

SAVE eNews 1/2007

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



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The project “Rescue Stations” has a new name:

‘European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net’ or ELBARN



SAVE, working together with the lead partner Euronatur and the further project partners GEH, SLE and R.A.R.E, has been awarded a grant from the EU for this project under the Work Programme



of the Regulation EC 870/2004. The grant was awarded to ELBARN as a ‘Concerted Action’ and thus ELBARN will be financed by the EU to 80% of eligible costs. We are proud that the grant application was accepted by the EU, the fact that this is a project run only by the NGO sector means that the ELBARN Project Partners have set a precedent for other NGOs seeking EU funding. The work to realise the goals of ELBARN will begin 1st June 2007 and the project will last for 3 years.

Up to this point there has been no pan-European concept for in-situ conservation of animal genetic resources. Without a clear concept and network it is very difficult, in acute cases, to find suitable alternatives to prevent live populations from being slaughtered. Although there are “Ark Farms” (e.g. the RBST’s Approved Farm Parks or GEH’s Arche Höfe) already in existence, which undertake important work in conservation and publicity, there is still an element missing in the system, an element that has long been identified by SAVE. This element is the Rescue Station. ELBARN aims to change the status quo by creating a network of existing Ark Farms, by encouraging the development of new ones so that every European country has at least one ‘Ark and Rescue Centre’ and also by enhancing the system with the missing element: capacity to rescue animals that are both Rare Breeds and face slaughter or other immediate danger.

This is an enormous project for the SAVE network and one which all SAVE members and partners are encouraged to join in with in order to make it a success. The Ark and Rescue Centres will:

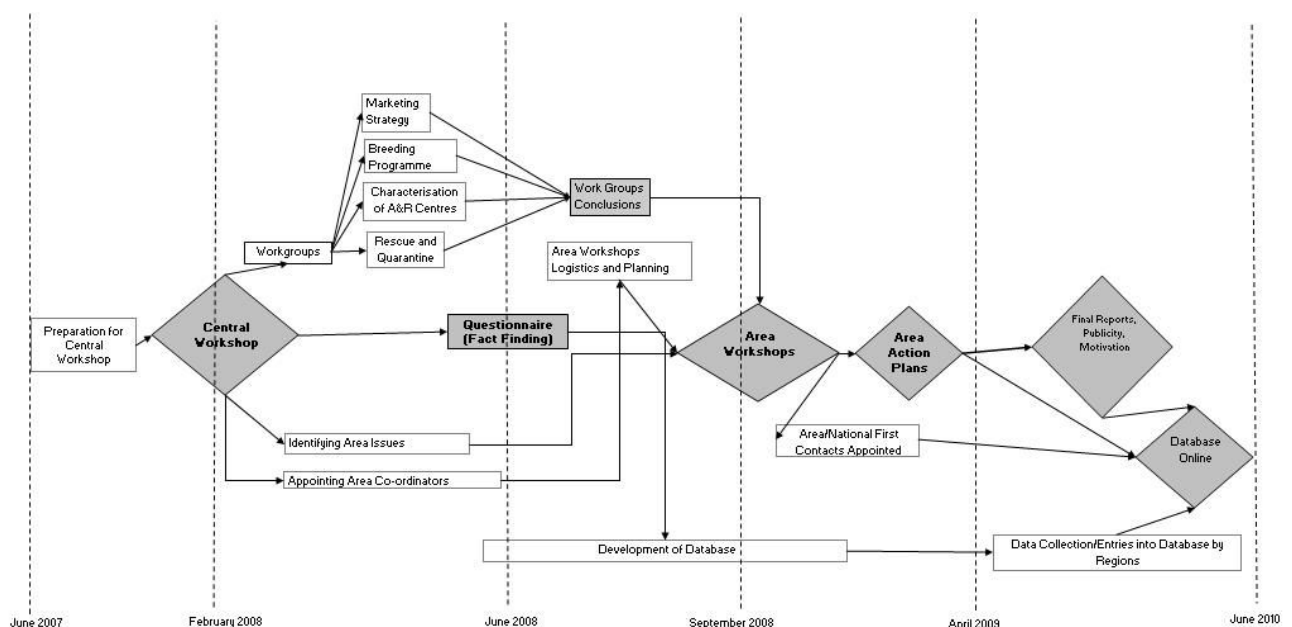
- offer emergency places for endangered genetically important livestock,
- will offer quarantine places for rare breeds in cases of epidemics,
- will keep core breeding groups
- as well as offer breeding help for livestock keepers and
- will also offer a place for the public to see the animal genetic resources of Europe.

