

SAVE eNews 1/2009

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

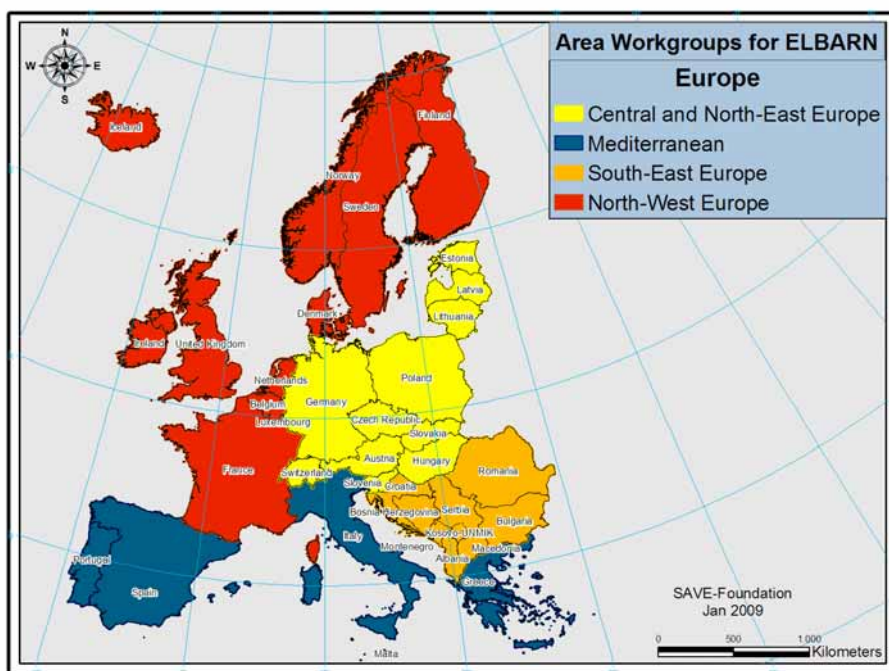
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European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net (ELBARN) – Area Workshops



Between March and May 2009 four 'Area Workshops' will be held to continue the work of the ELBARN project. ELBARN was launched with a 'Central Workshop' in February 08, where work groups discussed rescue and quarantine, the characterisation of Ark and Rescue Centres, breeding programmes and the marketing of rare breed products. Each of these work groups has provided a basis for the development of guidelines on these topics. At the Area Workshops, these guidelines will be presented to the participants.

As announced in the SAVE eNews 3/08 (<http://tinyurl.com/b9tp4e>) the ELBARN questionnaire, a detailed survey of the status quo in each European country has been made. The questions ranged from questions about regulations and breed registers to questions about marketing programmes and the locations of possible "Ark Centres". This questionnaire will be used as a source of data to identify the primary needs of each area. The discussions at the workshop will be based on the identified needs of the area and the guidelines mentioned above. Speakers at each workshop will present relevant information based on experience or regulations. Thus, the participants of the work groups will be given the tools they need to produce a plan of action for the area.

The objective of the pan-European project ELBARN is to create a network of establishments active in the in-situ conservation of autochthonous breeds. The project aims to prepare, in every European country, the required infrastructure and logistics for the worst case scenario. SAVE began this task with the website www.arca-net.info where establishments, open to the public and showing endangered livestock breeds or rare cultivated plants, can join a European network of similar institutions. For ELBARN, Arca-Net is being expanded and improved upon. It will contain a large selection of breed descriptions giving history and details of the animal breeds shown and also contain an interactive map and other improved search functions. Once the improvements to Arca-Net are complete, it will be announced in the SAVE eNews.

In order to achieve the long term goal of a functioning ELBARN, each area will develop an 'Area Action Plan', tailored to the local needs. Synergies with the Global Plan of Action will be discussed in order to coordinate action. At the workshop, three work groups will discuss these action plans and, especially, the topics of:

- Rescue Stations: How to save nucleus herds. This discussion will include identifying and establishing Rescue Stations in the area, any legal barriers faced by Rescue Stations, identifying and recording of breeds in the area.
- Sustainability: Putting ELBARN guidelines into practice. This discussion will include Ark Farms – how they can be established, how to make them profitable, marketing of products, working together with schools.

These discussions, along with a more general discussion on the action plans, will be incorporated into a draft version of the area action plan. The goals of the workshop are to:

- Produce Area Action Plans
- Identify points of contact within the area for people seeking information or wishing to raise the alarm about breeds in danger
- Networking stakeholders with an aim to collaboration and cooperation
- Share information about regulations, registration and recording of breeds

Would you like to attend one of the workshops?

