

SAVE eNews 2/2012

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



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The Prespa dwarf cattle in Albania and Greece



Landscape and vegetation on the Albanian banks of the great Prespa Lake

As part of the long-term monitoring in the Balkan region, breeds are being rediscovered that were believed to be forgotten or were previously unknown. First came the research: literature studies, reports, maps. According to reports, in the area of the Prespa Lakes very small cattle exist that can climb in the mountains like goats. Since Spring 2006, SAVE Foundation has been on the trail of these Prespa Cattle. At that time representatives of the Foundation went to the area of the great and small Prespa Lakes, which are shared by three States, to follow up the clues about the dwarf cattle. This border area was closed by the military up to the late 1990s. It belongs to Albania, FYR Macedonia and Greece. The search-tour led to the identification and the demonstration of possible conservation measures for this endangered cattle breed (www.save-foundation.net/english/PDF/Prespa_cattle.pdf), that, these days, only has noteworthy numbers left in Albania. It was clear that cross-breeding with imported high-performance breeds was becoming increasingly popular.



Albania:

In the following year, 2007, in the Albanian part of the area, tissue samples were taken from 50 animals considered to be reasonably pure bred Prespa cattle and the DNA was analyzed at the Veterinary University of Munich. Dr. Ivica Medugorac, who conducted the study, came to the conclusion that the Prespa cattle are related to the Busha cattle of the Balkans, but represent a unique group that is very worthy of conservation. Some of the samples were also investigated by the Institute of Prehistoric Archaeology & Natural Sciences (IPAS), University of Basel, where genes were found that do not occur in other European cattle breeds (not yet published).



In 2008, together with the Albanian partner NGO AlbaGene, the first conservation measures could be started. With a GEF Small Grant Prespa cattle in the villages around Liqenas that were purebred were registered and ear-tagged. 54 animals were recorded. In order to continue breeding purebreds, SAVE Foundation bought three Albanian Prespa bulls and put them to use, free of charge, for breeders in Liqenas. The population in Liqenas has, thanks to the efforts of the local NGO "Sun of Liqenas", increased to 92 breeding animals. At a meeting of all relevant stakeholders held in 2010, it was deemed urgent to record of the remaining purebred dwarf cattle in the northern part of the Albanian shore and in the south-eastern part, where there are few purebred animals left, in order to form new breeding nuclei.



In cooperation with the Greek "Society for the Protection of Prespa" (SPP), also active in the Albanian part of the small Prespa Lake, a breeding nucleus could be set up in 2011 in Shuec in the south-eastern part of the Albanian Prespa region. With the purchase of animals for Shuec the opportunity has been taken to purchase some animals from the as yet not monitored northern part of the large community of Liqenas. This brought fresh blood into the breed, helped to estimate the numbers of purebred animals in this area and to raise awareness, not least with their owners, of the value of purebred cattle. It was probably the first time that someone – and especially outsiders – showed interest in and bought the "dwarves". The animals are, thus, placed in a new light and have gained in value

and prestige. In future the high-quality products of the breed will be given an added value.

Greece:

The last Prespa cattle are not only found in Albania but also in a relict herd in Greece in the village Psarades. Two years ago some of the animals were sold from there to Leho-vo, a mountain village about 70 km south. The opportunity to create a nucleus herd in Albania has also been used in Greece to take one step further to record the purebred

animals and form two new groups of breeding animals. In Psarades itself the identification of animals has proved very difficult. The semi-feral cattle are kept outside almost all year round. To be used for meat, they often need to be shot. Firstly, the purebred animals had to be identified and then the associated owners are found, this required a great effort over several weeks and could only be carried out thanks to the commitment of local volunteers. In contrast, in Lehofo the animals were visited at the farm and purebred animals were selected and purchased. Meanwhile, with the help of the Society for the Protection of Prespa and Amaltheia, the Greek SAVE partner, two breeding groups could be created, one in the village of Lemos, another on the island of Agios Achillios



Half-wild Prespa cattle at Psarades in the "natural protection mission" in the reeds in the marsh-willow

Ark Farm on island Agios Achillios – the "park in the park"