These Ark and Rescue Centres will be electronically networked via an online database. The ELBARN Network will be spread throughout Europe to share knowledge

and encourage collaboration between organisations and institutes wishing to conserve European animal genetic resources. Additionally, the promotion of the products of these livestock breeds, whether this is as a food product or as a service such as grazing for environmental management, will be a central theme of the project.

ELBARN is not intended as a project that buys property or animals. Nor does it have any finances available for helping in the upkeep of Ark and Rescue Centres. However, through the Working Groups, ELBARN will be able to make concrete suggestions on how Ark and Rescue Centres can maximise the marketing potential of the rare livestock breeds in their care, thus rendering them profitable. It is also hoped that, through the existence of an international network sponsored by the EU, smaller projects related to fulfilling the wider goals of ELBARN will find funding to achieve their goals.

The three year project will have the following structure:



As can be seen from the above diagram, the launch of ELBARN is the Central Workshop. The Central Workshop is seen as an opportunity to invite the participants of ELBARN to meet together and appoint the Transnational Working Groups and the Area Coordinators. The Work Groups, appointed to create guidelines on the subjects of Rescue and Quarantine, Breeding, Characterisation of Ark and Rescue Centres and Marketing of Products, will meet on the second day of the Central Workshop.

A fact finding questionnaire will be used to gather as much information as possible from all the areas, this information will then be available online as part of the database. This database will be developed and filled with information, both from the questionnaire and, later in the project, with more specific details about each area. This database should be of interest and use to both the general public and people specifically interested in the conservation of livestock breeds. The database will be based on the already existing Arca-Net (<http://www.arca-net.info>) .

In order to develop Area Action Plans, tailored to the needs of each Administrative area, Area Workshops will be held in September 2008. These areas are administrated by the Project Partners as well as by the Area Coordinators and other individuals and organisations that are willing to give their time to ELBARN. The Area Action Plans will set out the work required in each area in order to achieve the goals of a fully functioning ELBARN. Issues on a transnational and national level will be discussed at the Area Workshops and the results of the questionnaire and of the Work Groups will feed into a process of setting out a concrete Area Action Plan, which will secure the future of ELBARN in that area. Depending on the area, differing amounts of time will be needed to complete this plan. However, it is within the idea of ELBARN that those areas with least problems will aid the countries that have massive hurdles to climb, in the form of knowledge transfer.

The final report will provide information on the improved state of in situ conservation of animal genetic resources in Europe. It will show how Ark and Rescue Centres operate, explain how the Database can be used and also show the work completed and that still to be done. This report will be made public in order to promote the work of ELBARN. As part of the promotion of ELBARN, the Area Action Plans will be presented to governments, in order to communicate the need for action and to show how to achieve successful *in situ* conservation.



Pilot Ark and Rescue Centre Vlahi in Bulgaria

Although ELBARN is financed by the EU, it covers the geographical region of Europe, not only the EU. All countries will be invited to participate in the network. The Central Workshop will take place in February 2008, more details will be announced at the end of the summer 2007. If you wish to express your interest in being a part of ELBARN or have any further questions, please get in contact with SAVE or the Project Partners.