The workshops are aimed at a broad range of stakeholders, from government ministers through to breed associations, NGOs, farmers, producers. If you are interested in attending one of the workshops please contact the SAVE office (office@save-foundation.net):

- **North West Area Workshop: Ghent, Belgium, 5th-7th March 2009**
- **North East & Central Europe: Roznov, Czech Republic, 27th-29th March 09**
- **Mediterranean: Agerola, Italy, 27th-29th April 2009**
- **South Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, 7th – 10th May 2009**

The cost of the hotel will be met by the project. Travel costs can be met on request. Please fill in the ELBARN questionnaire (at least those questions relevant to you) before registration, as it is a part of taking part in the workshop (you can fill in the questionnaire directly online here: <http://tinyurl.com/5qy33n>). Travel costs can only be paid to participants who have filled in the questionnaire.

We look forward to working together with as many stakeholders as possible to create a successful European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net!

Successful rescue of rare breeds: Guidelines of an ELBARN Transnational Workgroup

In the frame of the pan European ELBARN project, transnational workgroups were asked to work out statements and guidelines for different subjects in the frame of in situ/on farm livestock keeping for rare breeds. The Work group, which pooled expert opinion on rescue of rare breeds developed the following guidelines, which may be of interest for a wider circle of interested people:

Guidelines for Rescue rare Breeds

Principles

- Rescue is a temporary act.
- Action takes place in cases of emergency.
- Professional accomplishment: Rescuing should act in a most professional way. Therefore a net of experts and stakeholders is needed for identification of the needs, knowledge of the breeds and varieties taken into consideration, planning and implementation.
- Set up emergency funds: Emergency funds are necessary during a monitoring process in a country or region, but also in countries where the conservation structure is doing well. Here also cases of emergency can take place, e.g. when a breeder gives up breeding and keeping, in case of natural disasters or diseases. Here money currently available for culling animals in cases of outbreaks of diseases could be used for emergency measures.
- Verification of the rescued breed: The breed needs to be verified. In some cases there might not be time for verification. An expert should make a kind of first identification. An exact verification should take place as soon after the rescue action as possible.
- Ex situ conservation (in gene banks): Ex-situ conservation (storage, collection and cryopreservation of semen, ova, embryos etc.) are required in all circumstances as last resort and insurance.



Rescue Centre for rare Karakachan breeds in Vlahi, Bulgaria

Needs for successful rescue of a rare breed

- Preventive action

It is important to act before a rescue action is necessary: Breeds should be defined and monitored per country and/or per region as soon as possible. A decentralized system for identification of local breeds and varieties is necessary. For characterisation morphologic, genetic, functional and cultural aspects need to be taken into consideration.

- National Committee

Identification of the breeds and varieties should be done by a *National Committee* for AnGR. The composition of this committee needs to be multidisciplinary, including the officially appointed National Coordinator for the Management of AnGR by each country, NGO stakeholders, stakeholders of nature conservation and cultural heritage organisations. This committee should be in interaction with ELBARN.

- Reference point

A National (or regional) reference point or contact person is needed, with all available information of breeds and varieties of a country. This point should be communicated also to veterinarian / sanitary services and the public. This reference point should be in close interaction with ELBARN.

- Training of veterinarians

Veterinarians should be educated in terms of rare breeds to be able to identify such breeds and to give some information to the public.

- Conservation Value

The conservation value of the farm animal sometimes cannot be verified immediately. Therefore a verification of the conservation value is necessary as soon as possible after the rescue action.

- Threshold for a rescue action

The lowest threshold for an action needs to be defined. This cannot be done within a general definition. Different factors have an influence in the threshold for a need of action. In case of rare breeds, extinction takes place before the last remnants are dead. For the lowest threshold also factors like situation of the herd and their keepers, numbers of males and females in reproduction, natural, historical and cultural factors are playing a role. Therefore the above mentioned National committee and the National reference point are important decision maker units.

- Rescue Centres – requirements

A Rescue Centre needs to be identified to re-place a breed, a herd or a group of rare farm animals. Requirements are:

- Free space (stable, pasture, paddock)
- Flexibility in term of sanitary status, possibilities for isolation
- Readiness for collaboration - agreement

- Registration as a rescue centre

A rescue centre should have the character of e.g. an ark farm with free facilities. Officially running farms like state farms, university farms etc. often have space for hosting. This information needs to be stored in the ELBARN database in the net of responders. There is a need for a written agreement with the rescue centre. This agreement should include requirement to inform about any changes in status, availability of places and so forth. A sample agreement could be worked out by ELBARN (within the area actions).

