EXPLORATION, COLLECTING AND DESCRIPTION OF in situ AGRO-DIVERSITY OF CHILI (Capsicum annuum and Capsicum chinense) IN A MEXICAN COMMUNITY

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At Yucatan Peninsula from Mexico there is a great diversity of chili landraces (C. annuum and C. chinense). However it is unknown at regional, national and so much less international level even few researches systematized on morphological variability and its use have not been done. At community of Yaxcaba, Yucatan, Mexico, during 1999 was conducted a prospecting on chili diversity where the objective was gathering all information in order to determine the traits preferred by farmers of each local variety and landraces diversity of chili preserved on-farm. As part of the project “strengthening of the scientific basis of in situ conservation of agricultural diversity on-farm: Mexico country component” were surveyed 62 household where is was recorded information on name and number of variety cultivated and/or used, place where are growing (farmer field, home garden, pot or into orchard), morphological criteria used to distinguish each variety and human use (cooking, special dishes or medicinal). In addition ten plants chose randomly by farmer variety or landrace were characterized by qualitative and quantitative traits. Once were 102 samples collected, described and identified at Maya community of Yaxcaba it was determined that there are eight different morphotypes. Seven of them belong to C. annuum known locally as Dulce, Xcat’ic, Ya’ax ic, Cha’huac, Pico paloma, Sucurre and Maax, and one more called “habanero” from the specie C. chinense. Ya’ax ic landrace is being cultivated by 38% of farmers, after that habanero is the second in importance (17%), and the last one Pico paloma by 1% sowing in the farmer field and within orchard, respectively. Ya’ax ic landrace is being cultivated by 38% of farmers, after that habanero is the second in importance (17%), and the last one Pico paloma by 1% sowing in the farmer field and within orchard, respectively. Ya’ax ic was distinguished by long and cylindrical fruit and used to cooking a special dish called “Relleno Negro”. On the other hand habanero was identified by its high pungency. All data indicated that at community level is being preserved broad variability of chili landraces as C. annuum as C. chinense recognized by local names. In the home garden often was found C. annuum var. aviculare (wild relative) growing closing to local varieties.