

# SAVE eNews 2/2005

Quarterly e-mail service of the European SAVE Foundation  
(Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe)



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## 24<sup>th</sup> September 2005: European Agrobiodiversity Day



The SAVE-network launches the “European Agrobiodiversity Day”. During the previous annual meeting in Bled, the idea of a “European Breed of the Year” was discussed. It is supposed to sensitise the broader public and the media for the problem of increasing gene loss. The discussion resulted in the idea of the “European day of Agrobiodiversity”. SAVE clarified the interest in such a Europe-wide activity by means of a survey. The echo of partners and institutions was clearly positive and the proposals for a fixed date concentrated in unison on the period between end of August and October. For practical reasons, the **last Saturday in September** was chosen to be the annual „**European Agrobiodiversity Day (EAD)**“. In 2005, this is the **24<sup>th</sup> of September**.

The idea of the EAD is to generate a lot of public and media attention for the importance of the conservation of the genetic diversity of livestock breeds and cultivated plants. The European network is represented by the country organisations (SAVE-Partner organisations) in the individual countries. They can use the occasion to present themselves as part of a larger European organisation and to inform about the present situation and conservation efforts in their country. The EAD will promote old and endangered breeds and varieties and their conservation with positive news and at the same time emphasise the urgency of conservation efforts. Besides media information, the occasion can also be linked with market or information stalls, exhibitions (fruit, animals), guided tours (show farms), tasting (old fruit varieties, local products), competitions or other PR activities. Each country organisation is free to design their own activity. SAVE provides general media information on the main topic of the year. It can be translated by its partner organisations and completed with actual country-relevant information and examples.

## SAVE annual meeting in Nitra, Slovakia

The annual meeting of SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network will take place in Nitra, Slovakia, from **16-18 Sept. 2005**. It is organised by the SAVE partner AgroGenofond.

The tentative programme is organised as follows:

**Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2005:**

- Afternoon: Arrival in the Hotel Agroinstitute Nitra, registration
- Evening: Meeting of the SAVE project-commission

**Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2005:**

- Morning: SAVE Network (Council of Co-operation Partners)
- Noon/afternoon: Field trip to the stud Topolcianky
- Evening: Presentation of the activities of AgroGenofond

**Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2005:**

- Morning: Meeting of the SAVE Board of Directors
- Afternoon/evening: Field trip to the fruit variety garden Radosina of AgroGenofond and to the governmental gene bank in Piešťany.



The SAVE annual meeting is followed by the International Conference on “Conservation and Sustainable Development of Traditional Agroecosystems” from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2005 in Nitra, Slovakia. Within the frame of this conference, a half-day field trip to the Arboretum Mlynany in the Slovakian museum for agriculture is planned. For more information contact: [dezider.toth@uniag.sk](mailto:dezider.toth@uniag.sk) or SAVE: [office@save-foundation.net](mailto:office@save-foundation.net). (no conference fee for SAVE-members).

## Activities of AgroGenofond in Slovakia

AgroGenofond, SAVE-partner in Slovakia and organiser of the SAVE annual meeting 2005, dedicates its activities country-wide to the conservation of Plant Genetic Resources. In the following, three of the larger projects are presented.

=> Reintroduction of old local breeds for alternative land use systems in agriculture:

Within the frame of the programme for the development of rural areas, and the EU directive 2081/92 for the protection of geographical data and designation of origin, three marketing organisations are set up that try to market old varieties of the Black Mulberry (*Morus nigra*) in the village of Pukanec, of cornell cherries (*Cornus mas*) in the region Gemer and of sour cherries (*Prunus cerasus*) in the region Hont.

=> Set-up of variety gardens:

Together with village communal gardens, regional administration and non-profit organisations, seven larger variety gardens (“repositories”) for the in-situ and on-farm conservation of endangered cultivated plants could be set up. Three others are being built up. This long-term conservation mainly serves to conserve species that are propagated vegetative.

=> Revival and sustainable use of old knowledge, experience and tradition.

