



## THE ASSOCIATION OF POTATO BIODIVERSITY GUARDIANS FROM CENTRAL PERÚ

- a new model of  
self-organization  
for benefit sharing

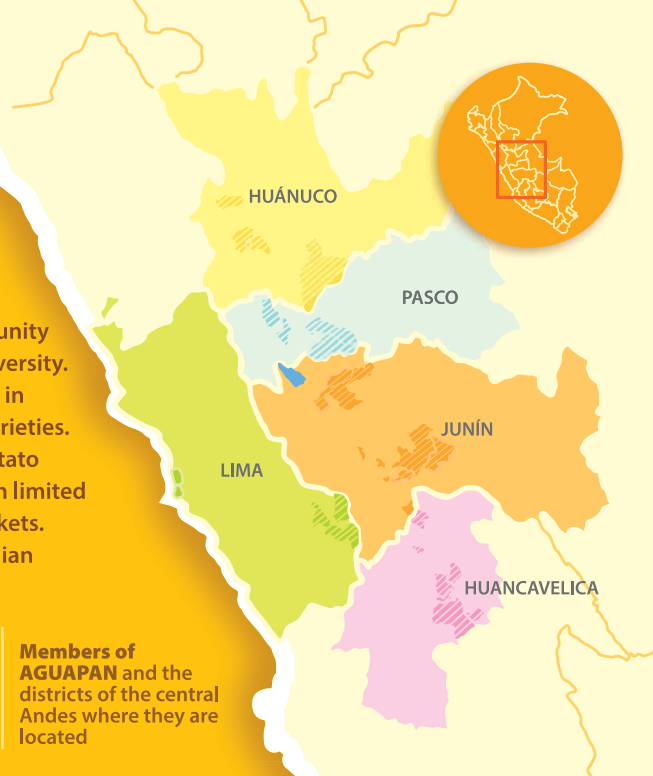


# AGUAPAN

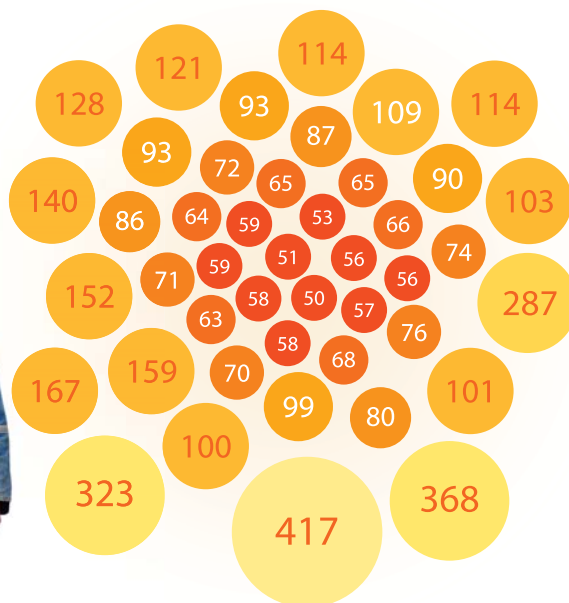
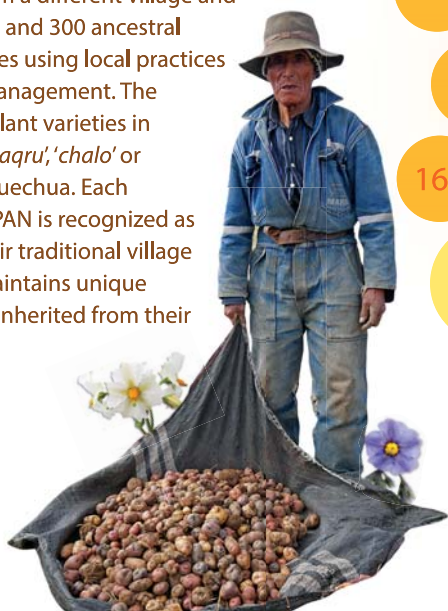
## What is AGUAPAN?

AGUAPAN is an association of “custodian” farmers whose special concern is to maintain the varietal diversity of Andean potatoes from Central Peru and assure that its members have the opportunity to improve their wellbeing while conserving biodiversity. Typically, custodian farmers have a special interest in maintaining unique family collections of potato varieties. Yet, the same farmers that maintain the world’s potato biodiversity often live in conditions of poverty with limited access to health care, education or high-value markets. AGUAPAN, through the self-organization of custodian farmers, aims to build a direct link with government and the private sector for benefit sharing initiatives that aim to support agrobiodiversity conservation while improving the livelihood conditions of farmers.

