

# SAVE eNews 4/2005

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



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## New utilisation for old breeds

In many countries, Christmas is celebrated with a fir tree. For that purpose, firs are cultivated in plantations throughout Europe. Clever minds have now linked necessities to



usefulness: To save expenses and efforts for cutting down grass and weeds and for fertilizers (potassium, nitrogen), Mangalitsa pigs (Woolly pigs) are kept in the plantations. They are easy to keep because of their modesty and their resistance to cold climatic conditions, only needing some scattered huts and igloos.

As the animals are distributed over a large area, soil compaction rarely develops. The pigs do not even harm the trees after having taken roots. It seems to be a classical win-win situation: the owner does not need to apply any chemicals, saves work and even creates income through the pigs. The meat, of excellent quality, is easily sold.

SAVE Foundation will give examples for unconventional utilisation of old breeds, particularly if they make sense and can be applied on a broader basis. It is very important that old breeds can settle in niches where they do not have to compete with modern performance breeds. Thus, they can conquer a place in the economic cycle.

The SAVE team sends Seasons greetings and a Happy New Year to all its readers!



## Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and SAVE Network

From 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2005, the SAVE Annual Meeting took place in Nitra, Slovakia, with the frame of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on "Traditional AgroEcosystems", supported by FAO and IPGRI (a report on the conference will be published in the next edition of the eNews). The SAVE Meeting with partners from 8 countries was imbedded into a festival of traditional Slovakian food and "Diversity of Slovakian cultivated plants".

The SAVE committees discussed during their meetings the possibility to take influence on the measures taken against avian influenza. Accordingly, a special page has been established on the SAVE homepage providing most recent information on avian influenza, relevant information on laws and regulations and the possibilities for Rare Breed organisations in Europe: [http://www.save-foundation.net/AI\\_Alert.htm](http://www.save-foundation.net/AI_Alert.htm)



AgroGenofond, the Slovakian partner in the SAVE Network, informed concretely about its work and projects. Thus, participants could gain new insights and suggestions. Thanks are expressed to AgroGenofond for the generous food and service and organisation of the SAVE Meeting.

During the excursions of the frame programme, participants were competently introduced into the work of the gene bank in Piestany where 50.000 samples of Slovakian cultivated plants are stored. Cereals are very important. Further information was given with regard to focal points of the activities and problems of *ex situ* conservation. Problems concerning the conservation of old apple breeds were intensively discussed in Ripolcany. The bus tour led through avenues with old apple trees, stimulating the discussion amongst the participants. Once again, the question of how the population of Eastern European countries can be sensitized for the issue of conserving old cultivated plants and livestock breeds and for their cultural value was raised. At present, conservation seems to remain mainly in the hand of governmental bodies. Members of the SAVE Network know, however, only too well that long-term conservation can thus not be secured.



In the Southern Slovakian hills, vine is cultivated, too. Besides traditional vinery that serves own needs, the famous "Tokaj" is produced in Slovakia. Its area of cultivation is found in the Western part of the Slovakian mountains "Zemplínske vrchy" (around the town of Sátoraljaújhely / Slovenské Nové Mesto) and covers approx. 600 ha with seven communities. Vinery follows a special process: White wine is made of two vine varieties

The first is the *Samorodné*, during which all vintaged grapes are pressed as usual, producing a wine similar to German Spätlese. The second is the *vyber*. It is produced adding 25kg of mashed dry grapes to each barrel of young wine. A wine tasting helped to convince the participants of the SAVE Network of the uniqueness of this Tokaj wine.

Animal projects were visited, too: in the Poloniny National Park, bison are kept in large enclosures for future reintroduction to the wild. Participants of the visit could observe these animals during their feeding time, and the largest European mammal left a considerable impression. A visit to the stud Topolcanký and its museum rounded off the excursions.



## Newsflash

- **European Charter for Mountain Quality Food Products**

At December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005, the "European Charter for Mountain Quality Food Products" was ceremonially signed and launched. The signing states oblige themselves to characterise, protect and promote high-quality products from mountain regions. Farmers and enterprises from mountain regions shall thus be better able to market quality products. This is definitely a contribution to sustainable development of the economy of European mountain regions. For more information, see: <http://www.mountainproducts-europe.org/>

- **EU Internet Consultation on the Loss of Biodiversity**

The objective of this online consultation is to seek the views on what needs to be done if the EU is to deliver on its commitments to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. This consultation started 12 December and will close at 6 February 2006. SAVE encourages all stakeholders to fill in the questionnaire from the point of view of AgroBiodiversity, making specific comments on the key challenges at end of sections 2 and 3. See URL: <http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=BIODIVERSITY>

- **SAVE Focus 2005 published**

A new edition of the SAVE Focus, published every second year, reports on the development of cross-borderly endangered livestock breeds, their problems, the need for action, co-ordination efforts and their success. SAVE lists the most recent stock numbers for Huzul horses, Mangalitsa pigs, Girgentana goats, Pusteria and Red Cattle, and five sheep breeds, subdivided into the individual breeding countries. The breeds are described and addresses of breeding responsables are given. Each breed is portrayed with a picture. The SAVE-Focus may be downloaded from the SAVE website under: [http://www.save-foundation.net/Publications/SaveFocus\\_2005.pdf](http://www.save-foundation.net/Publications/SaveFocus_2005.pdf) (336 KB).



