerina Biniari, Maritina Stavrakaki, Assistant Professor and Despoina Bouza, Laboratory Teaching Staff of the Viticulture Lab also included. Furthermore, Dr. Ralli Parthenopi, Researcher of the Greek Gene Bank of the Institute of Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources of the Hellenic Agricultural Organisation – DIMITRA and Dr. Ricos Thanopoulos, Agronomist, currently on a posting from the Agricultural University of Athens to the Hellenic Agricultural Organisation – DIMITRA, have greatly conduced to that accomplishment.

Henceforth, knowledge and practices in relation to local and indigenous agricultural varieties are recognized by an important UN Institution. This recognition marks a new starting point in the effort put into saving the local and native varieties of our country.