

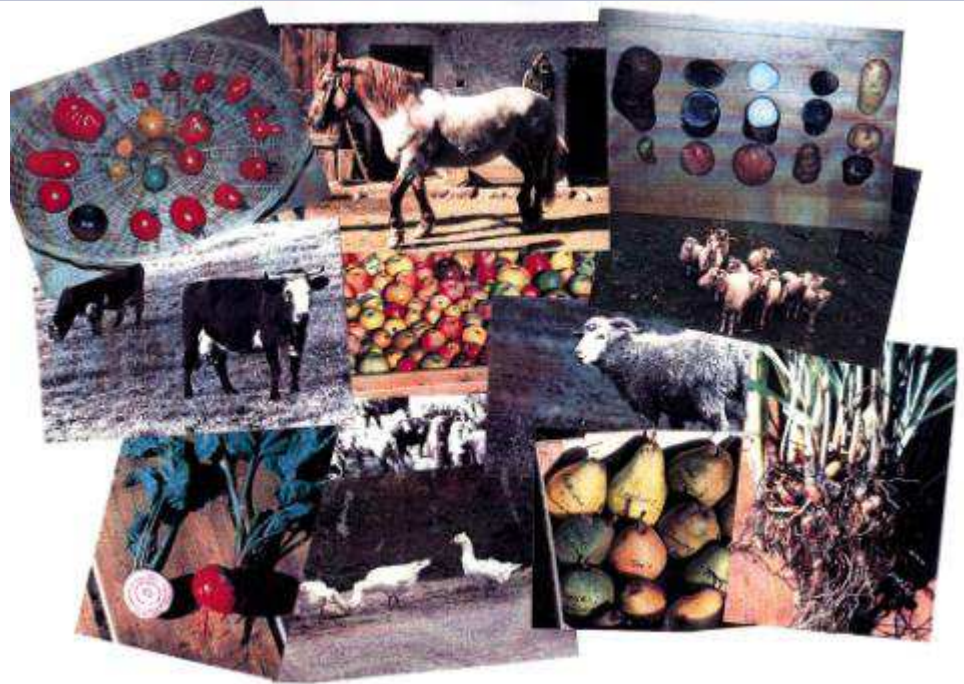


SAVE foundation

Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe
Sicherung der landwirtschaftlichen ArtenVielfalt in Europa
Sauvegarde pour l'Agriculture des Variétés d'Europe

2014

SAVE Foundation Activity Report



Activity Report for the period Summer 2013 – Summer 2014

Foreword

With this annual report SAVE Foundation informs about activities and projects of the SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network. The SAVE NGO (Non Governmental Organizations) Network is made up of 22 regionally and nationally active partners of SAVE, that are members of the SAVE Council of cooperation partners. Also a Board of Directors with 13 members out of 11 countries, the SAVE Project commission and several other partners involved in projects and programs are part of the SAVE Network. The SAVE NGO partners are the basis of SAVE Foundation. They are all accountable partners for the conservation of rare breeds and varieties in their respective country or region. These NGOs take their mission very seriously as it can be seen in various examples of conservation activities throughout Europe. SAVE Foundation also collaborates and networkis mainly through projects, with governmental and international as well as with scientific and technological institutions.

Local farmers and keepers of livestock and crops are also very important actors for conservation of rare breeds and varieties. They can network within the SAVE system: Arca-Net and Variety-Savers are online spaces to meet with people and actions with special interests and aims.

Promoting the special value of the species and their products is important to conservation. Since 2011 SAVE Foundation celebrates the “Arca Deli Award” at the annual meeting. It is for delicacies and innovative services originating from the circles of Arca-Net and Variety-Savers. In 2010 a

test run of the award showed several products and services out of rare breeds and varieties. Special Cheese, Jams, Schnaps, and meat products were entered, as well as didactic information signs and guided tour services. The wide range of products show the innovative and engaged work of farmers, breeders and keepers. These

mentioned products and services is one aspect. Another important aspect of conservation is the influence on the environment and to food security that agrobiodiversity has. With the year of Family Farming 2014 the United Nations show the importance of small farmers for global food security. There is still a gap of knowledge about environmental services. It is not only a funny “gag” that the Turopolje pigs dive for shells in the Save swamps. They fulfill an important environmental service, as do the open-pollinated old varieties in the field. In this sense we thank all activists, supporters, sponsors and sympathizers for their active effort to preserve agricultural biodiversity.



