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Documentation & Use of Traditional Knowledge in the Alps

The knowledge about cultivation, animal husbandry, breeding, use and product manufacturing of rare breeds and varieties is being lost with the elder generation. Sometimes the knowledge gets lost faster than the breed or the variety. If this knowledge falls into oblivion, in-situ / on-farm conservation becomes difficult. The traditional "Farmer's Knowledge" is an "Intangible Heritage" as it is protected by the UNESCO "Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage" (implemented 2003).



During the Conference "Alpine Convention and Agrobiodiversity" which was organized in collaboration with the Alpine Convention and SAVE-Monitoring Institute in May 2008 in Bolzano, Italy, experts stated that collecting the traditional knowledge of the Alpine Circle is of special importance. A precondition to implement a project to collect traditional knowledge is a functioning network of experts. Such a network was build up through several monitoring studies (like „Alpine Delphi“, 2007, see: http://www.save-foundation.net/pdf/Alm_Final_Report.pdf) and combined in the "Alpine Network for Agrobiodiversity" by SAVE-Monitoring Institute. The idea to collect the knowledge about rare autochthonous breeds and varieties is very new and innovative. Until now, only few efforts were undertaken to systematically collect traditional peasant knowledge. A basis for collection, verification and dissemination needs to be developed.

In order to achieve this, SAVE-Monitoring Institute began a one year feasibility study for collection and documentation of traditional knowledge in the Alps - to find the best way of collecting and handling the data. The project is based on agrobiodiversity and regionally limited to the Alps as a pilot region as a network of experts exists and basic data is already collected, as the occurrence and distribution of breeds and varieties.

The study includes:

- Development of an information platform (possibly wiki-based, that people can contribute to)
- Development of a system to collect knowledge from different sources (Libraries, Internet, Museums, Persons)
- Development of categories and content.

As a result of the feasibility study, a following project will be launched that is also clearly limited to agrobiodiversity and the Alps, as geographical region. It is important to set the scope of the research, otherwise it is difficult to judge where it should begin and end. Experience from this project shall be introduced in projects also in other regions, such as the Balkan region or the Carpathians, in a later stage.

If there are comments to this project please contact the responsible persons by eMail: waltraud.kugler@save-foundation.net; ulrich.donath@save-foundation.net

De Oerakker: Dutch safeguard for vegetables, grains & crops



The Oerakker (i.e. the ancient field) almost became an obsession for Ruurd Walrecht as he began, in the Netherlands, to collect endangered crops. As an enthusiastic hobby farmer he grew several varieties of vegetables, grains and crops and he started collecting old Dutch landraces. He visited dozens of old, almost retired growers, went to Northern Germany (Ost-Friesland) and contacted colonists in the USA and Canada who had taken Dutch seeds to their new homelands. He soon had to seek for more land for his collection and he arrived in the province of Drenthe in Veenhuizen in 2002, at the state prison, where he

hoped that the owner, the ministry of justice, would sponsor him. At the end of 2006 he received the Fighting Against All Odds-prize, but when he still got no financial support and scientific approval, he moved to Sweden, leaving his collection behind.

He had more than 500 Dutch landraces in situ, especially beans, peas, cabbages, and carrots. The Network Eternal Mash was created by his followers to protect his legacy. With about 20 historic vegetable gardens, a working party was set up in close collaboration with Centre for Genetic Resources University of Wageningen, for in situ conservation. In 2008 they started the Orange List (as a counterpart to usual Red list) for beans (453 varieties included), carrots (162), cabbages (788), lettuce (271) and peas (382); see www.deoerakker.nl. Recently, 129 varieties of onions, 37 of leeks and 17 of shallots were added to the Orange List. In 2008 the Agricultural University of Wageningen collection of beans was compared with the collection of Ruurd Walrecht. 10 to 15% of his collection was unique. Now, original varieties of beans are being grown at several locations. De Oerakker collection has been stored, categorized, and saved and is no longer private it has become a true non-governmental organization - showing that a huge national collection can never be maintained by one person.

René Zanderink (Amsterdam, tel. 020-6385813), Obe Bootsma (Haarlem, tel. 023-5316480), Chris Kik (head curator crops Centre for Genetic resources in the Netherlands (CGN) at the Agricultural University in Wageningen), board members De Oerakker and partners of Network 'Eeuwig Moes', heahea@planet.nl & info@deoerakker.nl

Association for the conservation and cultivation of cultivated plants (VERN e.V.)

