



Old and new plants from the Americas to Europe: potatoes, corn and the genetics of double hybrid corn (1800–1940)

Rural History, Volume 31, Issue 1

BRUNO ESPERANTE, LORENZO FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO, MIGUEL CABO

DOI: 10.1017/S0956793319000396

Published online: 16 April 2020, pp. 53-62

Print publication: April 2020

[Read this article for free](#)

Abstract

We discuss the extension of corn and potatoes in Galician Atlantic agriculture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as an innovation process that facilitated rapid circulation of a new cattle feed from the Americas to Europe. Specifically, we focus on Galicia from 1890 to 1940, a time of significant scientific interest with regard to genetic improvements. This new science made it possible to develop double hybrid corn plants that became widespread after the 1920s. In this article we will describe the conditions accompanying the introduction and spread of these American crops, as recorded by modernist historiography, then analyse the institutional and social framework – knowledge networks, innovation systems and institutional and social tools – that enabled genetic advances in the twentieth century. To accomplish this, we must trace the journey of seeds and knowledge across the Atlantic from places such as the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (1918) to the Galician Biological Mission (1921), among others.

How does Cambridge Core Share work?

Cambridge Core Share allows authors, readers and institutional subscribers to generate a URL for an online version of a journal article. Anyone who clicks on this link will be able to view a read-only, up-to-date copy of the published journal article.