

Anti-GMO Movement in Korea and Native Seed Protection Activities

Korean Women Peasant Association

1. Anti-GMO Movement in Korea

1) Introduction of Korea Anti-GMO Network

The Korea Anti-GMO Network (“KAGN”) is a gathering of alternative movement groups engaging in anti-GMO activities for the purpose of driving out genetically modified organisms that threaten our food and ecosystem from Korea and further from the world so as to revitalize agriculture and agricultural areas which have been impoverished.

<Participating Groups> as of September 2013

Korea Catholic Farmers’ Movement, Green Review, Dure Coop, Slow Food Korea, iCOOP Consumer Activities, **Woorinong Urban Community Representative Association**, Woorimil HQ, Wonju Cooperative Social Economy Network, National Office of Return to Farm Movement, Korean Peasants League, Korean Women Peasant Association, Korea Right Farming Association, Korean Institute for the Study of Rural Societies, Hansalim, Happy Coop, Korea Federation of Sustainable Agriculture Organizations, Heuksalim, Schoolbob Network

※ Producers’ associations, consumer cooperatives, school meal organizations, and civil associations have joined the efforts.

① Campaign Direction of KAGN

- * Focusing on the anti-GMO movement to eradicate GMOs from Earth
 - Movements against life patent and biopiracy
 - Movements for preservation of native seeds (preservation of agrobiodiversity)
 - Putting multinationals under surveillance for these movements
- * Activities to promote sustainable development of agriculture/agricultural areas and use of

organic produce as an alternative to GMOs

* GMO-Free zone movement

<Stance>

* We oppose gene modification technologies and GMOs that undermine the dignity of life, threaten our health and ecosystem, and put farmers' and consumers' right to live at risk.

* We seek to encourage cultivation and use of organic produce on our land as an alternative to GMOs, thereby enhancing food self-sufficiency and changing public awareness about agriculture and agricultural areas.

* We seek to transform the dominant trend and lifestyle that devalue life and chase materialism into the sustainable and alternative ones for the sake of our neighbors, future generations and the Earth by promoting anti-GMO movements so as to make this society and the Earth a better place to live for our descendants.

② Major Activity

* The KAGN is pressing the government and the National Assembly through consumer declarations, signature gathering, press conference, etc. to pass the revision bill of the Food Sanitation Act which has tightened GMO labeling requirements.

* The KAGN has filed a civil complaint with relevant local authorities about unapproved GMOs growing on fields, in cooperation with women farmers who are protecting and commercializing native seeds. It is also planning to bring an administrative lawsuit in case the civil complaint is not resolved.

* The KAGN is carrying out activities to induce the establishment of laws and regulations on preservation and development of native seeds as part of efforts to protect native seeds and biodiversity.

* The KAGN has published books showing the efforts of women farmers to explore and protect native seeds on their fields.

2. Native Seed Protection Activities

1) Native Seed Protection Campaign by Korean Women Peasant Association

Seeds are not just a source of food, but a valuable resource that reflects our multi-millennial history and culture and diverse genes of life. Seeds are harvests that farmers gain as a result of their productive activities and at the same time, they provide the means for the next year agricultural production. Farmers cherish the seeds, so there is an old saying, “A farmer does not give his seed away to others even when he is dying.”

● Campaign Goal

- ① Keeping in mind that preserving native seeds is a way to protect the right of farmers, the KWPA strives to explore ways to guarantee the right of women farmers who have preserved native seeds.
- ② The KWPA plans to collect the outcomes of its native seed preservation campaigns and compile the list of seeds protected by women farmers. It also carries out field surveys visiting rural villages and meeting farmers who have preserved native seeds.
- ③ The KWPA encourages rural areas to select a person who will represent each city and county in carrying out campaigns for protection of native seeds and come up with a plan for such campaigns.
- ④ The KWPA seeks to establish specific objectives such as ensuring one woman farmer to protect one native seed.
- ⑤ The KWPA plans to open a so-called Native School to provide opportunities to understand why native seeds should be preserved and how such seeds are planted and cultivated in an eco-friendly way.
- ⑥ The KWPA endeavors to discover individuals and groups who have preserved native seeds and carry out engagement activities to strengthen their ties, thereby ensuring the

number of women farmers making such efforts to increase.

- ⑦ The KWPA seeks to expand the activities for preservation of native seeds by reaching out to the public through campaigns such as Happiness of 10,000 won.