AgroGenofond regularly focuses on these topics in project development, seminars and workshops. The project "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Traditional Agroecosystems in the Carpathian Region" has recently been successful (cf. conference mentioned above). The project was accepted by FAO/GIAHS last year and will start in September 2005. (GIAS = Globally-important Ingenious Agricultural Heritage Systems, of FAO, Rome).

## Newsflashes

### **Workshop „Rare livestock breeds in Greece“**

In co-operation with SAVE and the WWF Greece, the Monitoring Institute carries out a workshop on the distribution and conservation of endangered autochthonous livestock breeds from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2005 in Athens, Greece. The issue of the specification of Greek goat and donkey breeds, initiated by the Monitoring Institute, is also dealt with during this workshop. Two dozen representatives from conservation organisations, agricultural service and universities are expected. Aim is the establishment of a country-wide network. For more information, please contact: [info@monitoring.eu.com](mailto:info@monitoring.eu.com)

### **Old cultivated plants in the Principality of Liechtenstein**

Various activities have taken place during the last years for the conservation of old cultivated plants in Liechtenstein. In order to conserve and promote them, a group of interested people has joined in the association "Hortus". The association shall serve as platform for the exchange of information, but also search for further utilisation possibilities for old breeds. To date, 100 apple and 80 pear varieties could be specified (one third is still not specified), 82 origins of beans, tomatoes and pumpkin, 19 origins of Ribelmaize and six vine varieties. For more information, please contact: [eva.koerbitz@lzsg.ch](mailto:eva.koerbitz@lzsg.ch).

### **Up wind for Plezzana sheep**

The stein sheep, found in the border triangle of Slovenia, Austria and Italy with its different breed names Bovska, Krainer and Plezzana, are now supported by Italy, too. In February 2005, the first general assembly of Plezzana breeders took place in Val Resia. Having now a breeding organisation, there are chances to obtain financial support and the exchange at breeders' level between the three countries involved will become easier. SAVE Foundation is very pleased to have contributed to this positive development with the organisation of the international co-ordination meeting for this breed in Bled, Slovenia, September 2004. Chairman of the Italian Plezzana breeders' organisation is: Paolo Emilio de Simon, A.V.R.O.Ple (Associazione per la Valorizzazione della Razza Ovina Plezzana, Tel. +39-220/6 55 04)

### **Community of interests for genetically not engineered seed**

In March 2005, 9 organisations and companies have joined forces in the "Community of interests for genetically not engineered seed". Their joint objective is to secure genetically not engineered seed-related activities in the long term. Responsible bodies come

from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. They are active in the area of seed breeding and conservation of varieties. The organisations are linked via a co-ordination office to exchange information internally. Furthermore, specific problems of practical work are analysed in detail and strategies for action are developed. The co-ordinating office will publish a monthly newsletter with actual information that are specifically important for seed-related activities. More information, please contact: [gentechnikfreie-saat@gmx.de](mailto:gentechnikfreie-saat@gmx.de)

## Book Reviews

### Developing Agrobiodiversity!

#### - Strategies for action and impulses for sustainable animal and plant breeding

Aim of the project "Developing Agrobiodiversity" is the sustainable securing of nutrition and development chances. The "Position Paper" resulting from the project is one of the best and most concise compilation on the topic agrobiodiversity. The position paper (12 pages) and the comprehensive report can be downloaded from the Internet:

[http://www.agrobiodiversitaet.net/site/page/downloads/Positionspapier\\_en.pdf](http://www.agrobiodiversitaet.net/site/page/downloads/Positionspapier_en.pdf)

### Livestock Biodiversity – Genetic resources for the Farming of the Future

This book offers a detailed and comprehensive overview of livestock biodiversity. It explores the history behind it, shows how livestock biodiversity can be utilized as animal genetic resources through breed development and by crossbreeding, examines the state of world livestock biodiversity today, and emphasizes the importance of conserving and developing the biodiversity of livestock.