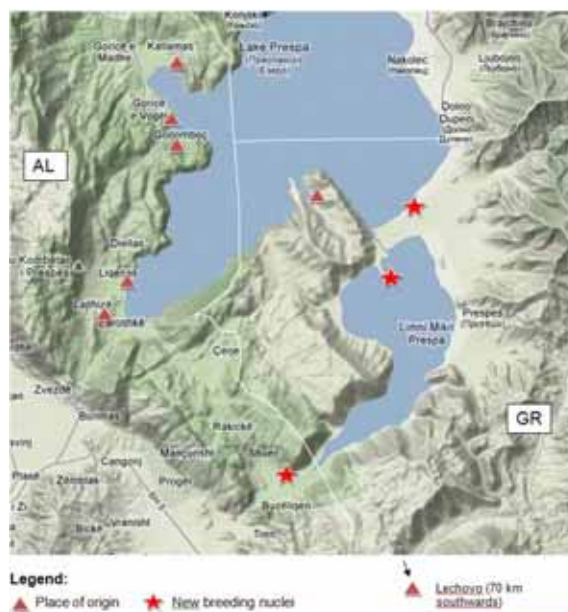


A few years ago the Prespa Lakes were declared a cross-border national park. The island of Agios Achillios is a closed part in the middle of small Lake Prespa and has important Byzantine monuments. It is accessible only via a pontoon bridge. SAVE's wish was to build an ark farm in this picturesque village, as a

"park in the park". In cooperation with the family running the taverna on the island it was possible to set up this Ark Farm as an Island Park. In addition to the Prespa cattle, the last water buffalo in the region live here and soon two breeding groups of the highly endangered Florina-Pelagonia sheep will be re-located here (Taverna Agios Achillios see entry in Arca-Net www.arca-net.info).

The project is a good example of cross-border activities of several NGOs. In addition to the re-establishment of pure breeding, the future should see a concentration on adding value to the breeds through product marketing.

The project in Albania is generously supported by the Fondation de Bienfaisance Jeanne Lovioz in Basel, the project 'cattle in Greece' by the Grovni Foundation, St.Gallen (both Switzerland).





Arca-Deli® Awards 2012

The Arca-Deli Awards are presented annually to products and services of locally adapted livestock breeds and cultivated plants. The award is presented to products and services seen as being recommendable as a model or example of good practice. The Arca-Deli Award label can then be used on labelling of products and services as a means of adding value. More about the award and the award winners, see: www.save-foundation.net/marketing/Arca-Deli-en.htm

Products and services must meet the following conditions:

- Product or service (PoS) must originate from a farm that is connected either to the European Ark Network "[Arca-Net](#)" or the "[Variety-Savers](#)" Network.
- PoS must serve the in situ/on farm conservation of autochthonous breed or variety.
- PoS must be qualitatively above the average
- PoS must be recommendable as a model or example of good practice.

Submission: Products and/or documentation regarding services can be submitted once a year to the judging committee of the SAVE Foundation. For this a call for proposals is launched in time before the Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network. SAVE staff are excluded from entering this award.

Judging: The awards are given by the Board of Directors of SAVE Foundation, following the recommendations of a three-member judging committee. The decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Awards: Each winning entry will be awarded with a certificate and the right to use the Arca-Deli logo on their winning product/s.

Deadline for entries 2012: Wednesday 12th September (no late entries!)

Please send:

- A sample of the product or photo/video documentation of the service
- A full description of the product or service including how it secures conservation of the breed or variety (max. 3 pages in English) Descriptions in other languages may be submitted as a Word document by email to office@save-foundation.net by 1st September 2012
- The information sheet and declaration must be attached and signed. It can be found here: www.save-foundation.net/marketing/Arca-Deli/declaration_form.doc
- A maximum of two products per farm can be entered.

Entries should be sent to:

=> SAVE Foundation, Project Office, Schneebergstr. 17, CH-9000 St.Gallen, Switzerland

Uses of donkey breeds in Europe



Since its first domestication, the use of the donkey has not changed much: They are mainly used as traction, pack and riding animals. Variants emerged in terms of body development dependent on the region, the husbandry and climatic conditions and the breed. However, there are comparatively few breeds and they are often not as clearly defined as with other animals. Furthermore, the breeding base for most donkey breeds today is very narrow, which increases the risk of inbreeding.

The traditional tasks of the donkey are now largely taken over by machines. Medicine, therapy, recreational activities, and meat and milk production provide a small niche for a few breeds. The worldwide stock numbers of donkeys are falling. In Europe, the decline in stock numbers is dramatic. In the southern countries especially, the old age of most donkey keepers is a large risk factor to stock numbers – often young people inheriting a farmstead get rid of the donkeys as their first action. Fortunately, the interest in donkeys as hobby and recreational animals in northern and central European countries has increased in recent years. Friends of the donkeys have come together to form associations. Selection and pure-breeding hardly happen and crossbreeds are the rule. Already in the study "Donkey Breeds in Europe" published in 2008, it was stated that the population figures of the donkey in Europe continue to fall dramatically. To encourage the renaissance of the donkey and their breeds SAVE Foundation is currently conducting a survey of owners and breeders, organizations and institutions that keep donkeys. Initial results show that there are new forms of use for donkeys. The qualities of the donkeys are increasingly being used where it is not economically feasible to work with machines:

Grazing:

The selective grazing behaviour of the donkey is used successfully for example in the Valais (Switzerland) in keeping open dry grasslands. It has been shown that endangered species of plants and insects are encouraged by this grazing.