The association for the conservation and cultivation of cultivated plants (VERN e.V.) was founded in 1996 in the north-eastern state of Brandenburg, Germany. At that time a system of large nature reserves was being built up. Against this background, some stakeholders in the district developed the idea to connect a sustainable, ecologically-oriented land use with the conservation of plant genetic resources. The aim of the association is to bring together existing initiatives, show gardens, nurseries and farms and to promote on farm conservation of crop genetic resources in a coordinated and skilled way.



A show nursery in Greiffenberg / Uckermark houses the seed stock, including treatment options and the office for the coordination of the network. This consists of agricultural and horticultural enterprises of different sizes (from 5 - 1000 ha), environmental education centers, botanical gardens or small show gardens as well as visitor information centers of large nature reserves to individuals – known as “Gastronomes” – who hold the issue close to their heart. Currently the association has nearly 400 members nationwide, the emphasis so far has been regionally in Berlin and Brandenburg. In Greiffenberg about four employees working regularly, plus temporary and seasonal workers, interns during the summer months and sometimes even international guests.

The association has, over the last ten year, developed a collection of various crops species (about 2,000 species), particularly cereals, potatoes, tomatoes and other vegetables, ornamental plants and selected groups. This collection is constantly growing, selectively edited and described. Interested persons can obtain seeds for their own purposes on a non-commercial basis. Since 2007, there is also a joint project with the Berlin Humboldt University on the reintroduction of old lettuce. In addition to courses, seminars and events are offered, such as the maintenance of varieties, seed production, multiplication or botany. Moreover, the association or individual members offer environmental education in the context of school and extracurricular education, at horticultural shows (LAGA) and also in political work, from the participation in 2008 at the international congress "Planet Diversity" to comments on EU legislation.

For more information: www.vern.de & <http://www.grand-cru-institute.com/de/index.php>

12th Regular Session of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources – Summary

The meeting of the 12th regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources took place 19th – 23rd October 2009 in the FAO headquarters in Rome. This was preceded by a special information seminar entitled “Policy Arrangements for Access and Benefit Sharing for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture [GRFA]”. This seminar aimed to provide a broad overview and discussion on the status of the negotiations on the international regime on ABS. CGRFA-12 considered agenda items relating to the ongoing programmes of the Commission with regard to the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW), including access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for GRFA, plant genetic resources (PGR), animal genetic resources (AnGR), forest genetic resources (FGR), biodiversity of micro-organisms and invertebrates for food and agriculture.



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Access and Benefit Sharing for GRFA: the essential role of GRFA for food security was stressed; members were encouraged by the Commission to work closely with the negotiators of the international regime in their respective countries; further work on ABS in relation to the CBD is necessary; the special nature of agricultural biodiversity should taken into account in the negotiations.

Plant Genetic Resources (PGR): The Commission endorsed the State of The World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (SOW-2) as the authoritative assessment of the PGRFA sector; governments and donors were invited to make available the financial resources necessary to translate the SOW-2 and requested FAO to print and widely distribute it; A summary, containing main findings, conclusions, identified gaps and needs for policy makers shall also be prepared by FAO.

Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR): The Secretariat introduced documents on the follow-up to the Interlaken Conference and the report of the fifth session of the ITWG-AnGR. The important contributions of small-scale livestock keepers was acknowledged, particularly those in developing countries, as custodians of much of the world's AnGR their full and effective participation in the implementation of the GPA was called for. The need for continued support and mechanisms to provide updated information on AnGR was noted. The ITWG-AnGR should explore early warning and response systems for AnGR.

Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the GPA for AnGR: The Commission adopted the Funding Strategy for the implementation of the GPA for AnGR; requested

FAO to implement the GPA as part of a consolidated programme that addresses all GRFA; and requested FAO to report on the administrative arrangements for the FAO Trust Account.

