

SAVE eNews 3/2010

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

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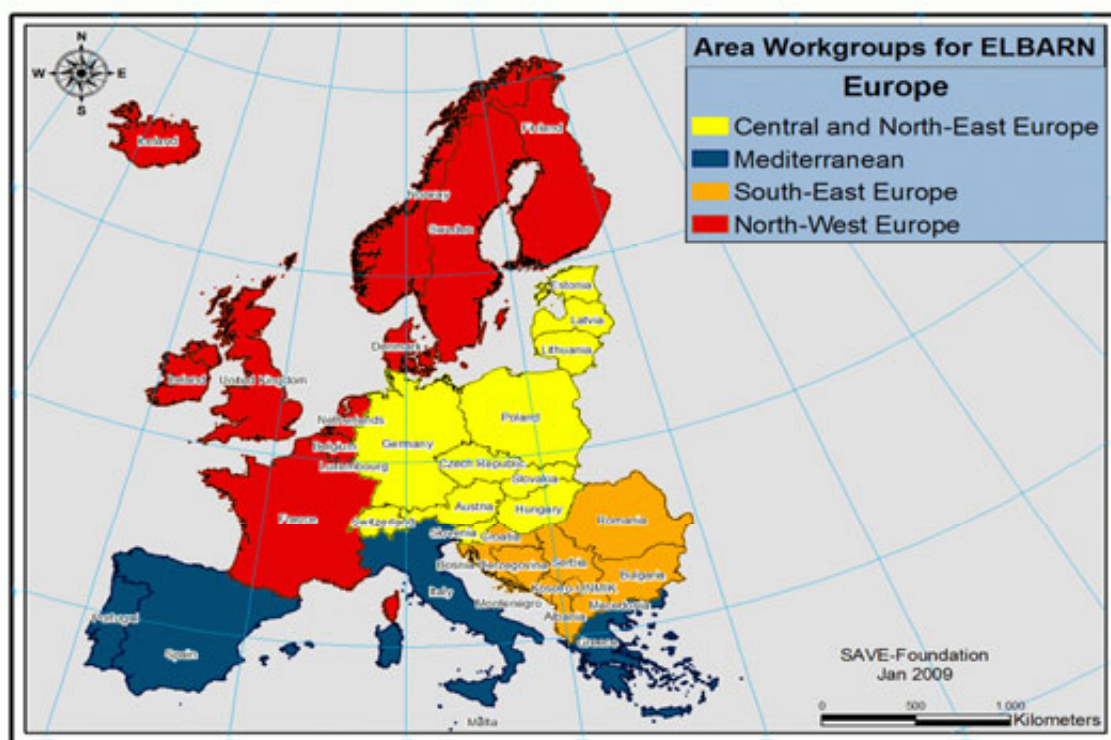
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ELBARN: European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net

Co-funded by the European Commission under Council Regulation (EC) no. 870/2004

ELBARN is the European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net. The project was supported as a concerted action from 2007-2010 as AGRI GENRES action 066 by the European Commission under Council Regulation (EC) no. 870/2004. The following executive summary outlines the EC supported project.

**Project Themes:**

The ability to act rapidly in order to protect endangered livestock breeds in emergencies or unforeseen circumstances is the central theme of ELBARN. For this to be possible, a lot of prior planning is required. A review of existing laws and regulations are needed to make sure that they won't hinder this attempt. It is also relevant to raise awareness of the importance of animal genetic diversity amongst veterinaries and official bodies. The ELBARN Ark and Rescue Centres (A&RCs) can provide a framework for successful rescue actions – but their actions need to be supported by adequate regulations and qualified partners.

The primary goal of ELBARN is to network existing “Ark Centres” and to provide a policy framework within which they can provide a professional service for conservation of endangered breeds (through breed management and emergency provisions). This service also includes the promotion of their products and services along with raising awareness within the public sphere for the importance of animal genetic diversity. The inclusion of endangered traditional livestock breeds into agricultural production and the raising of awareness are important tools for safeguarding their future.

