



Endangered Breeds in Albania

Albania is a country in transition, whose economy has to be rebuilt. There is little data available about agriculture, and particularly few data about old breeds. In order to throw light on the situation and to raise awareness for the importance of traditional breeds amongst agriculturalists, the Zootechnical Institute Tirana organised a "Stakeholder-Meeting", a meeting for all persons interested in the matter. People from the Ministry for Agriculture, from research institutes, from the agricultural extension service, from



nature protection and NGO circles were invited. In order to emphasise the importance of the conservation of genetic resources, 2 experts from abroad were invited, and a SAVE representative had the opportunity to explain the possibilities of non-governmental organisations.

It showed that the participants of the workshop still had an astonishing broad knowledge about autochthonous breeds of Albania. Endangered and missing breeds were named, and hints were exchanged concerning the whereabouts of probable remaining stock. A countrywide monitoring is supposed to evaluate the information gathered and to record the actual situation.

For several years, ALBAGENE, a national NGO, is active for the conservation of rare breeds. The projects are carried through in-situ, and have led, amongst other things, to the conservation of one of the last water buffalo herds and of the Shkodra sheep (see photo), which was in former times bred for extreme wool-performance. ALBAGENE is also trying to market the products, e.g. to sell wool for mattress production. A future project plans to comb the whole of Albania in order to record still existing breeds. SAVE-Monitoring Institute has agreed to help in this mapping. It is intended to draw up a plan for the further procedure during the SAVE Balkans-Workshop in Dimitrovgrad (22-24 September 2004) which will be integrated into a Balkans-wide monitoring.

Animal Genetic Resources in Greece

Greece does not only possess a large diversity of most different landscape structures, but was already famous in the antique for its agriculture and variety of products. But Demeter, the Greek goddess for agriculture, today known as label for organic products, seems to have forgotten its country recently. The diversity of breeds in Greece is highly endangered by industrialisation, migration to cities, the use of hybrids and other methods of modern agriculture.



Thanks to the support of the MAVA Foundation for Nature Protection, Montricher, SAVE-Monitoring Institute could start a monitoring of Greek livestock breeds. It became obvious already during the start of the first investigations that the need for recording and the need for action are enormous in Greece. In the official Greek lists, only 14 out of 21 sheep breeds mentioned in standard books in the 1960s are still listed. The systematic recording of data available in the RareBase-database of the Monitoring Institute showed the development trend since the 1960s. Considerable deviations of size and weight data (e.g. for the Zakynthos sheep 45-55 kg in 1967 compared to 75-86 kg in 2001) are probably caused by changing management conditions. On-site analysis and verification is urgently needed. (photo: ark-farm Dimos, Avra)

Older literature delivers hints that there are different goat breeds that developed through isolation on the islands. They were never recorded and specified officially, but summed up as "Greek Landrace with different types". Donkeys were not even mentioned in the official statistic. This problem has urgently to be dealt with when monitoring livestock breeds. In order to secure the sustainability of the project, the contact to official bodies is deliberately established and extended. In co-operation with the University of Thessaloniki, a random specification of goat and donkey breeds will be started within a short time.

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A workshop is planned for the next winter that is supposed to bundle and to motivate the different forces of the non-governmental sector to co-operate. From 2005, the actual Monitoring with search tours and surveys will start. We hope the gods of the Olympus and anyone interested will co-operate and support us, but we will also try to raise awareness amongst broad circles in Greece.

Nucleus Herd of Rhodope Cattle in East Bulgaria

The Dutch foundation Stichting Ark, together with the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds BSPB, has developed a project for the conservation of the Rhodope cattle, which is threatened by extinction. Rhodope Shorthorn is a small cattle breed with 100-110cm height at withers and a weight of 200-350 kg. It is closely related to the Busha cattle in former Yugoslavia, the Illyrian Dwarf cattle in Albania and the Brachyceros cattle in Greece. All these stocks are acutely endangered, possibly already extinct in Greece. Of the Rhodope cattle, only 50-100 animals of the original type are probably left. The other animals have been crossbred with Jersey cattle to create the new breed "Bulgarian Rodopi".



In Madjarovo, where the BSPB takes care of the East Rhodope Nature Protection Centre with a resettlement and rehabilitation station for vultures, a semi-wild but shepherded nucleus herd of Rhodope cattle has been set up. The project was financed by the Dutch Ministry for Agriculture, Nature Protection and Fishery: At the end of 2003, the herd comprised 33 animals, and it is supposed to increase to 50 animals through breeding and animal purchase at the end of 2004. Genetically, the herd is composed of 14 cows that are not related and 6 bulls that are not related which is not a bad but still insufficient basis

for conservation breeding. Further animals are to be found and used for breeding. Furthermore, "security doubles" of the bloodlines should be stored decentralised in second and third herds in the medium term.

To secure the project financially, the foundation Ark and BSPB have created the "Friends of Rhodope cattle". Anyone interested may contact the project manager Fokko Erhart, e-mail: fokko.erhart@stichtingark.nl

Newsflash

- **Coordination meeting Bovska sheep**

Within the frame of the annual meeting of SAVE Foundation in Bled, Slovenia, an international meeting on the breeding of the cross-border spread sheep breed, known as Bovska sheep (Slovenia), Krainer Steinschaf (Austria, Germany) or. Plezzana sheep (Italy) will be held. The co-ordination between Slovenia and Austria is very good, an international meeting on management level has, however, become necessary for breeding work. German and Italian breeding responsables will also participate. Details under : office@save-foundation.net



- **SEEDNet meeting in Skopje**

The Regional Interim Committee (RIC) of the newly established South East European Development Network (SEEDNet) met for a final preparatory project meeting in Skopje, FYR Macedonia, 5-6 April 2004. SEEDNets main objective is to contribute to the long-term conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources diversity within the region, through a well coordinated network of national programmes. Sub-regional crop working groups will be established and enabled to carry out various activities of common interest. Genebanks will be established or

restored, collections inventoried, material and information collected, education and training provided. (IPGRI newsletter)

- **Compendium Animal Health and Animal Production**

CABI Publishing of CAB International informs about its most recent offer: "CABI Animal Health and Production Compendium 2004 Edition". The compendium, which has been elaborated in co-operation with an international consortium, includes facts, bibliographical data, pictures and diagrams on all topics of animal production and animal health, including diseases, nutrition, breeding and production. The compendium is available in the Internet (at users' costs) and on CD-ROM.

