

Conservation of two native Bulgarian goat breeds

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Abstract

For a long period, native goat breeds in Bulgaria were neglected by the agricultural science. Forestry specialists insisted that goats are the biggest enemy of the forest. This negative image resulted in lack of investigations and conservation measures concerning native goat diversity in Bulgaria.

In 2002 SEMPERVIVA team discovered impressive native goat breed in the middle of Bulgaria and started to create a nucleus herd. Kalofer longhair goats are very high-prized by locals for their very long and good quality hair. Their skin is used for making attractive costumes for traditional mummer masquerade rituals. The specific type of Kalofer longhair goat clearly designates it from other Bulgarian and foreign breeds. Since 2004, the breed has been regularly presented on national animal exhibitions and conferences.

In South-west Bulgaria SEMPERVIVA team rediscovered a small population of Bulgarian screw-horn longhair goat. In 1968, Prof. Altmann exported from Bulgaria to former DDR (East Germany) a small group of such type of goats. 40 years Bulgarian screw-horn longhair goats are bred in purity in German zoos, farms and collections. In spring of 2009, with collaboration between Thuringia zoo and SEMPERVIVA society, a new export of small group of goats was implemented, in order to increase genetic variability of the German population.

In Bulgaria, both breeds have small populations and are in FAO category “Endangered breeds”.

In 2009, owners of Kalofer longhair goats and Bulgarian screw-horn longhair goats founded Association for Autochthonous Goat Breeds in Bulgaria (AAGBB). In 2010, AAGBB got certificate from the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture, for an official breeding organization. AAGBB maintains official breed registries, makes investigations and monitoring on local goat populations.