- **Goats in Greece**

Within the frame of the SAVE-Monitoring project “Animal genetic resources in Greece”, traces of a dwarf goat breed on the island of Kassos have been confirmed. The semi-wild milk goat is kept for cheese production. Via DNA analysis, the relationship with other breed will now be examined. Until spring 2005, approx. 8000 goats and 12000 sheep lived on the island of only 60 km<sup>2</sup>. As the island has been grazed completely bare, both sheep and goat populations have been reduced to a quarter of their original size at the behest of the government. Some Kassos goats measure less than 50 cm at withers; they are probably the smallest goats of Europe. Greece should be good for some more surprises in the future!



On the occasion of the SAVE-Monitoring Workshop in Athens at the end of June 2005, the peculiar Ulokeratiki goats were defined as one of the most endangered Greek goat breeds. Meanwhile, Stelios Makaritis and the Dimos-Blantis team have collected last animals and formed three nucleus breeding groups.

- **Success for Karachan breeds**

According to the Bulgarian SAVE partner organisation Semperviva, the Karakachan herd protection dog has been acknowledged by the government as “native breed”. Semperviva has therefore launched the Karakachan dog as breed of the year and hopes now to have other endangered breeds acknowledged as “native breeds”, too. These are mainly Karakachan sheep, Karakachan horses, and Kalofer longhaired goats for which Semperviva has established comprehensive and long-term conservation programmes.



Thanks to SAVE-Monitoring activities, remains of Karachan sheep could be traced in four countries: after Bulgaria and FYR Macedonia, animals were found in Greece and Serbia, too. Despite being only small herds, they are of major interest for breeding.

## Important dates (extract)

17-18 January: Congress "Impulses for agriculture and nutrition - Results from socio-ecological research". Berlin, Germany. Web: <http://www.sozial-oekologische-forschung.org/de/547.php>

17-19 February: 25 years Jubilee of GEH (German Rare Breeds Society) at Bartholomä - Baden-Württemberg. Contact: [geh.feldmann@g-e-h.de](mailto:geh.feldmann@g-e-h.de), Web: <http://www.g-e-h.de>

29-30 April: 100 year Jubilee of the Swiss Goat Breeder's Association; National Goat Exhibition with 750 goats from all 9 breeds in collaboration with ProSpecieRara. Espace Gruyère at Bulle (FR), Switzerland. Contact: [info@psrara.org](mailto:info@psrara.org)

18-20 May: Mediterranean Livestock Production: "Uncertainties and Opportunities", Zaragoza, Spain. [iamz@iamz.ciheam.org](mailto:iamz@iamz.ciheam.org), Web: <http://www.iamz.ciheam.org/gmed2006>

2-4 June: National Rare Breeds Exhibition in Germany. In the frame of the Hesse days GEH shows some 65 endangered German breeds. Whitson holiday 2006 at Hessisch-Lichtenau near Frankfurt/M. E-mail: [geh.feldmann@g-e-h.de](mailto:geh.feldmann@g-e-h.de), Web: <http://www.g-e-h.de>

2-4 June: Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network at Hessisch-Lichtenau near Frankfurt/Main, Germany. In connection with the GEH Rare Breeds Show (see above). Contact: [office@save-foundation.net](mailto:office@save-foundation.net)



5-7 June: 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Conference "Environment for Europe 2006 – EnE06"; Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro. Contact: [office@ambassadors-env.org](mailto:office@ambassadors-env.org), Web: <http://www.ambassadors-env.org>

22-26 August: 1<sup>st</sup> European Congress of Conservation Biology "biological and cultural diversity in Europe" at Eger, Hungary. Web: <http://www.eccb2006.org/index.php>, Contact: [zsofi@katki.hu](mailto:zsofi@katki.hu),

30 September: European Agrobiodiversity Day (EAD): PR events to the importance of "Traditional Agro-Ecosystems". Various activities of the national organisations of the SAVE Network in their own countries. Contact: [office@save-foundation.net](mailto:office@save-foundation.net)



25-26 October: First Exhibition of alpine rare breeds of goats and sheep in Vinadio (near Cuneo), Italy. Contact: [michele.corti@unimi.it](mailto:michele.corti@unimi.it), Web: <http://www.assoziazionerare.it>

27 October - 5 November: International Fruit Exhibition EUROPOMME 2006 in Naumburg, Hessen/Germany. Contact: [kurverwaltung@naumburg.kgrz-kassel.de](mailto:kurverwaltung@naumburg.kgrz-kassel.de), Web: <http://www.hessische-pomologentage.de>