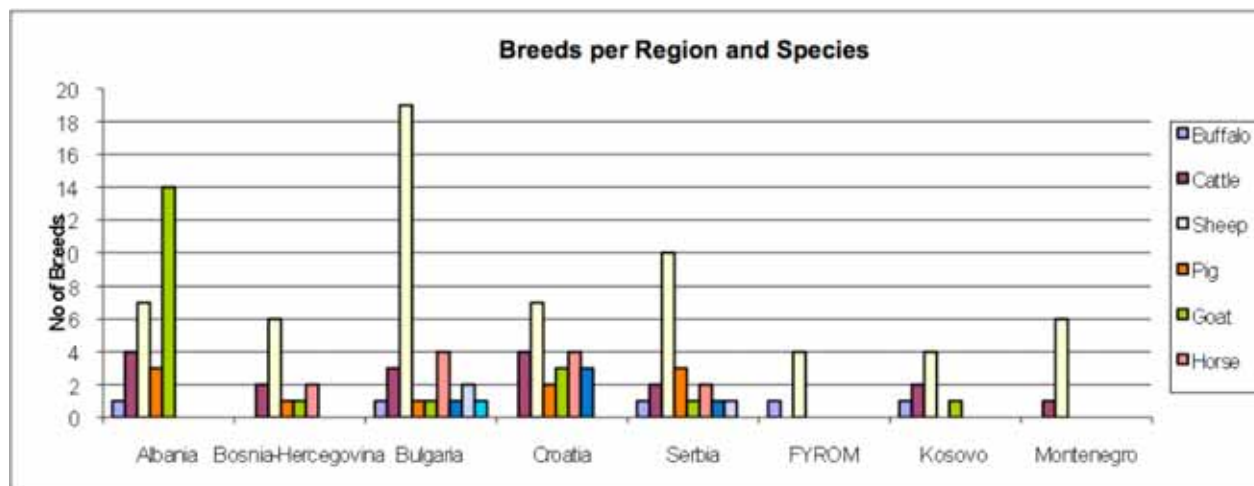
Cooperation with the International Treaty on PGR: Closer cooperation between the various international bodies dealing with PGR is called for. The Commission adopted the *Joint Statement of Intent for Cooperation* between the governing body of the ITPGR and the CGRFA; will collaborate with ITPGR so that issues related to ABS for PGRFA may be dealt with in an integrated and harmonious manner; and requested the CGRFA and ITPGR Bureaus to coordinate their agendas for e.g. review of the draft GPA.

Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): The different sectors of GRFA may require tailored access and benefit sharing approaches, and that these might need to be distinct from the bilateral contractual approach envisaged under the CBD. The Commission supports further collaboration between the CBD and the FAO Commission; and requested the Secretary to explore the possibility of holding a joint meeting of the Bureau of the Commission and the Bureau of the CBD-COP to discuss future cooperation.

A full report on this meeting can be found in the Earth Negotiations Bulletin on the website of the International Institute for Sustainable Development, which provides information resources, including daily coverage, of the negotiations. <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/cgrfa12/> Documents from the meeting are available here: <http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cgrfa-meetings/cgrfa-comm/twelfth-reg/en/>

Breed Atlas of the Balkans online

Within the project "Balkan-Network for Agrobiodiversity", alongside networking and monitoring activities, data about cross-border occurring species of farm animals in the Balkan countries was collected for the first time (http://www.save-foundation.net/Publications/SAVE_Focus_05_Balkan.pdf). Up to now, most Balkan countries have no adequate system for recording their indigenous breeds. Since 2005 many breeds were identified and their stocks were assessed, but a comprehensive overview was missing. With the newly developed internet database, it is possible to quickly and easily search within the collected information. The information is available for both professionals and interested laymen and also serves the networking of stakeholders. The Breed Atlas is available on the "Balkan Network for Agrobiodiversity", see: <http://www.agrobiodiversity.net/balkan/index.htm>. Search is possible by species, country, breed name or synonyms. On the data sheets the primary name and synonyms are listed. A brief description of the breed follows, including history and other general observations, breed details and the source of information. Where available, two pictures have been added to this description. A sketch map indicates the part of the country in which the breed is to be found, according to the information available.



The 139 recognized breeds and varieties are distributed widely across the regions and countries. In Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Serbia, many indigenous breeds are already recognized and approved by the State. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM and Montenegro, however, there is still great need for action.

Newsflash

2nd International Conference on the organic sector development in Central/Eastern European and Central Asian Countries

The 2nd International conference on the organic sector development in Central/Eastern European and Central Asian countries took place on September 10-11, 2009 in Tbilisi, Georgia. SAVE was represented at this conference and presented the marketing ideas from the ELBARN project during the session on animal husbandry. This very interesting conference presented the state of agriculture in the former Soviet Union and surrounding countries and gave a clear idea of the research taking place, the need for development and the problems that have to be overcome to promote sustainable agricultural development in the region. The conference demonstrated the fact that the organic sector often does not recognise the importance of livestock within an agro-eco-system, with the majority of presentations concentrating on the plant sector. The promotion of animals within sustainable farming systems is essential if traditional animal genetic resources are to be conserved for future generations. The current consumer swing towards a meatless diet is based on a rejection of industrial practices; however, autochthonous breeds raised in extensive systems can provide a highly nutritional and very tasty alternative to intensively reared meat products. The conference proceedings and declaration can be found here: <http://organicconference.elkana.org.ge>



FAO Regional Expert Meeting

Ulrich Donath, from the head office of the SAVE Foundation, attended the FAO Regional Expert Meeting which took place from 20-21 October 2009 Budapest, Hungary. He presented a paper with the title "Livestock-based Geographical Indication chains as an entry point to maintain agro-biodiversity". The content of the meeting as well as the recommendations will be published soon under the REU/SEU website (http://www.fao.org/Regional/SEUR/index_en.htm). In the presentation, the work of the SAVE Network was outlined and the critical aspects of products which are certified with geographical indicated labels were emphasized. It was also possible to introduce the ELBARN (European Livestock Breeds Ark & Rescue Net) project, which has a main theme of marketing products and services of AnGRFA, within the presentation.