Herd-protection:

Another use of donkeys is in herd-protection. Donkeys, kept with the sheep-herds from as young as possible, defend the flock from predators such as wolves. They bray, show their teeth and attack the aggressor with their hooves.

**Therapy:**

Hippotherapy: Some breeds of donkey have an ambling gait (tölt) that is smooth in contrast to trot and canter. The rider can sit calmly on a loosely swaying back. This is especially present in mules (male donkey x female horse = mule, donkey mare x horse stallion = jenny).

Therapeutic agents:

Donkeys are used to promote development in educational or therapeutic processes for gross motor deficits or inadequate impulse and emotional control. The latter is particularly in use in prisons because donkeys are smart, curious and personable. Their proverbial obstinacy can be useful in therapeutic situations.

=> If you wish to participate in the survey, please contact office@save-foundation.net

EuroNatur - Celebrating 25 years



There are many synergies between nature conservation and local breeds and varieties. This is what SAVE and EuroNatur found out 20 years ago during the dramatic rescue of Turopolje pigs in the Sava floodplains in Croatia. Today Tu-

ropolje are a living testament to the synergies between environmental protection and old breeds in the Ljnsko Polje Nature Park in Croatia (www.pp-lonjsko-polje.hr). EuroNatur works across borders and disciplines, as was made clear in the cooperation with SAVE Foundation and partners from the SAVE Network during the pan-European project ELBARN (European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net). We warmly congratulate our partners from the side of nature protection and look forward to further fruitful cooperation in the future.

To celebrate its 25th anniversary was EuroNatur on their website (www.euronatur.org) since 25 April, a "25 years time travel of EuroNatur" was initiated. Respectively as at 25 of each month there are picture galleries, videos and exciting riddles around 25 years EuroNatur.

Celebration of 30 years OENGINE at the Agraria in Wels



The scientific platform for the conservation of endangered farm animal breeds in Austria (<http://www.oengine.at>) celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2012. OENGINE is responsible for inventories of endangered livestock breeds. With this, the need for conservation, adaptation to environment and locality, genetic advantages and the environmental, historical and cultural significance are also recorded. Concrete measures for the conservation of endangered breeds are also performed. These include immediate actions to save highly endangered breeds, conservation measures in the private and public sectors, ex-situ conservation and the development of a gene bank. The financial resources for the duties of OENGINE are

provided by the federal government, local authorities and member fees.

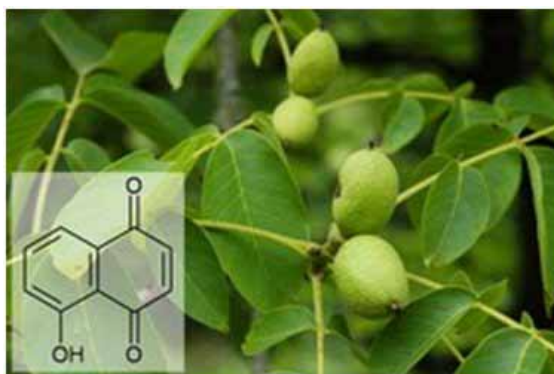
As part of the Agraria in Wels from 29.8.- 2.9.2012, an exhibition of the officially recognised old and endangered livestock breeds will be held. Also in Hall 3L specialities will be presented by direct marketers. On 31.8. there will be a celebratory demonstration of the Austrian endangered breeds. On 1.9. will be an information meeting for farmers with the title "Why rare breeds?" The festival program is rounded off by a scientific meeting in Wels Exhibition Centre together with DAGENE. We congratulate our long-time partner warmly and look forward to many more years of good cooperation.

Newsflash

Natural agents against fire blight

Fire blight is a dreaded plant disease affecting fruit trees that is often treated with the antibiotic streptomycin. At TU Vienna, environmentally friendly alternatives were sought and tested successfully. Heidrun Halbwirth was awarded the KIWIE Prize (Silver Medal of the Korea International Women's Invention Exposition) by Science Minister Karl Heinz Töchterle. In search of new possibilities, it was discovered that flavonoids, which also determine the flower colour, cause some resistance to fire blight. This, together with the active ingredient juglone, extracted from walnuts, has been a great success in laboratory and field trials. It is hoped that will soon be possible to make a marketable product.