Managing the breeding of endangered traditional livestock breeds is the most important tool for safeguarding genetic variety, especially if the population has already significantly declined. The ELBARN Ark and Rescue Centres (A&RCs) can provide a framework for this management in cases when no other organisations are in place. For example by sheltering nucleus herds and coordinating breeding with other farms and A&RCs. An essential part of the work for in situ conservation can be achieved.

Marketing is an important part of the process to find ways to finance Ark and Rescue Centres (A&RCs). A&RCs should be as self-sufficient as possible, as dependence on state subsidies can be dangerous in times of cutbacks. Besides marketing the actual products from rare breeds like milk, meat and wool, it is possible to market services such as landscape management, promoting tourism and education. The marketing strategies strongly depend on the type of A&RC, its location and market potential, possible customers and outlets. The diverse European countries have many differences in marketing, culture, income, purchasing parity and consumer behaviour, which results in a complex and diverse starting point for setting out generally accepted guidelines.



The ELBARN Team l-r: Martin Schneider-Jacoby (EuroNatur), Antje Feldmann (GEH), Markus Dressnandt (EuroNatur), Laura Milone (RARE), Hans-Peter Grünenfelder (SAVE), Elli Broxham (SAVE), Riccardo Fortina (RARE), Gabriel Schwaderer (EuroNatur), Staf Van den Bergh (SLE), Jef Aerts (SLE). Missing from picture are Ulrich Donath (SAVE) and Anja Zimmermann (GEH)

In early 2009 four 'Area Workshops' were held in [Ghent](#), Belgium, in [Roznov](#), Czech Republic, in [Legnaro](#), Italy and in [Blagoevgrad](#), Bulgaria. Each workshop was a meeting of a wide range of stakeholders specialised in this area, all of whom had a special interest and field expertise in the conservation of agrobiodiversity. For each area an "Area Action Plan" was developed, tailored to perceive local needs. The Action Plans were developed together with local partners and, therefore, can be seen representative for the views of the current participants in the ELBARN project.

Outcomes:

The three years of concerted action, including 5 workshops, has resulted in a well-networked and motivated group of people. This resource is an asset to the future work on conservation of indigenous animal breeds in Europe.

Over 400 Ark Centres from 43 European countries are now presented in a searchable, online database. Each listing includes a short description of the Centre, its opening times, descriptions of how to find it, what animals that can be seen and if there are farm products available. This function is available on the website www.elbarn.net and the list of Ark Centres is continually growing.

Tours through Eastern Europe have identified a number of potential rescue stations and in those cases the owner agreed an inventory of his property had been made. This information was later on made available to the relevant national Organisations.

The Area Workshops emphasised the need for a pan-European group who would communicate the national and area interests of stakeholders up to a governmental level. This is required to gain recognition for problems and needs on a national level and also act as a lobbying instrument to improve EU legislation affecting indigenous breeds. The ELBARN project partners decided to already create a small but effective Task Force to tackle some of the most pressing needs made up of ELBARN partner organisations and other people who have shown interest and commitment to the project.

It is the opinion of the ELBARN Task Force that this type of coordination work - collaborative, transnational, including all stakeholder levels – is essential for the long-term success of conservation. Therefore, we will be striving towards a sustainable future, based on the good work started under the current work programme so that it can continue on a wider European level.

The ELBARN project: a partnership of five NGOs:

Project Management - SAVE Foundation (Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe) www.save-foundation.net

Coordinator - EuroNatur: The European Nature Heritage Fund – EuroNatur is a non-profit foundation which stands up for the conservation of the European nature heritage on many different levels, e.g. via special species protection projects, renaturation measures, and site protection as well as political lobbying activities or environmental education. www.euronatur.org Euronatur also sells a wide range of interesting books and travel guides, which can be found in their online shop: www.euronatur-shop.com