Special consideration is given to:

- How livestock biodiversity arose and is maintained in relation to human society
- How it can be used in sustainable agricultural development
- How it can be conserved for the benefit of present and future generations
- Why conservation biologists and agriculturists should be involved in its protection.

Hall, Stephen J.G.: Livestock Biodiversity (p.217); ISBN 0-632-05499-9 (£ 59.50, hard-back), 2004 by Blackwell Science Ltd; <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com>

## Important Dates (excerpt)

26 June - 1 July: XX Internat. Grassland Congress: "Grasslands - a Global Resource" at University College Dublin, Ireland. Web: <http://www.igc2005.com/index.htm>

30 June - 2 July: Workshop "Rare livestock breeds in Greece", Athens, Greece; SAVE-Monitoring Institute. Contact: [info@monitoring.eu.com](mailto:info@monitoring.eu.com)



2-3 July: International "Berry Symposium" in Basel-Bruglingen, Switzerland. Contact: [gertrud.burger@psrara.org](mailto:gertrud.burger@psrara.org)



23-25 August: First International Conferenz on the "Importance of Biodiversity to Human Health" COHAB 2005 in Galway, Ireland. Contact: [info@cohab2005.com](mailto:info@cohab2005.com); Web: <http://www.cohab2005.com>

28 August: "Annual Living Heritage Expo" in the Provincial Domain Puyenbroeck in Wachtebeke (near Gent), Belgium. Contact: [staf.vandenbergh@sle.be](mailto:staf.vandenbergh@sle.be), Web: <http://www.sle.be>

5-9 September: "Potato 2005 - trade show, field demonstrations and congress", at Emmeloord, the Netherlands. Contact: [svanbeek@agriprojects.nl](mailto:svanbeek@agriprojects.nl)

7-9 September: Colloquium: "Vegetables, a heritage to hand on and to value", Angers, France. Web: <http://www.brg.prd.fr>

14-17 September: First International Conference on "Crop Wild Relative Conservation and Use"; Agrigento/Sicily, Italy. Contact: [organising.secretariat@pgrforum.org](mailto:organising.secretariat@pgrforum.org) or [scientific.secretariat@pgrforum.org](mailto:scientific.secretariat@pgrforum.org), Web: <http://www.pgrforum.org/conference.htm>

17-18 September: Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network at Nitra, Slovakia. Excursions to centres of plant and animal genetic resources. Contact: [office@save-foundation.net](mailto:office@save-foundation.net)



19-21 September: Conference "Sustainable Use of Traditional Agroecosystems" in Nitra, Slovakia (joint with Annual Meeting of the SAVE Network). Contact: [dezider.toth@uniag.sk](mailto:dezider.toth@uniag.sk)

20-24 September: Conference "Biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in mountain areas of Europe: the challenge of interdisciplinary research" Ioannina, Greece. Contact: [biosceneconf@bio.auth.gr](mailto:biosceneconf@bio.auth.gr), Web: <http://www.bioscene.co.uk>

24 September: "European Agrobiodiversity Day (EAD)". PR events to the importance of agricultural genetic resources. Various activities of the national organisations of the SAVE Network in their own countries. Info: [office@save-foundation.net](mailto:office@save-foundation.net)



24 September: 3rd Regional Fair "Balkan Agrobiodiversity and Rural Heritage", Dimitrovgrad, Serbia-Montenegro; Exhibition of indigenous Balkan breeds. Contact: [balkanika@ptt.yu](mailto:balkanika@ptt.yu)

24 September: SoZooAlp-Meeting "Historical transhumance between the Alps and the Po-Venetian plains"; Asiago/Trento, Italy. Contact: [michele.corti@unimi.it](mailto:michele.corti@unimi.it), Web: <http://www.sozooalp.it>

25-27 September: International Symposium "Comparative Advantages for Typical Animal Products from the Mediterranean Areas", at Vale de Santarém, Portugal. Web: <http://horta.0catch.com/medsymp/>