Members of AGUAPAN and the districts of the central Andes where they are located



AGUAPAN was created in 2013 and registered in Huancayo in June of 2014, with 47 households from 5 regions of central Peru as initial members. The farmer families belonging to AGUAPAN are from the highland regions of Huánuco, Junín, Pasco, Huancavelica and Lima. Each member of AGUAPAN is from a different village and grows between 50 and 300 ancestral varieties of potatoes using local practices of soil and seed management. The farmers typically plant varieties in mixtures called ‘chaqru’, ‘chalo’ or ‘wachuy’ in local Quechua. Each member of AGUAPAN is recognized as a custodian by their traditional village authorities and maintains unique family collections inherited from their grandparents.

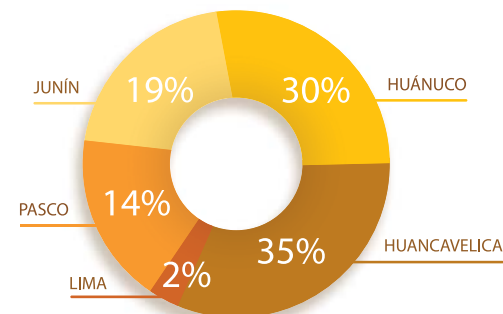


NUMBER OF DISTINCT POTATO LANDRACES GROWN BY EACH AGUAPAN MEMBER, 2016



## How did AGUAPAN emerge?

The creation of AGUAPAN emerged from the recognition that there are no organizations represented by farmers themselves when it comes to protecting traditional varieties and assuring derived benefits for farmers. While the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Nagoya Protocol propose benefit sharing to support smallholders, organizations self-representing custodian farmers were non-existent. AGUAPAN is a response to this situation as it is 100% composed of custodian farmers representing diversity from close to 50 communities.



PERCENTAGE OF UNIQUE POTATO LANDRACES BY DEPARTMENTS, AGUAPAN, 2016



## Why is AGUAPAN needed?

**First off all**, to create awareness and knowledge among custodian farmers themselves about their common challenges and ways to improve their living conditions while conserving biodiversity. Farmers are often not aware of international treaties and custodian farmers live in isolated mountain communities. **Second**, to have a channel for government and the private sector to work on benefit sharing initiatives directly with an organization that actually represents the interests of custodian farmer’s themselves. This way linkage between investors and benefactors can be horizontal and direct.

## The principles of AGUAPAN

- **Openness:** every farmer household that can show they have been maintaining more than 50 varieties for two generations (father-son, mother-daughter) and is recognized by their village authorities can become a member.
- **Direct is best:** dialogue and investment between farmers and companies for benefit sharing initiatives without transaction costs.
- **Self-determination:** the custodian farmers themselves best know their needs and how to attend these.
- **Trust and transparency:** information needs to be shared openly and widely between farmer members
- **Good governance:** elected farmer leaders, clear responsibilities, gender balance and continuous improvement



## How does AGUAPAN invest funds?

Since its creation AGUAPAN has been financially supported by HZPC, a Dutch potato breeding and potato seed company. The main investment consists of about 850 Peruvian soles that each farmer receives to support household-level needs. Depending on the household, funds are invested in child education, health care or farm inputs<sup>1</sup>. Remaining funds are using to support one annual meeting of all the AGUAPAN members and regular meetings of the elected leadership.

Currently AGUAPAN is able to support 50 members from 50 different communities. However, with more companies joining the initiative the farmer association hopes to grow to 150 members by 2020.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.euroseeds.eu/system/files/publications/files/aquapan\\_2016-03\\_eng.pdf](https://www.euroseeds.eu/system/files/publications/files/aquapan_2016-03_eng.pdf) • <http://www.perupas.com/aguapan>  
[www.yanapai.org](http://www.yanapai.org)

## How can you support AGUAPAN?

After four years of successful benefit sharing with 50 custodian households we aim to grow to incorporate more members. **We invite you to get involved and help make this happen!**

**How?** For example, you can link your company through a social corporate responsibility scheme, directly support a group of families to become a member, or invest in the documentation of AGUAPAN's diversity in a catalogue. There are also other ways, depending on your interest and possibilities.

If you want to get involved and support AGUAPAN, contact its farmer leaders or a member of the support group:

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