The Society for the Conservation of Old and Endangered Livestock Breeds GEH: GEH was formed in 1981 out of a group of breeders, keepers and idealists. It now has over 2000 members throughout Germany. GEH works practically for the conservation of traditional breeds in Germany. www.g-e-h.de

SLE: Steunpunt Leven Erfgoed [Living Heritage Centre] has been dedicated for almost twenty years to the preservation of the original and rare local breeds of agricultural animals and poultry. SLE is the only organisation in Flanders that works for the preservation of old and local breeds and for the retention of variety in the genetic legacy. www.SLE.be

RARE: (Razze Autoctone a Rischio di Estinzione) is the first private association for the conservation of local and endangered Italian domestic breeds for their scientific, cultural, economic and environmental value. www.associazionerare.it

Materials

The website www.elbarn.net presents all the following materials, plus a fully searchable database of over 400 centres in 43 European countries, which makes this a unique collection of farms, open air museums, nature reserves, etc., all conserving the traditional breeds of their region.

ELBARN Book: The final publication – a highly illustrated short book outlining the project and the importance of agrobiodiversity. It is comprehensive and explains what agrobiodiversity is and why it is endangered. It is completed with many examples, case studies, pictures, maps and contact information.

ELBARN Guidelines: A set of guidelines that can be used by Ark and Rescue Centres. The guidelines cover the subjects of Rescue and Disease, Ark and Rescue Centres, Conservation Breeding and Marketing of Products and Services.

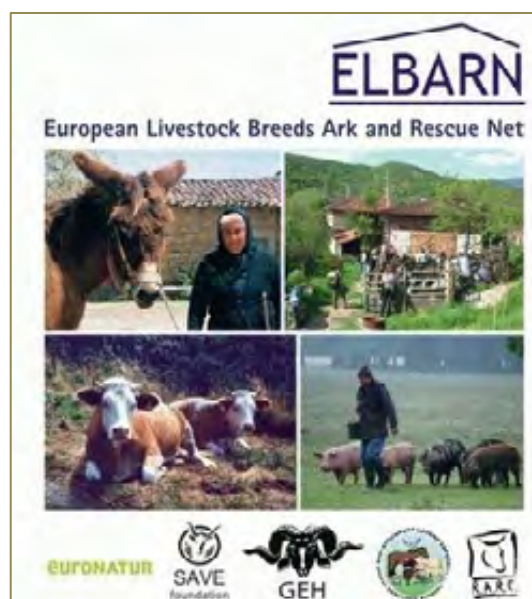
Workshop Results: All the presentations plus photos and other documents from the 5 workshops held.

Questionnaire Report: A short report which sets out the main results of the ELBARN fact-finding questionnaire.

Area Action Plans: For four areas of Europe. The 'Action Plans' set out the needs and requirements to carry the ELBARN project into the future.

Breed Descriptions: Descriptions of 641 different breeds typical for Europe.

All printed materials can be ordered for the price of postage from the SAVE Head Office.



SAVE annual meeting 2010 in Criewen, Germany

The SAVE meeting took place in Castle Criewen in the peaceful surroundings of the National Park Lower Oder Valley (northeast of Berlin <http://www.nationalpark-unteres-odertal.de/en>). 35 participants from 17 countries managed to come. Alongside the meetings, the 4th European Seminar on Agro-Biodiversity: "Agro Biodiversity - a crucial part of Biodiversity" took place and visits to nearby sites of interest had been organised. The SAVE Annual Meeting 2010 was organised in collaboration with the SAVE Network member VERN (Verein zur Erhaltung und Rekultivierung von Nutzpflanzen in Brandenburg e.V.) and the German- Polish Academy Castle Criewen.