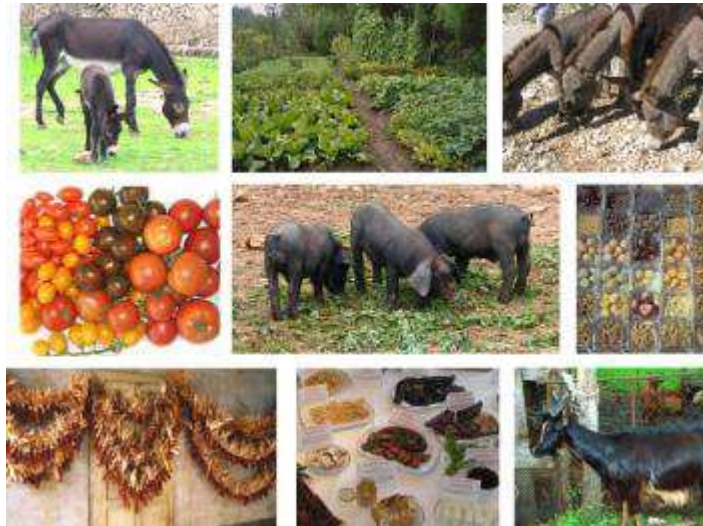
Your SAVE Foundation Team

The Mission of SAVE Foundation

Generations of breeding have given rise to a multiplicity of domesticated animals and plants that are optimally adapted to their specific environment. Today, this genetic, cultural, and historical heritage is increasingly threatened by high performance agriculture. The loss of the diversity of

autochthonous breeds and cultivated plants means a loss of possibilities for sustainable production, especially in marginal areas. These areas often are areas with a special value for na-

ture and, therefore, they need a special near-to-nature management. People in these areas need a sustainable livelihood in order to make remaining in their native region a viable option. Rare, autochthonous breeds and plants are mainly found in marginal areas and/or with minority ethnic groups. Conservation of the cultural heritage of humans is important as, not only languages and customs, are endangered but, also land-use systems and traditional farmers' knowledge. These latter aspects are directly related to the work of the SAVE Foundation and are an integral part of all the projects. Working together with local representatives strengthens their voice within national political processes and, due to the subject matter, promotes and supports sustainable production of local produce. Often, governmental support is missing for activities to conserve and protect these animals and plants. Governments are generally more interested in commercial aspects of farming; this can be detrimental to both human development in rural areas and the local environment.



This above explanation shows the holistic, multi-sectoral approach SAVE takes: the conservation of agrobiodiversity in Europe is more than "just" agriculture. Conservation of agrobiodiversity means the sustainable development of marginal regions, live conservation of cultural heritage and

promoting future food security. Farming with the goal of live conservation of genetic resources is complemented by research and collection of basic data and, as breeds and varieties do not respect our modern political borders, can be a practical aid to international understanding, based around one goal: the cross-border conservation of local breeds and varieties and, with them, the conservation of a piece of one's own cultural identity.

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History

Up to the 1960s, plants and animals were bred depending on the needs and environmental conditions where the farmers lived. Today, more than half of the breeds that existed in Europe 100 years ago are considered to be extinct. In regions such as Eastern and South Eastern Europe, the loss of breeds and varieties is particularly serious. National plans and efforts for live conservation have often been insufficient. Therefore, representatives of national NGOs decided, 21 years ago, to combine their energies within a pan-European Organisation to promote and coordinate activities to conserve the diversity of agriculture: SAVE was founded in the Netherlands in 1993. Today, the SAVE Network is made up of 22 organisations from 15 European countries. The SAVE Board of Directors consists of 13 individuals from 11 European countries.