Food Safety from Farm to Fork: The new Animal Health Strategy – European Commission Consultation Process Call for Participation



The consultation process by questionnaire serves to collect input on the main problems identified so far in relation to current EU animal health policy and to check, add to and, if necessary, redirect possible approaches to solving them. The document reflects the preparations made by Unit D1 in the Animal Health and Welfare

Directorate of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers with a view to drafting a new Animal Health Law and impact assessment. This questionnaire is addressed to anyone with a stake in animal health and welfare, especially stakeholders involved in keeping live animals and in the production of, trade in, import or export of live animals and products of animal origin, or in legal and economic affairs related to these areas including non-professional animal keepers. The online interactive questionnaire is available until 31 December 2009 at the following page:

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=animalhealthlaw>.

More details on the whole process:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/pillars/consultation_process_en.htm

Global Crop Diversity Trust: Food security and Climate Change: Need for action

The Global Crop Diversity Trust launches an initiative to point out the importance of agriculture in the current climate change debate, especially with view to the COP15 Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December. More than sixty of the world's most prominent agricultural scientists and leading thinkers in development issued in a statement a warning about the almost total absence of agriculture in talks leading up to the UN Climate Change Conference. In November José Emmanuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, spoke about the importance of crop diversity in tackling climate change and food insecurity, and called for governments in developed countries "to translate their commitments into hard cash". World leaders at the Rome Summit on Food Security unanimously declared that "Any recipe for confronting the challenges of climate change must allow for mitigation options and a firm commitment to the adaptation of agriculture, including through conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture". For more information see:

<http://www.croptrust.org/climatechangestatement.html>

Important dates 2010 (extract)

14-16 January: Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (within "International Green Week Berlin", 15-24 January), Berlin, Germany. Web: <http://www.forumgruenewoche.de>

9-13 February: "Nutra Bioorganic", first Fair in Russia on biological foodstuffs"; Moskow, Russia. Web: <http://www.bioorganic.ru>

11-14 February: Nature Fair, Basel, Switzerland. Web: <http://www.natur.ch>

17-20 February: "BioFach" - World Organic Trade Fair, Nuremberg, Germany. Web <http://www.biofach.de>

19 March: Research meeting on "Strewing Fruit Cultivation" (Streuobstanbau), Stuttgart, Germany. Contact: schmieder@uni-hohenheim.de

27-29 March: 5th European meeting for seeds: "Sowing future - harvesting diversity", in Graz, Austria. Web: <http://www.arche-noah.at/etomite/index.php?id=137#zukunftsaeen>

6-7 May: 5th Organic Forum "Processing and Trade of Organic Food, Non Food and Organic Raw Materials", Warsaw, Poland. Web: <http://www.organic-marketing-forum.org>

28 June – 1 July: Internat. Symposium "Innovation & Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Food – ISDA 2010"; Montpellier, France, <http://www.isda2010.net>

4-7 July: Workshop "Mountain food products: A special system of provision", Vienna, Austria. Contact: markus.schermer@uibk.ac.at

22-27 August: 28th International Horticultural Congress "Science and Horticulture for People", Lisbon, Portugal. Web: <http://www.ihc2010.org>

23-27 August: 61st Annual Meeting of the European Association for Animal Production (EAAP), Heraklion, Island of Crete, Greece. Contact: info@eaap2010.org, Web: <http://www.eaap2010.org>

29 August - 2 September: 23rd General Meeting of the European Grassland Federation, Kiel, Germany: Contact: egf2010@email.uni-kiel.de, Web: <http://www.egf2010.de>

3-5 September: 4th European Agrobiodiversity Seminar. Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and the European SAVE Network. Castle Crieven, Brandenburg, Germany. Contact: office@save-foundation.net



13-16 September: ECP/GR Meeting "On-farm Conservation and Management WG" Madeira, Portugal. Contact: biodiversity-ecpgr@cgiar.org

15-17 September: Forum Carpathicum, in Krakow, Poland. Contact: office@forumcarpathicum.org, Web: <http://www.forumcarpathicum.org>