The international seminar "Agrobiodiversity – a crucial part of biodiversity" provided an interesting input to the network meeting. Not only were the current state of the SAVE projects presented but other organisations presented their projects to the participants as well. Topics ranged from the state of plant genetic resources in Ireland in the current difficult economic climate, through an overview of the situation of genetic resources in Lithuania, to a fascinating talk about agrobiodiversity and ecology in Greece. A number of nine participants did present their work to the seminar (all conference papers see www.save-foundation.net/Conferences/Criewen.htm)

A closed session for the Council of Cooperation Partners (CCP), the Project Commission and the Board of Directors took place on the 3rd September. Due to a very tight schedule, the combined meeting of the CCP and the Project Commission had to be kept short. This unlikely experience will be regarded for the next annual meeting. A new member of the CCP was elected: Michel Jacobi representing the association "Safeguard for Agrobiodiversity in Transcarpathia, SATrans" introduced himself and was accepted into the CCP with a round of applause. The Board of Directors met with nearly all members present. Mr. Geert Boink was accepted into the Board as representative of the partner organisation SZH (Netherlands).

Board of Directors



Participants who didn't attend the closed meeting sessions were able to enjoy the sunshine and stroll around the variety garden at Castle Criewen. These beautiful historic gardens hold a large variety of interesting vegetables, fruit and herbs. It was also possible to see the Pomeranian landrace sheep grazing in the orchards. In the evening the participants were offered a dinner of regional specialities.

The second day of the meeting started with a fascinating tour of the variety garden in Greifenberg, run by VERN. This insight into the work of VERN was very valuable and participants were fortunate enough that the rain held off and so were able to hear about the long journey to today's variety garden from founding members of VERN themselves.



Tour in the variety garden in Greifenberg

It was very interesting to see not only the plants in the garden – the variety of which was very impressive – but also the rooms and simple machines used for drying, sorting and storing seeds. After this tour, the participants returned to the castle to listen to the rest of the seminar presentations.

The National Park Foundation “Unteres Odertal” was kind enough to offer a reception and dinner for the participants on the 4th September. The participants enjoyed each other’s company and discussed various aspects of their work to conserve agrobiodiversity in Europe.

Participants had been encouraged to bring along examples of their products from rare breeds and plants. These were then shown, tried and tested by all the participants. The products presented were all of very good quality and participants enjoyed trying them and discussing their merits. This part of the networking meeting was very successful and will be repeated in the future, perhaps in combination with an award for quality products.

On the last day of the meeting, the participants travelled to the Ark Centre Liebenthal. Where a nice variety of donkeys, poultry, sheep (esp. Skudde) and Mangalitsa pigs could be seen. Alongside this selection, Dr. Klaus Scheibe from the Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW) in Berlin gave a presentation about the Przewalski horses that are kept in a semi-wild reserve at the ark centre. These horses are included in behavioural research projects run by the IZW. Another interesting project in Liebenthal is the attempt to retrobreed the extinct Tarpan. The horses were given the breed name “Liebenthal” and are allowed to live wildly, with their natural social behaviour intact.

The participants left the annual meeting with much new information and impressions to consider until the next SAVE annual Meeting in 2011. For this meeting the SAVE Network is invited to Serbia. More detailed information and the dates will be announced in the SAVE eNews in 2011.



Mangalitsa Pig in Liebenthal



Liebenthal Horses

Workshop “Network of rare livestock breeds in Greece – focus on small ruminants”

Within the framework of the project “Conservation of Agrobiodiversity in Greece” SAVE Foundation and the Greek partner organization Amaltheia organized a workshop from 12-13 June 2010 for keepers of rare small ruminants. More than 30 participants, mostly breeders, owners, official- and university representatives, accepted the invitation to participate. During the monitoring of Greek livestock breeds over 40 varieties of sheep and



typical herd of goats in Central Greece: mixture of different breeds

goats were identified. Before the meeting the keepers had been hardly in contact with each other. Only a very few breeders' organisations existed. A complicating factor is the distribution of the breeds' varieties over numerous Greek islands. This fact also affects the exchange of knowledge between the different stakeholders.