Pan-European Networking - News

SAVE Foundation shares out the duties between its partners. Periodically the presidency of the SAVE Board of Directors is newly elected. At the SAVE annual meeting 2013 in Biezenmortel, The Netherlands, the presidency of SAVE was passed from Riccardo Fortina (R.A.R.E, Italy) to Geert Boink (SZH, Netherlands).



Also two new members were welcomed to the SAVE Network at the Annual Meeting: Sortengarten Sudtirol is from the German speaking part of Italy and concerns itself with the conservation of local



varieties of fruit and vegetables as well as local livestock breeds. The Foreningen Gamle Danske Husdyrracer is from Denmark and works for the conservation of Danish livestock breeds. SAVE welcomes both organisations to the Network and looks forward to fruitful collaboration with them in future.



From the plethora of projects, actions and activities of the SAVE Foundation hereinafter some special highlights of the period summer 2013- summer 2014 will be described more detailed.

Arca-Deli® Awards - visibility for products and services



Several products and services from rare breeds and varieties were awarded the Arca-Deli Award in the last years. If you are on holiday in Europe, you may see this label on a product of a farm or local market. With the Arca-Deli® label it is made visible that the product is very special: The Arca-Deli Awards are presented annually during the SAVE meeting to products and services of locally adapted livestock breeds and cultivated plants. The award is presented to products and services seen as being recommendable as a model or example of good practice. The Arca-Deli Award label can then be used on labelling of products and services as a means of adding value. The award tells customers that producers value the heritage and culture of the community. The Arca-Deli award can be valuable especially on local markets as it tells consumers that there is a local person standing behind the quality of the product. This means that the niche products associated with locally adapted breeds and

varieties become, on a small scale, more competitive and more economically viable. It also reminds customers that they are an important part of the conservation of their living heritage.

The following products and services have been awarded up to now:

Austria :

Sortengarten South Tyrol

- (2013) Apple schnapps made from the variety “Kalterer Böhmer”
- (2013) Jam made with a wild variety of zwetschke-plum, a wild ancestor of the plum



Bulgaria:

Vlahi Rare Breeds Center - Semperviva, BG- 2300 Pernik

- (2011) Cheese „Tolumsko Sirene“ from Karakachan sheep milk



Denmark

Family Kortegaard Becher, 9640 Farso

- (2013) salami-type sausage from Erteboelle sheep



Hungary:

Primagro Farm, H-3053 Kozard

- (2011) Traditional sour cherry marmalade variety “Kantorjanosi”, 100% fruit content, no sugar, no preservative, no colorant
- (2011) Traditional sweet cherry marmalade variety „black Katalyn“, 100% fruit content, no sugar, no preservative, no colorant



Szomor Salami Production, 2344 Dömsöd, meat from free ranging animals of the National Park

- (2013) Grey cattle salami with paprika
- (2013) Buffalo Salami



Italy:

Fattoria degli Animali, I-00055 Ladispoli RM

- (2011) Ark-Farm Services: Educational workshops and therapies with rare breeds



Germany:

- (2012) Ark Region Amt Neuhaus (UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the Elbe river basin): 18 farms show a range of endangered animals, offer quality products and events, craft activities, places to stay and to eat.

[www.flusslandschaft-](http://www.flusslandschaft-elbe.de/ arche region flusslandschaft elbe amt neuhaus 46 1.html)

[elbe.de/ arche region flusslandschaft elbe amt neuhaus 46 1.html](http://www.flusslandschaft-elbe.de/ arche region flusslandschaft elbe amt neuhaus 46 1.html)



- (2012) Tagliatelle made with eggs from the Deutsche Sperberhuhn
- (2012) Alpine Steinschaf-Wool office set: Laptop cover, notepad case and pencil case made from felt: A high-quality product that will provide a conversation opener about rare breeds. www.alpines-steinschaf.net/wolle/4-4-6.php



Greece:

Family farm Giantsidis, Lake Kerkini

- (2013) Soup powder from Greek Buffalo: Old recipe recovered with modern and safe drying methods
- (2013) Cake made with milk from Greek Buffalo milk, excellent taste.