The official sanitary status of the rescue place as a whole could be endangered in case of hosting animals with an unknown sanitary status. This is important in several cases of diseases like Maedi Visna, CAE, Brucellosis, Tuberculosis etc. The related authorities for sanitary rules and -management must be included in the process. Also the related authorities for the starting of the rehabilitation process should be identified (breeder association, governmental authorities)

After the rescue operation, the re-integration process of the breed into e.g. a breeding programme should start immediately after valuation.

The Process of Rescue

An ideal scenario of rescue a rare breeds looks like this: Somebody finds a herd of special exterior. This person calls e.g. a veterinarian.

The veterinarian calls the national contact point and uses the ELBARN database for more information and a first verification, if this is an endangered breed. The situation will be made more clear.

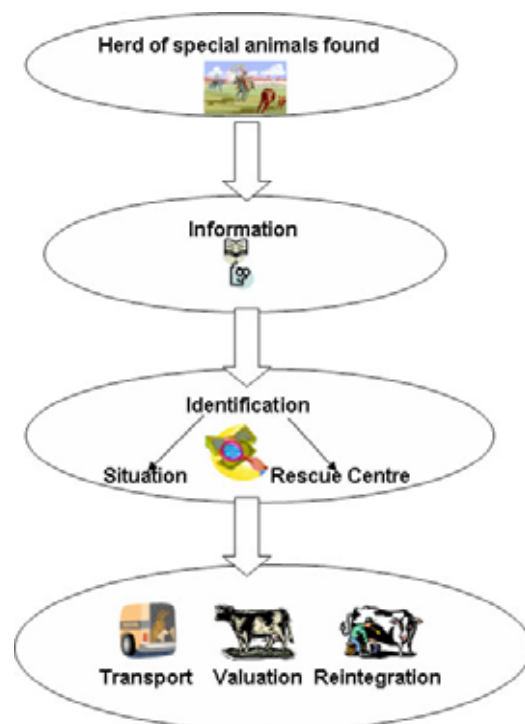
If a Rescue action is needed, the best Ark- and Rescue Centre nearby will be identified and an agreement with the farmer will be made.

The herd can be re-placed.

Afterwards, a precise valuation follows and a permanent place needs to be found.

A herdbook will be established and the re-integration process can start. Possibilities for herdbook keeping and data collection should be available.

For more Information see: <http://www.elbarn.org>



Newsflash

SAVE Foundation gets specialised consultative status with FAO

After many years of co-operation on "consultative status" FAO Director-General has granted now "specialised consultative status" to SAVE Foundation. That means the SAVE Foundation is entitled not only to send an observer to appropriate technical meetings but also to submit memoranda on technical aspects of the FAO programme of mutual specialised interest. SAVE may also send an observer to Conference sessions and in appropriate cases to Council sessions. On the other hand SAVE will co-operate with the competent services of FAO by co-ordinating activities, will invite representatives of FAO to attend and participate in the SAVE meetings and will promote FAO's programmes and activities through appropriate forms of publicity. Hopefully this agreement will reinforce a fruitful collaboration of mutual benefit.

Course on "Genetic resource policies and conservation strategies"

From 6-17 April 2009 Wageningen International and Centre for Genetic Resources (NL) will organise a course on "Genetic resource policies and conservation strategies". The course is designed for project co-ordinators, senior staff, managers, trainers, programme leaders and other professionals who aim to promote the conservation and use of genetic resources. Deadline for applications is 6 March 2009. Link: <http://tinyurl.com/cfnbwv>

ITWG 5th Session

The 5th Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2009) took place in Rome, Italy, 28 – 30 January 2009. SAVE participated in this meeting as an observer and also presented a side event “European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net (ELBARN) as a Response System for Breeds at risk”.

Provisions for breeds at risk are an important part of securing sustainable conservation of livestock breeds into the future. Without adequate contingency plans for rare breeds in the event of disease or other emergency it is unlikely that these often forgotten animals will be protected. Every animal lost to an endangered population means that the survival of the breed becomes less likely. If in-situ conservation of traditional livestock breeds is to be accomplished, emergency response systems need to be put in place. This is why SAVE, in the context of the ELBARN project, is drawing attention to this need and, also, offering a practical solution to the problem.