It was an important occasion to explain the basic principles and problems of conservation in small populations. Due to the tradition to hold herds with different breeds, owners in Greece were often not aware of the dangers of in- and crossbreeding between the breeds. The workshop motivated the owners to keep herd records for small populations. In the work groups, the following themes were discussed:

- Current breeding systems
- Movement of animals
- Products and marketing
- Subsidies
- Keeping herd records



The main goals were to get an overview of the situation of the various breeds and to achieve an interdisciplinary exchange between keepers, scientists and officials. Once again, it showed how important it is to bring all partners for conservation work around one table. Valuable contacts were established between the different stakeholders. Officials explained the possibilities and obstacles for an official recognition of further breeds and direct payments. Consequently many discussions took place about the recognition of specific breeds, possibilities for subsidies and the requirements for genetic testing. The SAVE partner organization Amaltheia was previously not well known to keepers of small ruminants. Due to the workshop the network is now able to be extended and intensified.

The prosperous community of Schimatari 60 Kilometers northwest of Athens gained as a result of a communal reform extra land. As an attempt to make their community more attractive to visitors from nearby Athens they plan to establish a farm with traditional livestock alongside their already existing archaeological site. The workshop was, therefore, an important impulse for the community of Schimatari for their plans. Amaltheia already offered their further help for this project.

Workshop papers see: www.save-foundation.net/Conferences/Schimatari.htm

Eradication of a unique cattle population

The Île d'Amsterdam is a 55 km² island in the southern Indian Ocean. It is near to the larger Kerguelen Islands and are part of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises, TAAF). As a part of populating this territory about 140 years ago, domesticated animals were introduced via Réunion island. Bizet sheep and mouflons went to Kerguelen, cattle to the Île d'Amsterdam. These animals adapted to the special climatic conditions of this cold area and began to reproduce and 'go wild'. It is no wonder that they, in such large numbers, damaged the native flora and fauna. The cattle on Amsterdam reached a population of about 2'000 head. In 1987 it was decided to reduce their number to 600 and to fence them in. As a consequence, the vegetation and the endangered Amsterdam Albatros recovered. The then prefect of the island cared about the herd, for they carried within them a unique genetic heritage. This cattle population has been adapting to the conditions near to the Antarctic for 140 years. Thus it is unimaginable why the current prefect, after discussions with personally selected scientists, ordered the eradication of the remaining cattle population "in order to return the island to its original state". Even the afore-mentioned researchers knew that this was hardly possible, as the feral cats and rats damage the original state far more and are almost impossible to eliminate. The eradication of the large mammals is, therefore, nothing more than a sham sold as an act of nature protection.



The elimination of the cattle on Amsterdam has already happened, now it is the turn of the sheep on Kerguelen. As the slaughter of these animals will happen in a short time space, the resulting meat will not even be used as food. It is also not planned to keep some of these animals elsewhere or to cryo-preserve any genetic material from them. This irresponsible and autocratic act by the prefect is astonishing in a country that was once known for its leadership in the conservation of agricultural diversity. And all this is happening in the International Year of Biodiversity!



Link: <http://troupeauxdestaaf.monsite-orange.fr/>

Newsflash

Forum Carpaticum

The first Forum Carpaticum took place in Kraków, Poland, 15th -17th September 2010. The Science for the Carpathians initiative (S4C) invited scientists, policy- and decision-makers working on, or interested in the sustainable development of the Carpathian region to discuss and present a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines from both, the natural and social sciences, as well as practical knowledge. The Forum Carpaticum was an attempt to integrate different fields of expertise to generate value for the Carpathian mountain region. SAVE took part in the Forum with a workshop about agrobiodiversity. The opportunity to meet and network with stakeholders from the region was very valuable. For more information, please see www.forumcarpaticum.org

Gloucester Old Spot Pigs “Traditional Speciality Guaranteed”