Family Nikolaos Fotiadis, Greece: Products from the autochthonous black pig: Unusually for an old pig breed, the meat is very low fat

- (2012) Bacon with herbs from Mount Olympus
- (2012) fresh sausages with local herbs and spices as well as local varieties of vegetable



The Netherlands:

Pecus / Buitengewone Varkens, Schoneveldsweg 7, 7495 PE
Ambt Delden

- (2012) Extraordinary Pigs! 100'000€ raised through crowdfunding for rearing rare breed pigs, producing good tasting pork and for increasing animal welfare; conservation of the old with modern methods.

<http://www.buitengewonevarkens.nl>



Spain:

Red Andaluza de Semillas "Cultivando Biodiversidad" (www.redandaluzadesemillas.org/)

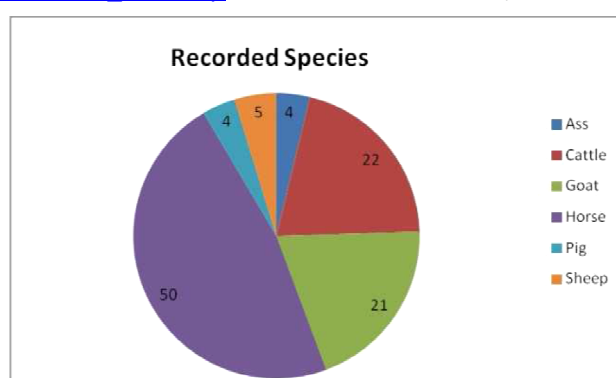
- (2013) Seed box with organic seeds of local varieties

Topic Network

The ecological Value of feral and free ranging Livestock Populations in Europe

SAVE-Foundation launched a project “The Ecological Value of Feral Populations in Europe” in 2011 to collect data and information on the occurrence of feral breeds and varieties of livestock, to promote the interdisciplinary networking of key people from in situ / on farm – conversation work and nature conservation and to develop best practice management plans. Within the project a collection of basic data and information especially on large animals were done. On www.agrobiodiversity.net/topic_network/feral/breedatlas_feral.asp varieties of 50 horses, 22 cattle, 21 goats, 5 sheep, 4 donkeys and 4 pigs are listed.

Also information about the project activities and a list of best practice methods can be found. Most common problems and needs were already discussed in the last issue of the SAVE Activity Report. Besides feral populations without any human influence, there are several varieties living under free ranging conditions. The animals are ranging free, but they are controlled e.g. in the size of the herd, disease control and occurrence of fodder. This extensive system of free ranging well adapted breeds is as less investigated as the “pure” feral populations. Therefore emphasis shall be on this aspect.



The close connection between nature conservation and possibilities for collaboration of keepers of livestock can be shown exemplarily in the Balkan Karst regions. An example of a management plan was developed which includes aspects of livestock as well as the needs of the environment. A suitable species and environmentally adapted breed is a precondition for sustainable biodiversity conservation. The need to know, what exactly is the problem in an ecosystem and what causes it is essential for a management plan.

Basis for a management plan

Due to the abandonment of the countryside grazing in the Karst poljes and mountains of the Balkans decreased dramatically. Livestock keeping in the Karst systems has decreased by more than 90% in some areas as the example of the Biokovo nature park in Croatia near the border to Bosnia Herzegovina shows: in 1938 about 23'000 livestock animals were counted in 20'000 hectare. Today only 4% (less than 1000) are left. The increase of



succession causes a loss of habitats and a change of ecosystem balances. Therefore a habitat improvement is necessary. This can be done through grazing with free ranging livestock, which is adapted to the local flora and their phytotoxins, the local climate and the poor infrastructure. Furthermore local breeds are attractive for tourism in the region. The low input breeds also produce milk and meat often in a high quality for the market. Locally adapted livestock breeds can be utilized to restore the traditional cultivated landscapes that have existed for centuries. But it is important that the use of livestock is properly managed and regularly monitored

Conflicts have to be taken into consideration. Often the ownership and the right of use of the land and in the case of feral populations also of the animals are not clear. Some conflicts of interests in the region are caused through hunting interests, different nesting habitats for birds, local needs for income through agriculture, industries, tourism etc.

