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(Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe)

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Utilisation and marketing – new value for old varieties

Historical tomato varieties in farm gardens and in the markets of Northrhine-Westfalia

Since 2000, a model project to support cultivation of endangered Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) has been realised in the German Federal County of Northrhine-Westfalia. The projects' aims are to elaborate basics and to demonstrate cultivation. Thus, an overall concept for the conservation of PGR on agricultural enterprises (on-farm cultivation) is being developed. Selection and description of varieties worth to be conserved as well as seed production and seed provision give farms an incentive to cultivate these varieties and species. Besides approx. 150 cereal samples, potatoes, old ornamental plants and vegetables were tested with regard to their suitability for conservation and utilisation. Economically successful use and thus sustainable cultivation were main priorities. Tomatoes proved to be particularly suited. They can easily be reproduced; a broad diversity of varieties and variations of taste and optics is still available as seed samples. The evaluation of such diversity was only possible with the support of the gene bank of the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK) in Gatersleben, Germany. For many decades, the institute has been conserving genetic diversity *ex situ* in its collections and passing on seed to conservation initiatives such as "VERN e.V.", "Dreschflegel" und "VEN e.V."



As partners of the model project, 6 gardening enterprises, willing to cultivate old varieties, were chosen with an overall cultivation area of approx. 3000 m² in glass and foil cultivation systems. 3 enterprises are members of the "Demeter" association, one enterprise belongs to the "Bioland" association, and 2 others operate conventional. Particularly the organic farms proved to be very flexible and quickly discovered the diversity of the assortment to be a market niche. Pre-selection of recommended tomato varieties followed in the first line external characteristics such as form, colour, taste. Furthermore, their performance in tasting and test cultivation had left a positive impression. Cultivation is extended each year with regard to cultivation area as well as range of varieties. Farms involved are to gather their own experience with cultivation and marketing of the varieties and have thus developed farm-specific assortments on the basis of the initial variety assortment.

It has, however, to be stated that the missing 100 years of conservation breeding cannot be compensated for within a few years. Particularly characteristics such as bursting resistance and maturation period require the attention of breeders in the future.

Besides individual preferences, some varieties established themselves better than others, for example the green-fruited variety "Evergreen" dating back to the Middle of the 19th century, or the "Ananas Tomato". Old farmyard varieties from the Balkans or from South America outshone many others offered on the market with regard to their taste. One of the most intensive taste experiences can be expected from a small-sized wild tomato, firstly offered in the Netherlands in a 100gs- tray for 3.50 Euro and receiving good feed-back.

On-farm development of a variety assortment shows clearly the focus of individual farm types: a conventional farm in Munster produces for wholesale and catering. Here, "Marvel Striped" (orange with red marbling), "Evergreen" (green-fruited), "Berner Rosen" (light violet), "Indian Tomato" (dark red) and "Stuffer Tomato" (hollow-fruited) prevail. A Demeter-associated farm in Dortmund focuses mainly on direct marketing. On this farm, "Black plum" (very dark reddish-brown) was established best, followed by the white tomato "Beauty Blanche". "Marvel Striped", "Evergreen", "Blond head", a local variety from the USA and the late-maturing "Bullock hearts" are also very popular here. After first experiences with the recommended initial assortment, this farm extended its range and offers now a very broad range of products of 28 varieties (seedlings and fruit).



Marvel striped (Anannas tomato) U. Schulze



The white, green and black tomatoes with old pedigree and exquisite taste enthuse future regulars during tasting on the markets. The broader the range of offered forms, colours and tastes is, the more appetite for this vegetable was raised. Furthermore, latest studies have shown that antioxidative features and variability with regard to vitamin contents is quite pronounced. Farms could not meet the newly risen demand of their clients as each new offer attracted more demand. High prices (up to 3.5 Euro per young plant and 3.5 to 10.00 Euro per kg/fruit) were particularly paid on those events and markets were

products were individually presented and where regular clients value the offered products accordingly. The price rises only after clients had time to get used to the exclusive product. Thus, products should first be offered for a lower price, which will then rise in the following years, according to a demand that has to be raised again and again.

In intensively accompanied farms, a broad variety of tomatoes has been established well on the market. The diversity of the phenotype of a commonly known fruit such as tomatoes has been recognised as sale-supporting argument.

Customer links, generated through tasting and information, lead to continuous demand. Outside of those markets that already participate in the project, the acceptance of old varieties by gardeners and consumers still needs enhanced promotion.