● Major Activities

① Seed Farm for Native Seeds

- The KWPA clarifies where the responsibility for management of seed farms lies by appointing a manager or designating seed farms subject to joint cultivation;
- ensures stability in operating seed farms by making alliance with other organizations;
- adheres to the basic principles of pesticide-free production, distribution of traditional ways of farming, and propagation of seeds while the forms of farms are customized to each region; and
- compiles the list of native seeds by province in the first half of the year and combines the lists to make comprehensive one in the second half of the year.

② Preservation of 1 Native Seed per Woman Farmer

- The KWPA sets a specific goal such as encouraging a woman farmer to preserve one native seed, thereby keeping indigenous crops from disappearing;
- reaches out beyond women farmers to other experts in indigenous crops so as to encourage them to protect native seeds; and
- promotes the 1 woman farmer protecting 1 native seed campaign and the purchase of the crops to ensure that the cultivation of native crops would continue.

③ Field Survey of Native Seeds

- The KWPA has every city and county come up with its own plan to explore native seeds;
- conducts a field survey where local residents can participate so that the field survey provides an opportunity to learn about the native seed protection campaigns;
- supports other cities and counties which do not engage in such campaigns to ensure they conduct their own field surveys;

- sets up a 1–year plan for field survey training so that such training is provided to cities and counties;
- ensures that the field survey is not a one–time event by visiting the site frequently to observe the growth of crops and scrutinize the way of cultivation and history of seeds; and
- trains researchers who conduct field surveys and has them record the results of their surveys taking photographs or video clips, or publishing books with the support of the central organization.

④ Regional Policy and System Transformation

- The KWPA secures markets for indigenous crops by having relevant laws and regulations enacted or revised and consolidates the foundation for cultivation of native crops by having laws on food processing added;
- organizes the private–public consultative body to discuss native seed projects and establish relevant policies;
- shares case stories with other regions so that the regions without relevant laws and regulations put in place can introduce ones while the regions with such laws and regulations can actually carry out campaigns;
- establishes seed distribution centers (seed bank, seed library, etc.) for seeds that cannot be protected only through seed sharing; and
- makes such centers a place where people can get along with others and exchange their knowledge and expertise about native seeds (launching ceremony, festival, general assembly, seed sharing through five–day markets, etc.)

⑤ Native School

- The KWPA operates Native School in order to follow in the footsteps of an international farmers’ movement organization named Via Campesina which has implemented its strategic goals such as supplying seeds to farmers, promoting eco–agriculture and providing education to farmers;
- plans to open Native School for two days in Gyeongnam at the end of June and encourages women farmers living in the region where the native seed protection campaign is not conducted to actively participate in the program; and
- plans to open a central school in the first half and a local school targeting women

farmers of each province in the second half of the year.

⑥ Native Seed Festivals

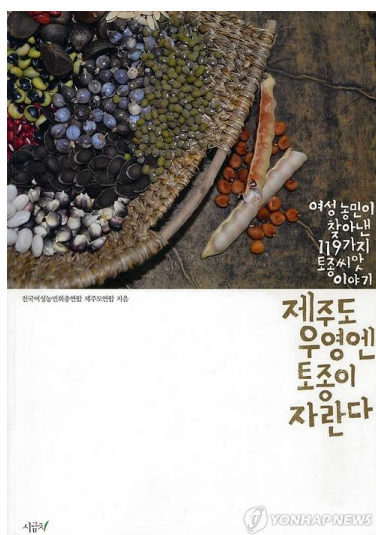
- A central native seed festival where representatives of each region gather to engage and network with urban consumers provides an opportunity to promote and draw attention to the KWPA activities.
- A local native seed festival where local farmers producing native seeds get along with each other provides an opportunity to link those who have native seeds and those who plant such seeds and see substantial results of local campaigns.

⑦ Happiness of 10,000 won

- The KWPA ensures that the cases of Hongcheon Women Peasant Association and Happy Cooperatives spread, encourages the happiness of 10,000 won campaign to be conducted by region, and promotes exchanges with other groups.

2) Local Cases

● Jeju



- Women farmers visited villages in Jeju where farmers having protected native seeds were living and met them in person to collect data about native seeds during the year 2012, resulting in the publication of a book titled 'Native Crops Grow in Jeju Farms' on

June 12, 2013.

● **Hongcheon, Gangwon**

- The Hongcheon Women Peasant Association in Gangwon Province signed the <Agreement on Joint Cultivation of Native Seed Farm> with Korean Women Link Coop. They meet every month to raise native crops together.

● **Euiseong, Gyeongbuk**

- Women farmers in Euiseong built the <Euiseong Regional Agriculture Research Center Native Garden> and have worked together. Since March 2010, they have formed and operated small groups in the Regional Agriculture Research Center, recruited members and run a seed farm to share and protect native seeds.