Herbivores are not just “grazing machines” of different size. According to a Livestock Unit a horse is in its effect to the vegetation not equivalent to seven goats. The needs, problems and conflicts of keeping a certain species in an area need to be taken into consideration.

Species	Shelter	Shepherd/Warden	Predator Protection	Winter feeding	Grazing/Browsing	Special needs	Together with	Problems
Cattle	Simple, dry area for lying down	Warden	No	Yes, in snow	Mesotrophic grazing	Parasite control	Horses	Trampling
Horse	Simple, dry area for lying down	Warden	No	Yes	More selective than cattle, bite damage on trees (not shrubs)	Plenty of space	Cattle	Dung in one place
Water buffalo	Simple, dry area for lying down	Warden	No	Little	Rough grazing	Wet areas, open spaces, forest	Cattle	Eutrophication
Donkey	Simple, dry area for lying down	Warden	No (can be used as predator protection)	Little	Rough grazing, salty grazing	Ideal in dry areas, need hard surfaces	Cattle, Sheep, not horses (cross-breeding!)	Do not eat bushes
Sheep	Simple, dry, warm	Shepherd	Yes	Yes	Close grazing	Shearing, Parasite control	Donkey	Non-selective grazing
Goat	Simple, dry area for lying down	Shepherd	Yes	Yes	Grazing and browsing, selective, bite damage, can also digest “poisonous” plants	Ideal in mountains, stony areas	Not sheep (parasites)	Can only be used for short periods
Pig	Simple, dry, warm	Shepherd	Yes	Yes	Omnivores In forest grazing, foraging	Mud baths	All	Cross-breeding with wild boars and transmission of disease therefore fencing at periphery

With this list suitable species can be selected for the respective habitats. If it is known, which species is suitable, certain instruments can be used to find out the right well adapted breed. In some countries there is already a good collaboration between the responsible for nature protection and conservationists of traditional breeds. BSAVE Foundation could also create suitable instruments which give an overview about locally adapted breeds like “Breedatlas Balkan”: www.agrobiodiversity.net/balkan, Arca Net: www.arca-net.info, ELBARN: www.elbarn.net.

With this project a milestone for a better mutually understanding of the needs and problems of nature protection issues and agrobiodiversity could be done. This process will be strengthened in future through a better collaboration and more projects in this direction. The full report of the project see: www.agrobiodiversity.net/topic_network/feral/breedatlas_feral.asp

Fundus Agri-Cultura Alpina

One of the most important commodities of our recent time is knowledge. Long-term experience shows, that conservation of agrobiodiversity is not really sustainable, if the methods and knowledge about production, handling and traditions is going to be lost. Therefore, it is essential for a sustainable live conservation of agrobiodiversity to collect and maintain the traditional farming knowledge. SAVE Foundation developed a new project based on a feasibility study (see: <http://www.save-foundation.net/deutsch/projekte.htm#Alpen-Bogen>



in German language), which was supported by the Lotteriefonds St. Gallen, Switzerland. Geographically the project comprises the German speaking Alpine region. Within the technical preparation and implementation it is foreseen to include all 4 alpine languages and also English from the beginning on.



The "Fundus Agri-Cultura Alpina" is a collection of traditional knowledge and information for the keeping and use of indigenous livestock and crops, traditional farming and tradition. This meets a need in the preservation scene in the Alps. These include not only expert and holder of old breeds and varieties, but also actors in nature conservation, regional development and agriculture in general. The declared aim of the Fundus Agri-Cultura Alpina is to provide old, traditional knowledge in a bundled form to a

wide audience and not to do a scientific work. SAVE Foundation will create a wiki-based system, which shall - as it is common in wiki-databases - include a wide range of actors.

Local knowledge has a history and dynamics. Therefore, the user of this information platform will not only be able to retrieve information, but also to participate actively, by incorporating their own experiences and knowledge. The information system should be as open and accessible as possible. However, it should also be prevented from "nonsense entries". Therefore several experts will be asked to participate in the system and to control the entries. For a sustainable long-term effect of the project, it is necessary to create the widest possible public that also after the project ending there is an interest of the relevant parties to share experiences and latest developments free of charge.

