Agrobiodiversity

WHAT IS AGROBIODIVERSITY?
Agrobiodiversity refers to agriculture and biodiversity.

DID YOU KNOW?
In the Andes Mountains of South America, farmers grow over 3,000 different potato varieties!

HOW PEOPLE CREATE AGROBIODIVERSITY
Over the past 10,000 years people have created countless varieties of crops and livestock breeds.

Each growing season, farmers saved seeds or took cuttings from the plants that grew well in local soils and weather conditions, or that were best able to resist diseases and insect pests. Over time, they developed varieties that produced food under varying environmental conditions. Farmers also alter soils and other parts of the landscape, and this in turn affects biodiversity.

The knowledge traditional farmers have about crop varieties is astonishing. In India, women grow, harvest, and cook over 100 varieties of rice.
When people moved to different parts of the world, they took their seeds and farm animals with them. Farmers bred new varieties of crops and livestock that suited the new growing conditions.

As people select crop plants and livestock for different traits, they create new varieties.

Wild cabbage is the ancestor of many different food plants. People bred wild cabbage for different plant parts.

- Brussels sprouts (for lateral buds)
- Kale (for leaves)
- Kohlrabi (for round, fleshy stems)
- Broccoli (for green flowers and stems)
- Cauliflower (for flowers)
- Wild cabbage plant

Genes, together with the environment, determine the traits of living things. Add human ingenuity and experimentation, and you get the diversity of vegetables, fruits, grains, and meats we eat today!