More information at http://www.tuwien.ac.at/aktuelles/news_detail/article/7318/



“The Alps” – multivision

Alparc, the Network of Alpine Protected Areas, launched a multimedia show as a joint production of Alparc and about 20 administrative bodies of the Alpine protected areas as part of the European Day of Natural Parks on 24th May. "The Alps" is a plea for diversity in the Alps. More information at: <http://multivision-alparc.org>

FAO E-learning Tool

Along with Iowa State University, the FAO has developed a new electronic learning tool. This interactive tool in the form of a PDF is intended to inform the public about the importance of animal husbandry and conservation of genetic diversity. Find out more: www.fao.org/ag/againfo/resources/documents/e-module/AnGR_Emodule.pdf (17 MB Download!).

**The history of cultivated plants**

Comprehensive information on the history and development of crops in Switzerland as well as North and South Tirol has been collected by Peer Schilperord. The collections include facts about growing, use and the dynamics of species diversity. It could be concluded that barley, emmer and einkorn were used in the Alps already 7000 years ago, maize 450 and the potato 300 years ago. By the way "Spelt" is the only grain that was developed in Europe. These collections can be downloaded as an e-book: <http://berggetreide.ch>

**Important dates (extract)**

6-7 June: Regulatory and Institutional Frameworks for Markets for Ecosystem Services; International Conference at Surrey, UK. www.ias.surrey.ac.uk/workshops/ecosystem

7-8 June: Sustainable Foods Summit in Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Contact: info@sustainablefoodssummit.com Web: <http://www.sustainablefoodssummit.com/>

14-15 June: ELN-FAB European Seminar 2012 with special focus on issues, problems and solutions related to the Mediterranean region and region-specific crops. In Avignon, France; Web: <http://www.eln-fab.eu>

27-28 June: ERG-Workshop on Access and Benefit-sharing for Food and Agriculture. In Bonn, Germany. Contact: abs-conference@bmelv.bund.de

4-8 July: SEE more Conference 2012: Mountain Resources and Their Response to Global Change" in Ankara, Turkey. Web: http://csaum.ankara.edu.tr/index_en.php, Contact: csaum@ankara.edu.tr

18 - 22 July: Conference "Rural Mountain Areas: Experience, Preservation, Trends and Future Challenges". In Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Contact: rsld_ubbcluj@yahoo.com, Web: <http://conference.ubbcluj.ro/rsld/eng/index.html>

26 August: Levend Erfgoed Expo at Provinciaal domein Puyenbroeck - Wachtebeke, Belgium. Contact: staf.vandenbergh@skynet.be, Web: <http://www.sle.be>

27-31 August: 63rd EAAP Annual Meeting, Bratislava, Slovak Republic. Web: <http://www.eaap.org/>

31 Aug. - 4 Sept: "Towards a bright future with the dark bee", Internat. Conference at Plantahof, Landquart, Switzerland. Web: <http://www.sicamm.org>

5-8 September: AlpWeek 2012: The Alps reinvent themselves, at Valposchiavo, Switzerland. Contact: thomas.scheurer@scnat.ch, Web: <http://www.alpweek.org/2012>

7-10 September: European Federation of City Farms Conference 2012. In Lübeck, Germany. Web: <http://www.cityfarms.org/>

12-14 September: 2nd IFOAM Animal Husbandry Conference; Hamburg, Germany. Contact: events@ifoam.org, Web: www.ifoam.org/animalhusbandry2012

13 September: 6th European Seminar on Agrobiodiversity 2012: "Economic Value of local Breeds and Varieties" at Urnäsch, Switzerland. Mail: office@save-foundation.net

13-15 September: Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and European SAVE Network; at Urnäsch, Appenzell AR, Switzerland. Contact: office@save-foundation.net, Web: www.save-foundation.net/pdf/SAVE_2012.pdf

18-20 September: 25th International Conference "Genetic Days"; Wroclaw, Poland. Web: <http://gen.ar.wroc.pl/days/index.htm>

26-29 September: Bio Balkan Expo 2012 in Belgrade, Serbia. Mail: office@alexpo.co.rs, Web: <http://www.alexpo.co.rs/3biobalkan2012.html>

30 Sept - 3 October: 17th Pan-Hellenic Festival of Ecological Agriculture and Handicraft "Another world is here". Tritsis Park, Ilion, Attica, Greece. Contact: info@oikogiorti.gr, Web: <http://oikogiorti.gr>

3-6 October: "New approaches for grassland research in a context of climatic and socio-economic changes" at Samsun, Turkey. Contact: iamz@iamz.ciheam.org, Web: <http://www.iamz.ciheam.org/samsun2012/>

26-28 October: Internat. Fruit Exhibition EUROPOM 2012 at Klosterneuburg, Lower Austria. Contact: eva-maria.gantar@weinobst.at, Web: <http://www.europom2012.at>

21-23 Nov: 3rd International Symposium on Medicinal Plants, their Cultivation & Aspects of Uses, Petra, Jordan. Contact: Maa973@yahoo.com, Web: <http://3ismp.bau.edu.jo/spo.html>

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