

Online Resource 4. Examples of timelines for maize landrace abandonment in the families

Situation 1. Older generation resisting the change

This was the case for a farmer from Tlalnepantla who was cultivating the Ancho and Del Monte landraces in 1967 when he donated seed to the genebank (Figure 1). In 1980 he introduced avocados in their nearby plots, cultivating maize in between fruit tree rows while the trees grew, until the shade would impede it. In 1990 the donor-farmer stopped cultivating his most distant plots because of his age and abandoned his Del Monte landrace. He continued cultivating a small area with Ancho in his backyard to provide the household with fresh corn-on-the-cob. He continued until 2000, when he was no longer able to farm. After his death, his children abandoned maize cultivation completely and continued with the more profitable crops: avocado and nopal.

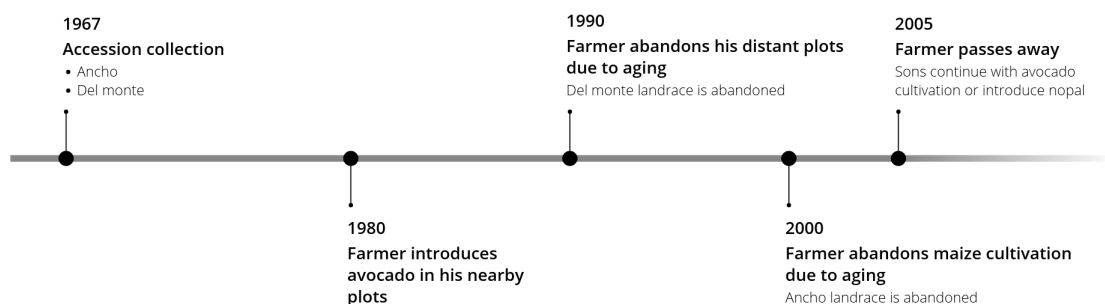


Figure 1. Timeline for maize landrace abandonment by a family in Tlalnepantla, Tlalnepantla

Situation 2. Younger generation resisting the change

This was the case for a farmer from Ahuehuetzingo who was cultivating the Ancho landrace in 1967 (Figure 2). When his son-in-law left for an off-farm job between 1990 and 2001, the farmer introduced hybrids and abandoned the Ancho landrace. At his return, the son-in-law took over maize cultivation. He was interested in planting landraces because he had access to the large traditional market of Xoxocotla, in the municipality of Puente de Ixtla. In this market, landraces could obtain a premium price. However, because his family no longer conserved Ancho he had to obtain a different landrace from the market.

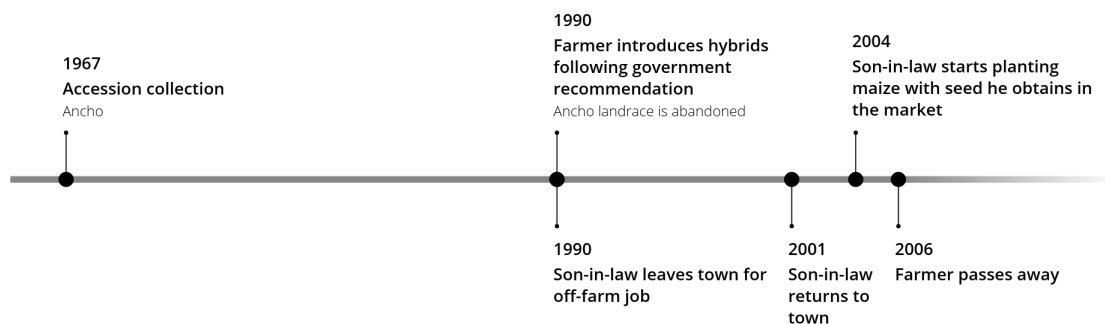


Figure 2. Timeline for maize landrace abandonment by a family in Ahuehuetzingo, Puente de Ixtla

Situation 3. Both generations resisting the change

This was the case for a farmer from Tepoztlan who was cultivating Ancho in 1967 while his daughter found a non-agricultural occupation (Figure 3). The family preferred their landrace because it was adapted to their rocky hillside plots. These plots were unsuitable for mechanization and were cultivated under a traditional system called *tlacolol*.¹ In 1973 the farmer passed away, but his son-in-law was able to take over the plots and continue cultivating Ancho. However, when his son-in-law passed away in 1998, his daughter could not take over the labor-intensive cultivation of their plots and was forced to abandon Ancho cultivation. During the interview she expressed that she would have continued cultivating her landrace in her plots if she could.

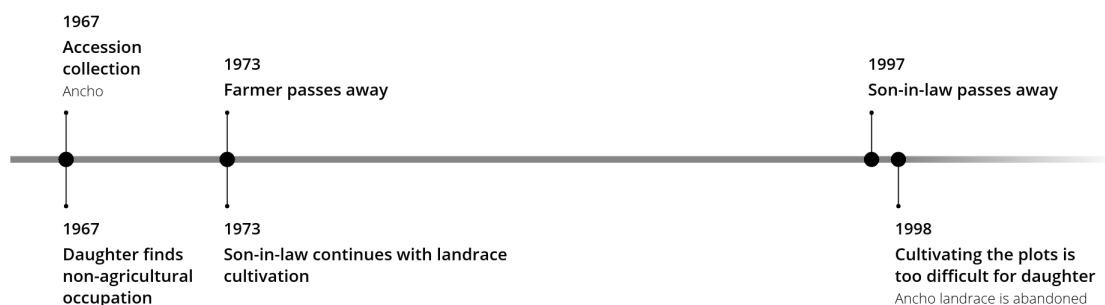


Figure 3. Timeline for maize landrace abandonment for a family in Tepoztlán, Tepoztlán

References:

Barrera, C. H. 1999. *Tlacolol: Sistema Agroforestal del Trópico Seco*. Tesis profesional. División de Ciencias Forestales. Chapingo, México: Universidad Autónoma Chapingo.

¹ Agricultural system similar to slash-and-burn where an area of forest is cultivated for 3 to 7 years and is then left idle for regeneration. It is usually practiced in slopes (25 to 45%), often in rocky soils or soils with rocky outcrops (Barrera 1999). Rocks help retain soil moisture for crops but at the same time preclude mechanized tilling, requiring manual tilling with a hoe, instead.