



Traditional AgroEcosystems (TAES)

An international conference on TAES

Traditional agroecosystems have developed over a long time: they are the cornerstones of a diverse cultural landscape. TAES are tuned and adjusted to their environment, they form part of an ecological entirety. Traditional agroecosystems aim at sustainability and optimise yields instead of maximising them. Interesting synergy effects result from ingenious combinations of utilisation. Examples for still functioning TAES are traditional mountain pasture systems (seasonal utilisation with recovery of vegetation in the valleys), standard tree cultivation or forest pasture systems. In present times, they are repressed and limited to marginal areas and poorly developed regions. As they have in the past produced a broad variety of valuable and locally adapted livestock breeds and cultivated plants, TAES are important for their conservation. Recently, TAES have again received public attention and interest because they demonstrate how modern low-input agriculture can function.



TAES were the topic of an international congress in Nitra, organised by the Slovakian SAVE partner organisation AgroGenofond together with the Agricultural University of Nitra, IPGRI and SAVE. Individual TAES were analysed, using the Carpathian Mountains as reference area. Approx. 150 participants from 7 countries participated in the session on different aspects of traditional local breeds and varieties and the prospects for future modern utilisation. Local initiatives were presented, such as for example the festival "Hontianska parada", where an entire village presents traditional food, traditional attires, dances and handcrafts to thousands of visitors. The development of new products from traditionally cultivated plants was discussed, too, e.g. mulberry juice, as well as the issue of legislative preconditions for marketing protection of local products in the frame of EU support. SAVE Monitoring projects "Fruit-Net" and "Synonym register of fruit varieties" were presented. A comprehensive poster session completed a broad range of information offered. The culinary climax of the Festival of Slovakian Food was a large buffet with an enormous choice of little known and forgotten titbits and Tokay wine testing and tasting.

TAES as examples for the management of protected areas

Traditional agro-ecosystems (TAES) are becoming increasingly important for the niche production of quality products (support through EU regulations 2081 and 2082/92) and the socio-economic development of small farms in poorly developed regions and marginal sites. Moreover, they are well-suited for farming in buffer zones of large-scale nature protection areas. In this context, pasture management projects with traditional livestock breeds are of high tourist value, as the following examples will demonstrate.

Protection of Herons and Spoonbills in the Croatian Lonjsko Polje Nature Park



The rough pastures in the area of the present Nature Park Lonjsko Polje have since ever been feeding place for White Stork, Spoonbill and Lesser Spotted Eagle. To keep the pasture landscape open, Euronatur and SAVE Foundation have jointly and successfully been active for the conservation of the well-adapted Turopolje pigs since 1993. In 2004, 20 heads of Podolac cattle were introduced to the area (Slavonian-Syrmian Grey Cattle). Those “dangerous” looking animals are an unique tourist attraction and prevent at the same time photographers and visitors

from disturbing heron nests on the pastures at close range. The Croatian government pays conservation subsidies for endangered animals that also contribute to the parks' management. The Nature Park profits thus from biotope management, offers an attraction for tourists and also contributes to the conservation of livestock diversity with nucleus breeding herds. Links: <http://www.save-foundation.net/english/turopolje-e.htm> and http://www.euronatur.org/Euronatur_foerdert_die_Erhaltung.525.0.html

Grazing in the East-Rhodope Nature Park, Bulgaria

In Madjarovo BSPB, the Bulgarian bird protection society, operates the East-Rhodope Nature Protection Centre with a vulture reintroduction and rehabilitation station. In the wilderness area of the nature park, a nucleus breeding herd of the critically endangered Rhodope dwarf cattle is being built up in co-operation with the Dutch foundation Ark since 2002. Pasture areas are kept open through grazing. This dwarf cattle is very undemanding as regards food and environment.