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Continuous Monitoring of Agricultural Genetic Resources in the Alps

"The present study shows that efforts to develop a system for continuous monitoring, equipped with an efficient alarm system, are urgently needed. This seems, at present, the most efficient way of dealing with a situation which might change fast, and of reacting in reasonable time to negative trends"

(Preface, Agricultural Genetic Resources in the Alps, 2003)



The original study "Agricultural Genetic Resources in the Alps" undertaken by the Stiftung Pro Specie Rara was published in 1995 and successfully updated between 2000 and 2001 by the Monitoring Institute for Rare Breeds and Seeds, published in 2003. A new update of this study is required. However, it is certain that a study on a similar scale to the two previous ones cannot be repeated every two years. Due to this

fact and in order to achieve the aims of networking organisations and institutions, documenting and updating relevant data and building up an **early warning system** for critically endangered agricultural breeds and species, the Monitoring Institute is undertaking research based on the Delphi Method.

Experts in the various aspects of Alpine Genetic Resources were invited to take part in the research. The aim is to build up a pool of knowledge, information and opinion to aid the continuous monitoring of agricultural genetic resources in the Alps. This first round of research will be based on two questionnaires, which the participating experts

will be able to fill in online using a personal username and password. Each expert will fill out a questionnaire that is especially tailored to his or her expert knowledge. The questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to fill out. There is a possibility for the participants to log-in more than once in order to complete the questionnaire or add a new comment.

Once this questionnaire is returned to the Monitoring Institute, it will be analysed according to "Grounded Theory Analysis" (after Strauss). This systematic method of analysis is a well-known and much used way of analysing data that is not primarily numerically based. Both agreements and disagreements will be brought together and compared, any statistics that are made available by the participants will be collated and the overriding themes and suggestions will be followed up. The findings of the original survey will then be presented to all of the experts who have taken part. At the same time the second questionnaire will be sent out, this second questionnaire will be based on the results of the first. This means that questions that have been raised in the analysis will be asked. Experts who have contributed opinion that is unexpected, controversial or needs further explanation will be invited to expand on their previous contribution. The second analysis will then take place, also using "Grounded Theory Analysis". The final results of this project will be available at the beginning of 2007. The participating experts along with external experts will be invited to comment on these results.

By the end of these rounds there should be a good picture of how the agricultural genetic resources in the Alps look today and what awaits them in the future. A regular repetition of this exercise based on the themes that have been brought up in the first study should enable the successful monitoring of the Alpine Region for many years to come.

Endangered breeds of the Balkans – Networking and Capacity Building; Workshop in Pernik, Bulgaria

One cornerstone of *in situ* conservation of endangered livestock breeds is the active exchange between experts, breeders and governmental bodies. Cross-border networking and exchange between representatives of Balkan countries were thus the focus of the workshop "Rare Breeds of the Balkans" from 6th to 8th July 2006 in Pernik, Bulgaria.

The workshop was carried out by SAVE Foundation and the Monitoring Institute in co-operation with the Bulgarian partner organisation Semperviva.



Representatives from five countries reported about projects, progress and experiences, discussed about methods and possibilities of the conservation of autochthone livestock breeds. The chance to set up a sustainable cross-border network and to exchange know-how on the conservation of agrobiodiversity were the main points of discussion. Two working groups discussed intensively about national and transnational conservation measures and cross-border co-operation.

The following key points were phrased in Pernik:

- To set up and maintain a sustainable international Balkans-network, regular meetings are unconditionally required. All relevant groups from governmental, institutional and private sector are to be integrated.
- The establishment of national NGOs is, at least in the long term, indispensable for economic and efficient conservation work.
- Possibilities to establish a transnationally active regional association are considered.
- Breeder's organisations are essential for efficient conservation work, subsidies and broad public participation. Breeders in some countries have, however, firstly to be convinced with regard to the advantages of such an association.
- Rescue Stations that serve to house animals in emergency situations and to conserve breeding groups in the long term, e.g. as country park or show farm, should urgently be set up.
- The Balkans site in the Agrobiodiversity.Net (<http://www.agrobiodiversity.net/balkan>) is more intensively used in future as platform for exchange. Country co-ordinators receive a login to update news and information regularly.

In Pernik, it showed clearly that participants were extraordinarily motivated to co-operate and network across national borders in favour of the *in situ* conservation of autochthone livestock breeds in the Balkans – even across national interests, religion and other issues.