Link to FAO website: <http://tinyurl.com/bx4pkx>, Link to ELBARN: www.elbarn.net

ICT Ensure Workshop - Club of Rome in collaboration with UNESCO

SAVE Foundation gave a presentation on “Networking Agrobiodiversity” at a meeting of Club of Rome (<http://tinyurl.com/bthy8q>) at UNESCO in Paris, January 15th. The ICT-ENSURE project (<http://tinyurl.com/clwo7s>) and The Club of Rome - European Support Centre (<http://www.clubofrome.at/>) organized this meeting. The event dealt with the use of information and communication technologies in the area of biodiversity monitoring and conservation for agriculture.

In the presentation the IT related work of the SAVE Network was outlined and how SAVE is doing networking via Agrobiodiversity Net. Also the audience was introduced to the online database Arca-Net and to ELBARN (European Livestock Breeds Ark & Rescue Net). Needs while networking agrobiodiversity were mentioned as well as SAVE imaginations about “Sharing the load” between State/Science/NGO. Some claims to the Commission like support for an EU wide web Portal, help with translation in more European languages and support for creation of a label to identify products from rare breeds/cultivated plants were expressed.

The return of the curvy cucumber

Rules governing the size and shape of fruit and vegetables will be consigned to history after European Union Member States today voted on Commission proposals to repeal specific marketing standards for 26 types of fruit and vegetables. The Commission's initiative to get rid of these standards is a major element in its ongoing efforts to streamline and simplify EU rules and cut red tape. For 10 types of fruit and vegetables, including apples, strawberries and tomatoes, marketing standards will remain in place. But even for these 10, Member States could for the first time allow shops to sell products that don't respect the standards, as long as they are labelled to distinguish them from 'extra', 'class I' and 'class II' fruit. In other words, the new rules will allow national authorities to permit the sale of all fruit and vegetables, regardless of their size and shape. The Commission will now formally adopt the changes which will be implemented from 1 July 2009. See press release in 22 languages under <http://tinyurl.com/ae786f>

Important dates (extract)

5-7 March: European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net: Area Workshop Northwest Europe at Ghent, Belgium. Contact: jef_aerts@telenet.be; Web: <http://www.elbarn.net>

18-19 March: 1st GLOBALDIV Workshop "A global view of livestock biodiversity and conservation" at Bydgoszcz, Poland. elena.murelli@unicatt.it; Web: www.globaldiv.eu

23-24 March: "Heritage Care through Active Citizenship", European Conference on Civil Society Organisations active in the Field of Heritage. At Mechelen, Belgium. Web: <http://www.heritageorganisations.eu>

26-28 March: European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net: Area Workshop Central and Northeast Europe at Roznov pod Radhostem, Czech Republic. Contact: anja.zimmermann2@gmx.de; Web: <http://www.elbarn.net>

3-5 April: International meeting "Shearing, sorting and grading of wool". Celebration of the 20th anniversary of ATELIER, at Noyers sur Jabron (Alpes de Haute-Provence), France. Web: <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/atelier.laine>, Contact: atelier5@orange.fr

24-26 April: European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net: Area Workshop Mediterranean Area at Agerola (near Naples), Italy. Contact: laura.milone@gmail.com; Web: <http://www.elbarn.net>

5-7 May: European meeting « Laines d'ici et d'ailleurs » (Wool from here and other places) about the experiences of local wool processing; at Cernier, Switzerland. Web: <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/atelier.laine>, Contact: atelier5@orange.fr

14-16 May: Conference "Challenges of the Balkan Animal Industry and the Role of Science and Co-operation" at Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. Contact: af@uni-sz.bg

12-16 July : IALE Conference 2009: "European Landscapes in Transformation: Challenges for Landscape Ecology and Management", Salzburg. Austria. Contact: secretariat@iale2009.eu; Web: <http://www.iale2009.eu/>

20-23 August: Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network at Gent, Belgium. Visit of the EU institutions in Brussels and the Living Heritage Expo of the Belgian partner organisation SLE (see next line). Contact: info@monitoring.eu.com



23 August: 12th Rare Breeds Expo in the "Living Heritage Park" in the Provincial Domain Puyenbroeck in Wachtebeke, near Gent, Belgium. All Belgian rare breeds will be present. Contact: staf.vandenbergh@skynet.be, Web: <http://www.sle.be>

8-10 September: "Responding to the challenge of a changing world", Second World Seed Conference at Rome, Italy. Web: <http://www.worldseedconference.org>

29 September: European AgroBiodiversity Day (EAD). PR event for AgroBiodiversity. Various activities of the SAVE Network organisations and other stakeholders in their respective countries. Contact: info@monitoring.eu.com