Links: <http://www.abibbg.com> and <http://stichtingark.nl/index.asp?Section=gebied&Level=4.2>



Pirin National Park, Bulgaria

The SAVE partner organisation BBPS Semperviva operates a "Rare Breed Centre" in the fringe area of the Pirin National Park in West Rhodope mountains where the endangered horses, sheep and herd protection dogs of the old Karachan shepherds and Kalofer Long-Haired Goats are bred. The interrelation of agricultural use and nature protection as well as the symbiosis of several projects that would not

be feasible individually is very impressive (sheep-dogs-wolves; nature protection-agriculture; NGO - National Park; horses as means of transport in protected areas etc.)

Link: <http://www.save-foundation.net/semperviva/home.htm>

Lake Prespa: buffalo management in the Ramsar wetlands

At Lake Prespa in Greek West-Macedonia, grazing with traditionally managed water buffaloes has stopped the excessive growth of reed in the internationally important wetlands. The LIFE Nature Project, realised by the "Society for the Protection of Prespa", demonstrates that grazing with buffaloes is significant superior to mowing. The buffalo pasture creates small habitats important for birds, amphibians and fish. Grazing at Lake Mikri Prespa will in future still be further differentiated with old livestock breeds and is important, amongst others, for the Dalmatian Pelican and the Pygmy Cormorant. The Glossy Ibis has been observed to hatch in the region for the first time in 35 years.

Link: <http://www.spp.gr> (only in Greek).



TAES and Nature Protection

The use of traditional agro-ecosystems has a positive influence on the biodiversity of wild plants and animals. M. Schneider-Jacoby (Euronatur), for example, states that the population of spoonbills has been increasing continuously in the Nature Park Lonjsko Polje in Croatia since grazing has started. Population numbers have reached 82 pairs in 2005 (50% of Croatians breeding spoonbills). The heron has increased from 219 pairs in 2003 to more than 662 birds in 2005.

Marginal fallow areas are also used for alternative field cropping here and there, e.g. for buckwheat, flax, hemp, poppy seed, one-grained wheat, two-grained wheat, spelt wheat. (Gru)

“Fruit-Net” is online now

Fruit-Net – a databank-based online inventory on neglected and forgotten fruit, berries and wild fruit – is online now.



The project “Fruit-Net” was presented in the SAVE eNews 1/2005. Thanks to the generous support of the Margarethe and Rudolf Gsell Foundation, Basel, Fruit-Net is online now! Under URL <http://www.fruit-net.info> more than 400 contacts from 43 European countries are listed. Most important aim is the linking of conservationists – persons and organisations who actively collect, safeguard, manage, determine varieties, propagate or trade old varieties, work up literature on pomology etc. The network serves to exchange information, propagation material, and conservation know-how and to conduct expert talks amongst interested persons. It supports those who search and those who offer across national borders.

Via the clearly arranged search function, a conservationist of old and forgotten fruit and berry varieties – either a person or an organisation, can be found. Fruit-Net is, however, more than a comfortable address list! A clear presentation in file-card layout includes, besides the address, more detailed information on activities, too. The file card “Species List” provides information on number and species that can be found under the respective address. Contents of the web site, particularly the Species List, are filled in and updated by the conservationists themselves. Thus, Fruit-Net is always “up to date”. Numerous links to related websites and databases top off “Fruit-Net”.

Save the address in your list of favourite websites: <http://www.fruit-net.info> !

European Agrobiodiversity Day (EAD): 30th September 2006



This year's Agrobiodiversity Day is dedicated entirely to the value of traditional agroecosystems (TAES) (cf. main topic of the current eNews). Using different activities in numerous countries as example, the occasion will be used to demonstrate how those sustainable systems that are optimal adapted to local conditions can increasingly be used again in future. Old livestock breeds and cultivated plants are important parts of those systems. Particularly in economically disadvantaged mountain and fringe regions, the mostly small-structured systems and the interaction of agriculture and nature could be revived and subsequently contribute to

the conservation of genetic diversity of domesticated and wild animals and plants. Economic and infrastructure advantages could develop from the production of quality products, within the frame of low-input agriculture, from tourism and from the management of large-scale nature protection areas.