Model Projects

BushaLive: Comprehensive overview in the field, development of an overall-crossborder conservation model – some preliminary results



The BushaLive project, funded under the Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, targets the autochthonous Busha cattle breed of the Balkans, which survives in small, highly endangered, populations. The breed is hardy and well-suited to extensive farming, but has relatively low production yields. It is an important part of the local identity, but will be lost if conservation measures are not put in place to protect it. Stakeholders across the various nationalities and religions present in the Balkans share a common will-

ingness to collaborate in conserving the breed.

Within the project blood samples have been taken from 254 animals in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A minimum of 20 samples of individual animals per country was requested for the study. The aim is to obtain unbiased estimates of diversity parameters, population history and the degree of admixture in the Busha population, using genome-wide marker data. Final conclusions will only be possible after completion of all the analyses. However, the results obtained so far show that locally well-adapted strains that have never been intensively managed and differentiated into standardized breeds show large haplotype diversity. This suggests the need for a conservation and recovery strategy that does not rely exclusively on searching for the original native genetic background, but rather on the identification and removal of common introgressed haplotypes.

Further information on each of the sampled animals has been collected via a comprehensive survey targeting their phenotypic characteristics and husbandry systems, as well as the products and services that they provide. This information, together with the genetic data, will be used to provide a basis for the development of a regional strategy for the management of the breed, spanning all stakeholder levels from farmers to governments. The project will also explore the potential for more effective marketing of the breeds' products. The next steps will be the establishment of basic recording systems and support for the development of breeding organizations and common breeding goals. The project will close with a stakeholder workshop for people working at all levels in the conservation of the breed. The event will provide an opportunity to pass on the information gathered and the strategies developed during the project to those who will use them in the future. All the results and data will be published, as they become available, online on:

http://agrobiodiversity.net/balkan/topic_network/Bushalive.asp

Rescue of the last black Alpine pigs and conservation of the Ciuta sheep

At the end of May 2013, representatives of the Veterinary University of Parma informed the SAVE Foundation that a group of small, black Valtellina pigs had survived in a Fattoria Didattica (didactic farm), but were unfortunately very endangered. SAVE was asked to make conservation measures. Fact is that most indigenous pig breeds in the Alps are already extinct. Only very few relict specimens in different valleys have survived. But they cannot be conserved on their own as the genetic base of each relict is too small. Since they are all black or black-spotted animals it was decided to merge the last remnants in a composite breed under the name “black Alpine pig”, a name that was already used in old literature for the community Alps black pigs. So at least the ecotype of this mountain pig can be conserved which is quite different from the larger, also almost extinct black pigs in the Po Valley in Italy (Mora Romagnola, Nero di Parma).



As acting regional organisation SAVE Foundation could rely on the Network for rare Alpine breeds “Pro Patrimonio Montano (PPM)” which spontaneously took over animals and is now building up the breed. Meanwhile PPM undertook numerous search tours to find other remnant populations in remote Alpine areas. Up to now three different varieties could be found with 12 different pedigree lines in all. By mid-2014 seven new nucleus groups could be established in the mountains of the provinces of Verona, Trento, Sondrio (Valtellina) and Como. Four breeding groups are located in agro-tourist farms and are publicly accessible. The herd register of Pro Patrimonio Montano is with 23 animals, plus 7 promising piglets. Nevertheless more search tours to find additional relict populations will be done to regions where similar animals were once kept.



Efforts to preserve the Ciuta sheep that had survived in Val Masino, a steep side valley of Valtellina, dated around 12 years back. At that time, unfortunately, no one was willing to take a breeding group of this smallest sheep in the Alps, going back to neolithic times. As part of the search for other black Valtellina pigs, everything changed. Spontaneously interested people were willing to take on also other endangered breeds. So Pro Patrimonio Montano grabbed the opportunity and is now expanding the Ciuta project. Now in the register there are again 17 breeders of this goat-like sheep (including private breeders who joined the project).