The Gloucestershire Old Spots pig breed has been awarded Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) status under the title 'Traditionally Farmed Gloucestershire Old Spots Pork'. This is the first breed of any species in the world to achieve TSG status. This status took 11 years to achieve, partially because it was unclear if a breed could attain TSG or not. A problem of both major retailers and individuals at local level trying to sell meat from unregistered and crossbred stock as 'Gloucester Old Spot' created confusion and diminished the appeal of Gloucester Old Spot meat, which is known for its excellent flavour and succulence. The TSG award will give farmers greater power to combat these situations. To qualify, the pigs themselves must be registered pedigree and be fully identifiable for traceability. In addition, they must be raised in high-welfare non-intensive systems as defined in the TSG. Members of the Gloucester Old Spot Breeders Club strongly recommend that other breed societies throughout Europe look at similar protection, especially as the marketing of the produce of many of these breeds is an important tool in their conservation. More information: www.gos-tsg.com and



<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:238:0008:0013:EN:PDF>

Russia launches inquiry into Pavlovsk seed bank after Twitter campaign

The Global Crop Diversity Trust has published the fact that the Russian Pavlovsk Collection, created by N. Vavilov and protected by researchers with their lives during WW2, will have to make way for a private housing development. However, due to massive international protests, it has now been announced that the auction for the land by the Federal Fund of Residential Real Estate Development has been postponed. An independent, international commission will now assess the collection in order to secure it. In total, the Pavlovsk collection holds more than 6'000 varieties of fruit, berries, grasses and grains. 90% of these varieties cannot be found elsewhere in the world. The order to stop the destruction of the collection came direct from President Medvedev who announced via Twitter that the issue must be scrutinised. Find the campaign on Twitter using the search word pavlovsk or read the Vaviblog www.vaviblog.com

Important dates (extract)

14-16 Oct.: 7th Internat. Symposium on Mediterranean Pigs, Cordoba, Andalucía, Spain.

Web: <http://www.uco.es/congresos/cerdomediterraneo>

Contact: Emiliano.DePedro@uco.es,

19 October: International Symposium on "Business & Biodiversity", Paris, France.

Contact: business&biodiversity@epe-asso.org,

Web: www.epe-asso.org/?part=International_Symposium

21-25 October: "Terra Madre 2010" and "Salone del Gusto" (the food communities network), Torino, Italy. Contact: terramadre@slowfood.it, Web: <http://www.terramadre.org>

22-25 October: Europom 2010, Wisley, Surrey, Great Britain. Web: www.europom.be

Contact: showscustomer@rhs.org.uk

27-29 October: Symposium "Animal Farming and Environment Interactions in Mediterranean Region" Zadar, Croatia. Contact: medit.zadar2010@unizd.hr,

Web: www.unizd.hr/zadar2010

28-29 October: National Congress "The pure breeds: Source of Wealth for the Spanish Livestock", Santiago de Compostela, Spain. feagas@feagas.es, Web: www.feagas.es

11-12 November: European Seminar on the European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity (ELN-FAB); Ljubljana, Slovenia. mikos@ecnc.org, Web: www.eln-fab.eu

12-14 November: Avalon Open Conference "How can we green the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)?", Bled, Slovenia. Contact: office@avalon.nl, Web: www.avalon.nl

12-14 November: 10th International Meeting of Pomologists at Reichelsheim, Odenwald, Germany. Contact: m.hess@odenwaldkreis.de, Web: www.ipt.streuobstregion.de/

18-19 November: European Rural Days at Namure, Belgium. Contact: c.schalenbourg@reseau-pwdr.be, Web: <http://eu-ruraldays.blogspot.com/>

29-30 November: Global Forum on Agriculture (OECD), Paris, France. Contact: andrzej.kwiecinski@oecd.org

1-3 December: International Conference on Biodiversity - Biodiversity and the UN Millennium Development Goals: Challenges for Research and Action; Frankfurt/Main, Germany. Web: www.biodiversity-conference2010.de/index.php/home.html

8-9 December: Responses to Environmental and Societal Challenges for our Unstable Earth (RESCUE): European Response to Grand Challenges in Sustainability Research. Antwerp, Belgium. Web: www.esf.org/index.php?id=6198

⇒ **Further dates see:** <http://www.save-foundation.net/english/actual.htm>