SAVE Annual Meeting in Hessisch-Lichtenau, Germany

The Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network will take place during Whitsun from **2nd to 4th June 2006**, at Hessisch-Lichtenau, Germany (east of Kassel). It is organised in connection with the 25th anniversary of the German partner organisation GEH who is going to present some **65 endangered German livestock breeds** on the "Hessentag 2006". Information and registration: info@monitoring.eu.com

The tentative program is organised as follows:

Friday 2nd June

- Afternoon: Meeting and guided Tour through the „One-World Garden“ of the University Kassel in Witzenhausen
- Evening: Open Meeting of the SAVE Project Commission

Saturday 3rd June

- Morning: SAVE-Network (Council of Co-operation Partners)
- Whole day: Visit of Hessentag and the GEH Show
- Evening: Meeting of the SAVE Foundation Council

Sunday 4th June

- Morning: Visit of a nearby Ark farm and discussion of two related SAVE projects
- Afternoon: Farewell.



Newsflash

SAVE Focus, Special Edition Balkan

During the workshop "Endangered Livestock Breeds of the Balkans" in Dimitrovgrad (September 2004), it was emphasized that several endangered breeds occur in different countries. To support co-operation and co-ordination of conservation efforts, SAVE has asked the Monitoring Institute to dedicate a special edition of the SAVE Focus to this issue. This SAVE Focus Special Edition Balkan is now ready and includes information for the group of Pramenka and Tsigai sheep, for Brachyceros/Busha and Steppe Cattle as well as water buffalo. Information concerns the number and location of remaining animals, addresses of responsables etc.. Download (2,2 MB) from:

http://www.save-foundation.net/Publications/SAVE_Focus_05_Balkan.pdf

SAVE Workshops in Greece and the Balkans

In connection with the projects of the Monitoring Institute and the efforts to improve networking between stakeholders in the relevant areas, SAVE organises further workshops in Greece and the Balkans. Further information under: info@monitoring.eu.com

- From 18th to 20th May, the establishment of an "NGO network for endangered breeds in Greece" will be discussed in Agrinion, Greece.
- From 30th June to 2nd July, representatives of NGOs, universities and governmental bodies of Balkan countries will meet in Pernik, Bulgaria, to approach networking issues in the frame of the "Balkan Network for Agro-Biodiversity", too.

Avian Influenza

Quite a different report to the Bird Flu problems from GRAIN is available in English, French, Spanish and German under: http://www.save-foundation.net/AI_Alert.htm

Important dates (extract)

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

18-20 May: SAVE Workshop "Network of Rare Livestock Breeds in Greece", Agrinion, Greece. Contact: info@monitoring.eu.com

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

2-4 June: National Rare Breeds Exhibition in Germany. In the frame of the Hesse days GEH shows 65 endangered German breeds. Whitson holiday 2006 at Hessisch-Lichtenau (East of Kassel). Contact: 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 (East of Kassel), Germany. In connection with GEH Rare Breeds Show (see above). Contact: office@save-foundation.net



5-7 June: 2nd Regional Conference "Environment for Europe 2006 – EnE06"; Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro. Web: <http://www.ambassadors-env.org>

30 June - 2 July: SAVE Workshop "Rare Breeds of the Balkan: Networking and Capacity Building" in Pernik, Bulgaria. Contact: info@monitoring.eu.com

22-26 August: 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

27 August: 10th "Rare Breeds Expo" in the "Living Heritage Park", Provincial Domain Puyenbroeck at Wachtebeke (near Gent), Belgium. All Belgian rare breeds of farm animals will be present together with a number of rare breeds of neighbouring countries. Contact: staf.vandenbergh@sle.be, Web: <http://www.sle.be>

15 September: 2nd Cattle Network Workshop "Development Trends in Small Cattle Farms" (joint to EAAP-Meeting), Antalya, Turkey. Contact: secretariat@cattlenetwork.net, Web: <http://www.cattlenetwork.net/antalya.htm>

29 September - 1 October: International Environmental Conference: Sustainable Management and Development of Mountainous and Island Areas; Island of Naxos, Greece. Web: <http://www.fmenr.duth.gr/Naxos-Conference/index.htm>

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