Details under: <http://www.cabicompendium/ahpc/> (from ZADI-Newsletter)

- **Living Heritage Park in Belgium**

"Stichting Levend Erfgoed - Fondation Patrimoine Vivant" will open its first "in-situ" conservation park on August 29, 2004 in the Provincial Domain Puyenbroeck in Wachtebeke (East Flanders - Belgium). This "Living Heritage Park" was set up in close cooperation with the Province of East-Flanders and was financially supported by the European Union. It will harbour practically all old breeds of Belgian farm animals and will serve as a breeding park. At the same time it will serve educational purposes for visitors and more especially for schools. The Flemish Minister of Agriculture Tavernier, presented the Stichting Levend Erfgoed with a "Kempens calve", an almost extinct cattle breed in Belgium. The calve was called Vera, after the president of the Green Party (see photo). The official opening of the park will coincide with the 8th annual "living heritage expo" organized by Stichting Levend Erfgoed. Details: staf.vandenbergh@skynet.be



- **Arca-Net goes online**

SAVE Foundation has launched a new internet portal: "Arca-Net" (Ark-Network). Goal is the networking and promotion of institutions showing rare breeds to the public, as Ark-farms, pedagogic farms, open air museums, animal parks, etc.. A test version for the German speaking countries is now online (click on the info-Domain: <http://www.arca-net.info> (only in German up to now). But Arca-Net will be extended and cover all Europe at the end (in English language). It is also planned to add institutions from the plant side with public access (variety gardens, arboreta).



- **Office of the Carpathian Convention**

UNEP, the UN environmental organisation, has set up a new office in Vienna that is at the same time an interim office for the framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. The decision to set up an office in Austria was justified with the fact that many other international organisation are already present there, amongst others the office for the Alpine Convention. Details by: harald.egerer@unvienna.org

- **Photo Competition "Alpconfoto"**

The European Academy Bozen carries out the photo competition "Alpconfoto", that is dedicated to the topic "Sites and Cultures of the Alps – a story in pictures" The competition is inspired by the objectives of the Alpine Convention and wishes to contribute to increase the name recognition of the convention and its contents. The competition will end in August 2005. Details under: <http://www.eurac.edu/alpconfoto>.

Important dates (extract)

29 August: "Living heritage expo" and opening of the first "Living Heritage Park" in the Provincial Domain Puyenbroeck in Wachtebeke (East Flanders), Belgium. Contact: staf.vandenbergh@skynet.be

2 September: Coordination-Meeting (A-D-I-SLO) of the breeder organisations of Bovec sheep (or Krainer Steinschaf or Plezzana sheep) at Bled, Slovenia. Contact: office@save-foundation.net



2-4 September: Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network at Bled, Slovenia, in collaboration with DAGENE; Contact: office@save-foundation.net



4 September: DAGENE Symposium "Specificity and influence of the autochthonous animal breeds on the quality of the local meat and milk products", Exhibition and tasting of Slovenian Local Products, in Bled, Slovenia; Contact: drago.kompan@bfro.uni-lj.si

5-9 September: 55th Annual Meeting of EAAP at Bled, Slovenia. With workshops to the topics: "Animal Genetic Resources" and "Sustainable Recultivation and land Use on Karst and Mountainous Regions by Use of Animals"; Contact: eaap@eaap.org, Web: <http://www.eaap.org>

22-25 September: Conference: "The Alps of the next generation - from forecast to action", Kranjska Gora, Slovenia; Web: <http://www.forumalpinum.org>

22-24 September: Workshop "Rare indigenous breeds of the Balkan", SAVE-Monitoring Institute; Dimitrovgrad, Serbia-Montenegro; Contact: office@save-foundation.net



24 September: 2nd Regional Fair "Balkan Agrobiodiversity and Rural Heritage", Dimitrovgrad, Serbia-Montenegro; Exhibition of indigenous Balkan breeds. Contact: balkanika@ptt.yu

24-25 September: Iberoamerican seminary on sheep diversity of Spanish origin, Huescar (Granada), Spain; Contact: id1debej@uco.es

27-30 September: Congress of the Rare Breeds International (RBI) in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Contact: KeithR@nda.agric.za, Web: <http://www.rbi.it>

20-23 October: "Terra Madre - world meeting of food communities" (Meeting among peasants, producers and agribusiness operators. A new, different way of looking at food production).; Torino, Italy. Contact: s.abbona@slowfood.it, Web: <http://www.slowfood.com>

21-25 October: "Salone del Gusto", Slow Food International food and wine show; Torino, Italy; Contact: s.abbona@slowfood.it, Web: <http://www.slowfood.com>

3-5 November: 5th National Colloquium "Un dialogue pour la diversité génétique", Lyon, France. Contact: BRG@inapg.inra.fr, Web: <http://www.brg.prd.fr>

13-14 November: 4th International Pomology Meeting. Goersdorf, France. Commission Pomologique d'Alsace. Contact: dsiegel@rohmmaas.com