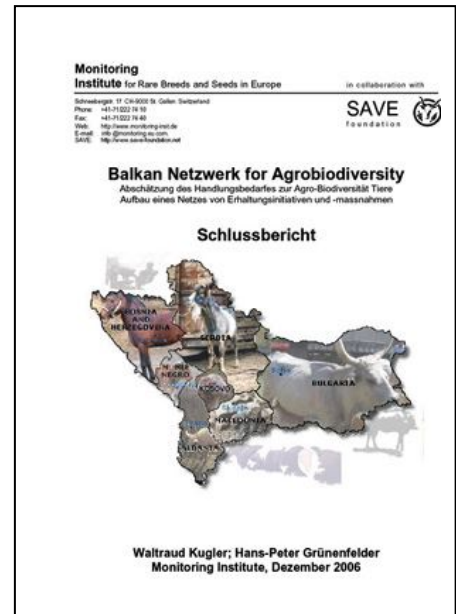
Detailed project description see: <http://www.save-foundation.net/pdf/ELBARN.pdf>

Lead Partner: Euronatur (European Nature Heritage Fund) – Germany (and area partner)
 Co-ordinator: SAVE Foundation (SAVE) – Germany
 Area partners: Gesellschaft zur Erhaltung alter, gefährdeter Haustierrassen (GEH) – Germany
 Steunpunt Levend Erfgoed (SLE) – Belgium
 Associazione Razze Autoctone a Rischio di Estinzione (R.A.R.E.) – Italy



Balkans Network: Phase I and II have been completed

Both phases I and II of the project “Balkans network - estimation of the need for action for agro-biodiversity of livestock; set-up of a net of conservation initiatives and measures” were carried out from 2004 – 2006. The final report has now been published on http://www.save-foundation.net/deutsch/PDF/Balkan_Schlussbericht.pdf (at the moment only in German language). Within the frame of this project, a comprehensive overview on the situation of livestock agro-biodiversity in the entire Balkans has been given for the first time. However, Greece and the European part of Turkey have only been included for livestock breeds spread across national borders. The SAVE Focus, Special Edition Balkan http://www.save-foundation.net/Publications/SAVE_Focus_05_Balkan.pdf (report in English) describes livestock breeds of the Balkans that occur across borders, stock numbers are listed and contacts in the individual countries are given.



For individual species and breeds in the countries concerned, but also across national borders, urgent conservation measures could be carried out and future projects were planned and prepared, e.g. the building up of breeding groups for Busha cattle, Karakachan sheep and Svrlijig chicken; the purchase of breeding bulls and the introduction of breeding management practices for Prespa cattle and water buffaloes and the verification of primeval pigs.



Besides recording, monitoring activities and rescue actions, first steps for cooperation on horizontal as well as on vertical level have been initiated. During two workshops the interest in a Balkan cooperation that is directed from outside was clearly expressed. The possibilities for an internationally secured “Balkans-network-NGO” were evaluated. The official side also recognizes and supports the engagement for the conservation of livestock agro-biodiversity in the Balkans: an international meeting of the national coordinators animals (appointed to FAO), taking place in November 2006, was dedicated to the issue of networking. An own partial network of governmental representatives was decided on. SAVE also took part in this workshop and could present the point of view of NGOs. Furthermore, the set-up of a third partial network for universities was encouraged in order to facilitate the exchange of results, activities and project plans.

A very gratifying development of the project's activities is that breeds counted for lost were found again, such as e.g. Prespa dwarf cattle (c.f. picture). This should, however, not belie the fact that for many breeds, only small stock numbers still exist, often being kept by elderly people. Breeders and animal keepers are more often than not unfamiliar to herdbook keeping; uncontrolled crossbreeding with western high-performing breeds is frequent.



Within the frame of the project, not all tips could be followed up exhaustively. Search tours and recording still need to be done. In some areas, the interest of farmers could be sparked, in others, the attention of the governmental side could be gained. There is, however, a strong will to cooperate for the conservation of agro-biodiversity despite ethnical, political and many other differences and borders. This wish needs to be supported actively. At the same time, it is important to link the agricultural sector to other areas, e.g. Nature conservation. Thus, synergies can be used and sustainable systems for agriculture, tourism and nature protection can be elaborated.