Newsflash

Information on the European Day of Agrobiodiversity (EAD)

On the **30th of September**, the European Day of Agro-Biodiversity (EAD) is going to take place. The topic for this year is "Traditional Agro-Ecosystems". The topic is particularly media-suited to raise awareness for the very special value of traditional agricultural systems. SAVE has compiled a **dossier** that country organisations can translate into their language and complement with information on local projects, problems and activities. The dossier is only available in English and can, as other documents, be downloaded from the following website: http://www.save-foundation.net/EAD/EAD_en.htm



Important dates (extract)

14 September: Days of the Natural Patrimony in France: Agriculture: which solutions for mountain agriculture? Is there a future for "local" mountain agriculture? How to maintain an agricultural activity securing landscape and local life? How can town be an outlet for mountain products? contact: lise.ravenaux@frapna.org

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

23 September: RARE-Meeting "Dairy products and autochthonous breeds", Guastalla, Italy. Contact: info@associazionerare.it, Web: <http://www.associazionerare.it>

26-30 September: 2nd World Pastoralist Gathering in Valsain near Segovia, Spain. Meeting of some 300 pastoralists from 40 countries. Contact: pastores.sinfronteras@pastos.org

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>
Contact: emanolas@fmenr.duth.gr,

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. Web: http://www.save-foundation.net/EAD/EAD_en.htm



30 September: 2nd National Symposium on Agro-Biodiversity of AlbaGene in Tirana, Albania: Contact: kkume@icc-al.org

30 September: 3rd International Congress "Traditional Agro-Ecosystems" in Nitra, Slovakia, with side event in Timisoara, Romania. Contact: dezider.toth@uniag.sk

30 September - 1 October: 4th Regional Fair "Balkan Agrobiodiversity and Rural Heritage", Dimitrovgrad, Serbia-Montenegro; Exhibition of indigenous Balkan breeds. Contact: balkanika@ptt.yu

30 September - 1 October: National Rare Breeds Exposition with all rare Swiss breeds. Brunegg/Mägenwil, Switzerland; Contact: philippe.ammann@psrara.org, Web: <http://www.prospecierara.ch>

2-4 October: 6th National Colloquium "Des ressources partagées", La Rochelle, France. Contact: BRG@inapg.fr, Web: <http://www.brg.prd.fr>

4-11 October: 5th Iberian Congress on animal genetic resources (SERGA and SPREGA) and Meeting of the International Goat Association "Local goat genotypes and their utilization in management systems as means of conservation" La Palma, Islas Canarias, Spain. Contact: jcapote@icia.es; Web: <http://www.webs.ulpgc.es/serga06/>

12-15 October: 7th Fair of the Agricultural Biodiversity and 2nd European seminary on seeds "We keep the diversity", Bullas, Murcia/Spain; Contact: jmegea@um.es

16-17 October: International Symposium on Pomegranate and Minor Mediterranean Fruits, Adana, Turkey. Contact: ahsen@cu.edu.tr

18-20 October: International Conference on the Perspectives in European Fruit Growing, Lednice, Czech Republic. Contact: uov@zf.mendelu.cz; Web: <http://www.zf.mendelu.cz>

19-20 October: International Workshop "Policies against Hunger V, After the flu: No birds, no food? How to cope with Avian Influenza"; Berlin, Germany. Contact: foodsecurity@gtz.de

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

25-28 October: International colloquium "Ploughing with animals, yesterday and today, here and there", Nantes, France. Contact: rbourrig@club-internet.fr, Web: <http://palissy.humana.univ-nantes.fr/labos/cicpr/index.html>

26-27 October: NGO-Workshop of the Forum Environment and Development for the preparation of the next International Conference on Biodiversity (CBD COP9, Germany 2008); Bonn, Germany. Contact: m.brinkmoeller@forumue.de

27 Oct. - 5 Nov.: International Fruit Exhibition EUROPOMME 2006 in Naumburg, Hessen/Germany. Contact: kurverwaltung@naumburg.kgrz-kassel.de, Web: <http://www.hessische-pomologentage.de>

11-12 November: National Fruitshow of the 'Stichting Behoud en Bevordering Fruitcultuur' at Doesburg, Netherlands. Exposition of more than 1000 old, new and special fruit varieties. Contact: fructus.doesburg@wxs.nl, Web: <http://www.tolderas.nl>

14-17. November: EuroTier 2006, International Exhibition for Animal Husbandry and Management; Hannover, Germany. Web: <http://www.eurotier.de/>

18-19 November: 6th International Meeting of Pomologists, St.Andrae in Lavanttal, Carinthia (Austria). Contact: katharina.dianat@boku.ac.at