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Consultancies

Animal Genetic Resources in Bulgaria: Roundtable Meeting of Stakeholders

In the context of the programme Linking Nature Protection and Sustainable Rural Development, funded by the Swiss Contribution thematic fund Civil Society Participation in Bulgaria, SAVE Foundation was invited to assist with a programme component addressing the institutional framework for the management of animal genetic resources (AnGR).



SAVE has undertaken two missions to Bulgaria in 2014. The first was a field trip to meet stakeholders and gain an overview of the state of the conservation measures for rare indigenous breeds, both at policy level and on the ground. This mission also won a new member for Arca-Net, the “Wild Farm” in Gorno Pole, Bulgaria. The Wild Farm is an unconventional farm where animals are bred in the wild. It is situated in the Eastern Rhodopes, South Bulgaria. The guests can enjoy

traditional accommodation, a lovely mountain view and activities such as milking cows, horse riding, extracting honey and nature walks. The herd of over 500 cows and bulls from local indigenous breeds are kept outside all year round, in harmony with the surroundings. The first Arca-Net station in Bulgaria was the Rare Breeds Centre in Vlahi (pictured).

The second mission to Bulgaria was to help facilitate a roundtable meeting of stakeholders. The roundtable addressed technical matters related to the genotyping of livestock populations and the development of effective institutions and policies. The sustainable use of animal genetic resources was addressed on the second day of the roundtable meeting. Examples of successful initiatives in other countries were presented and SAVE presented the Heritaste® label.

It was pleasing that stakeholders from all levels – from government to farmer – were able to attend the roundtable and actively participated in the discussions. SAVE Foundation’s role in this context is to make recommendations based on the roundtable discussions: implementation will take place at national level. SAVE’s experience in many countries and in many fields of activity indicates that it is important to bring all stakeholders together for this kind of discussion. A transparent approach allows everyone to be involved in planning future activities and adds sustainability to the process.



Family Farming

In December 2011, the UN General Assembly declared 2014 to be the International Year of Family Farming and invited FAO to facilitate implementation of the International Year, in collaboration with its partners. The UN "International Year of Family Farming" has the aim of raising the profile of family and smallholder farming by drawing attention to its role in "eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development, in particular in rural areas".



The concept of "family farming" in Europe does not necessarily mean "small-scale." According to the EU family farming is the most common operational farming model in Europe. Furthermore, the EU acknowledges that, while family farming is often more than just a professional occupation, there is a "high diversity of family farms in the EU, in terms of their size, activities they engage in, availability of resources, degree of market integration, competitiveness, etc".

Therefore, in Europe and in the context of conservation of agricultural diversity, breeds and varieties, it can be said that the small-scale farmers and the "hobby" farmers make the most important contribution to the on-going conservation process and, with it, future food security, conservation of the traditional cultivated landscape and the surrounding areas of natural beauty. While the hereditary structures in rural areas may be relevant in other parts of the world, it is questionable if they are important in Europe. What can be considered to be more important is the commitment to on-farm diversity, soil and water quality and rural development through an extensive, regionally adapted farming system.

Focussing on small-scale farms brings the following to the fore:

- Farms in Europe are generally getting larger and employing fewer people
- Small farms are currently squeezed onto 17.7% of Europe's farmland
- Young people are moving towards urban areas and agricultural land is being abandoned
- Land-grabbing is a major problem in countries where land ownership is poorly regulated.
- Small farms continue to be the major food producers in the world
- Small farms are overall more productive than big farms
- Most small farmers are women.

What does this mean for the SAVE Network and the individuals and organisations working for the conservation of agricultural biodiversity in Europe? The work in Europe is far from complete. In every country there are structures and policies to be challenged. The sweeping budget cuts throughout Europe have left autochthonous breeds and varieties, in many countries, without a safety net. All the work that SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network have been doing for the past 20 years needs to be continued with new enthusiasm and energy so that the diverse rural areas of Europe still exist in the future!

The Bodies of SAVE Foundation

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References

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