The Serbian Novi Pazar Goose shows how fast a breed can be lost: in 2003, the breed was described in an official publication of the government and classified as highly endangered, however, without giving stock numbers. In 2004, the breed was recorded in the DAD-IS database of the FAO. Search tours in 2005 and 2006 ended without any result – although a breed description is available and the potential area of distribution well-known. Today, the formerly largest goose breed of Serbia, has to be considered to be extinct – even though search is continued.....

The activities for the Balkans Network were financed by the Sonnenwiese Foundation, Vaduz, (phase I) and the Heidehof Stiftung, Stuttgart (phase II).

Newsflash

Patenting Sentinel and Action Service

The International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) has launched a new initiative in the field of patenting in the animal sector, an issue of great importance for the future of all organisations involved in the sectors of animal recording and genetic evaluation. The latest developments in this field and the future prospects are causing increasing concern among breeders, thus stressing the need for continuous updating on the progress of animal patenting issues worldwide and raising the awareness of professionals regarding their possibility to take action towards the protection of their professional interests. The ICAR initiative called "Patenting Sentinel and Action Service" (PSAS) will be based on an international network for the exchange of information on animal patenting issues. For this reason, a PSAS website has been created, providing information on legal, technical and practical aspects of animal patenting, as well as worldwide news in the field. The website can be explored under URL: <http://www.psas-web.net>

Important dates (extract)

8-11 March: 2nd Nature Fair in Basel, Switzerland. Congress "Growth in Nature and Economy" March 9th. Contact: kongress@natur.ch, Web: <http://www.natur.ch/kongress>

9-11 March: International Conference "Szenarios for the future of traditional orchards in Central Europe", Fulda, Germany. Web: <http://www.streuobst.de>

23-26 May: 18th EUCARPIA Genetic Resources Section Meeting "Plant Genetic Resources and their Exploitation in the Plant Breeding for Food and Agriculture", Piestany, Slovak Republic. Contact: eucarpia.pgr@vurv.sk, Web: <http://www.eucarpia.org/>

5-8 June: International Symposium: Environment and Culture in the Mediterranean Region. Antalya, Turkey. Web: <http://geomed2007.balikesir.edu.tr>

10-17 June: World Gathering of Nomads and Transhumant Herders; La Granja (Cantabria), Spain. E: pastores.sinfronteras@pastos.org, Web: <http://www.pastos.org>

20-22 June: Colloquium "Live plant collections: place and role in conservation"; Nancy, France. Contact: AFCEV@jardin-bota.uhp-nancy.fr, Web: <http://www.afcev.org>

20-22 June: 11th European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production, Basel, Switzerland. Contact: info@erscp2007.net; Web: <http://www.erscp2007.net>

1-2 September: 25 year Jubilee ProSpecieRara Foundation, Bern, Switzerland. Contact: info@psrara.org, Web: <http://www.prospecierara.ch>

1-7 Sept: FAO International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources, Interlaken, Switzerland (with exhibition of rare Swiss breeds from ProSpecieRara). Web: <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/genetics/angrvent2007.html>

24-28 September: Second International Conference on Health and Biodiversity (COHAB 2007), Galway, Ireland.



28-30 September: Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and SAVE Network on the occasion of the Allitalian Organic Fair in Guastalla (near Parma), Italy. Contact: info@monitoring.eu.com

29 September: European Agro-Biodiversity Day (**EAD**). PR event to the topic "use it or loose it" (conservation through consumption). Various activities of the SAVE Network organisations in their respective countries. Contact: info@monitoring.eu.com.



13-15 October: International Conference "The Role of the Donkey and the Mule in the Culture of the Mediterranean", Island of Hydra (near Athens), Greece. E-mail: ed.emery@britishlibrary.net, Web: <http://www.geocities.com/DonkeyConference>