NEW SITES RECOGNIZED IN 2025 AS GLOBALLY IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE SYSTEMS GIAHS IN THE WORLD

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In 2025, during a meeting of the GIAHS Scientific Advisory Group from 19 to 21 May, Six new sites in Brazil, China, Mexico and Spain, have been recognized as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems GIAHS.

With the latest addition to the global agricultural heritage systems list, FAO's worldwide agricultural heritage network now comprises of 95 systems in 28 countries.

The information on the website presents the six new GIAHS included in the list:

Shade-grown Erva Mate in Paraná, Brazil. For centuries, Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities in southern Brazil have cultivated erva-mate in shaded agroforestry systems rooted in ancestral and agroecological practices. By integrating food crops, native fruits, and forest products, the system strengthens biodiversity, food sovereignty, and cultural identity, while helping conserve the Araucaria Forest, one of the planet's most endangered biodiversity hotspots and a vital reservoir of life.

Deqing Freshwater Pearl Mussels Composite Fishery System in Zhejiang Province, China. In Deqing County, China, farmers have sustained an 800-year-old fish-mussel co-cultivation system that merges aquaculture, agriculture, and craftsmanship. Centered on Shelled Pearl Mussel techniques, it yields pearls, rice, silk, and more. This circular system enhances biodiversity, food security, and cultural heritage, offering global insights into sustainable farming, ecological balance, and rural development.

Fuding White Tea Culture System in Fujian Province, China. In Fuding, China, centuries-old white tea cultivation blends ecological wisdom and craftsmanship. Centered on the Lüxueya mother tree and natural withering techniques, this system integrates tea gardens with forests and crops, preserving biodiversity and supporting rural livelihoods. Deep cultural roots, rituals, and traditions reflect a strong bond between people, tea, and the land.

Gaolan Shichuan Ancient Pear Orchard System in Gansu Province, China. In Shichuan, a 600-year-old agroforestry system thrives along the Yellow River, where towering pear trees are cultivated using the traditional "Gaotian" method. Integrating fruit trees, crops, and livestock, it preserves ancient varieties like Ruan'er and Dongguo. Resilient to droughts and floods, the system sustains agrobiodiversity, food security, and rural livelihoods, reflecting harmony between tradition and ecology.

Metepantle Ancestral Agricultural System in Tlaxcala, México**.** For over 3,000 years, farming families in Tlaxcala have sustained the Metepantle system, a terraced mosaic of maize, agave, beans, squash, and wild plants. Rooted in Nahua knowledge, it preserves seeds, supports dryland biodiversity, and anchors local food systems and livelihoods, offering resilience and cultural continuity in one of Mexico's most climate-vulnerable regions.

Agricultural Systems in Jable and Volcanic Sands in Lanzarote Island, Spain**.** On the arid island of Lanzarote, where black volcanic fields evoke a lunar landscape, farmers have developed a striking agricultural system. Using volcanic lapilli (enarenado) and sea sand (jable) to capture moisture and protect the soil, they grow grapes, sweet potatoes, and legumes. This approach sustains biodiversity, livelihoods and cultural heritage in one of Europe's driest regions, largely without irrigation.

Kaveh Zahedi, Director of the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and environment at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) highlighted that "Amid the increasing impacts of climate variability and extremes and biodiversity loss on agriculture and farmers, these systems are bright spots showing how communities can draw upon age old knowledge systems and practices to put food on the table, protect jobs and livelihoods and maintain unique and sustainable agricultural landscapes. Agricultural heritage systems are living examples of harmony between people and nature that have thrived and evolved through generations and have much to teach us as we adapt to an uncertain future.

The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) are agroecosystems inhabited by communities that maintain an intricate relationship with their territory. These evolving sites are resilient systems characterized by remarkable agrobiodiversity, traditional knowledge, invaluable cultures and landscapes; they are sustainably managed by farmers, herders, fisherfolk, and forest people in ways that contribute to their livelihoods and food security. Under FAO's GIAHS (Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems) programme, the selected sites demonstrate global importance through their contributions to food and livelihood security, agro-biodiversity, sustainable knowledge systems and practices, social values and culture as well as outstanding landscapes. Many of these sites showcase exemplary practices that enhance the resilience of agrifood systems to climate change, promote biodiversity use and ensure the sustainable management of ecosystems.

Traditional agriculture systems continue to provide food for nearly two billion people worldwide. They also sustain biodiversity, livelihoods, practical knowledge and cultural heritage. -This global agricultural heritage needs to be recognized and supported in ways that enable it to evolve while continuing to provide essential goods and services for the present and future generations.

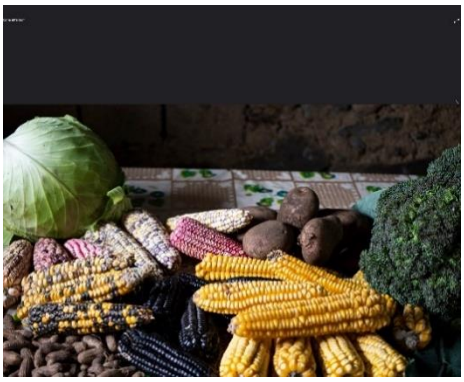
In order to provide systematic support to the conservation and adaptive management of agricultural heritage systems, the GIAHS Programme promotes intervention strategies at three distinct levels:

- At the *Global level,* it facilitates international recognition of the concept of GIAHS wherein globally significant agrobiodiversity is harboured, and it consolidates and disseminates lessons learned and best practices from project activities at the pilot country level.
- At the *National level* in pilot countries, project activities ensure mainstreaming of the GIAHS concept in national sectorial and inter-sectorial plans and policies.
- At the *Local/Site level* in pilot countries, the project activities address conservation and adaptive management at the community level.

Across the world the rapid expansion of industrialization and urbanization is putting a significant number of agricultural heritage systems are at risk of disappearing. Conserving and developing such agricultural practices today

not only helps address major challenges such as increasing agricultural productivity and farmers' income, but also enables the sustainable management of essential natural resources such as water, the conservation of biodiversity and the maintenance of basic ecosystem services that are resilient to climatic change.

Since 2005, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has designated 95 systems in 28 countries as agricultural heritage sites. The GIAHS website allows users to check the list by region and country of the global agricultural heritage sites. In this section it is possible to visit each designated system's dedicated webpage to discover further information, photos, videos, news and stories.



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News in the FAO website

The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Initiative

Twenty years of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems - 2022 FAO publication

Preparation and submission a GIAHS proposal