SEEDS of future humankind
The location of technological innovations in agriculture and agrobusiness

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The objective of this special session is to raise the question of the location of innovative activities in the field of agriculture and agri-food production. The food industry and agriculture are characterized by a very high level of technological innovation. This can be illustrated by the example of multiple innovations in seeds and grains, which make it possible to create new varieties of vegetables, fruits or plants, which will be sold and consumed all over the world. The battle is raging around these varietal innovations, due to the amazing volumes of products consumed, for example in the fields of wheat, rice, tomatoes or apples. It is important to grow fruits, cereals or vegetables whose volumes allow a high level of profitability to be achieved. But also products whose organoleptic characteristics are appreciated by consumers, products which can be preserved for transport, and also which can cope with current climate modifications (like water stress) and health diseases (like epidemy and pests). These innovations are absolutely strategic at the global level, because they contribute to feeding the planet and ensuring the survival of humanity.

A good part of these innovations come from agricultural or peripheral territories, in which research and innovation centers are located. These are often agricultural or industrial clusters, within which technological innovations in seeds or grains are invented and then developed. Where do these businesses stand? Sometimes in the very heart of cities, but more often in rural areas, because the development of these varietal innovations generally requires suitable spaces, such as land or greenhouses, in order to carry out trials and carry out pre-propagation.

What role does space play in the development of these innovations and production in the face of urban concentration and land artificialization?

The objective of this special session is to question the location of these innovative activities, which are particularly important for the future of humanity, and to overcome the following paradox: activities that are absolutely central in economic terms, but located in peripheral areas.

Key Questions:

- What factors determine the location of seed and grain innovation centers?
- How does the spatial location of these centers affect the development and dissemination of seed technologies?
- How do peripheral and urban areas interact to foster technological advancements in seed development?

Call for Contributions:

We invite researchers, policymakers, and industry practitioners to submit papers addressing the following themes:

- Spatial analysis of seeds and grains innovation hubs
- Relational analysis of knowledge exchange between actors in seed and grain innovation
- Institutional analysis of factors that impact regional and industrial development in seed and grain innovation
- Case studies of rural-urban collaborations in seed and grain innovation
- Policy frameworks supporting the balanced geographical distribution of seed and grain innovation