

SAVE eNews 4/2012

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



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20 for 20 – the SAVE Network is 20 years old



Since 1993 SAVE has grown from an idea to a reality. The SAVE Network has worked hard to connect people from all over Europe (and beyond), to pass on ideas, knowledge, practical advice and to make sure that European agrobiodiversity does not get neglected. SAVE has been instrumental in setting up national NGOs to work for the conservation of autochthonous breeds and crops. SAVE has worked on the ground, in places where attention was urgently required, SAVE has organised high-level workshops, planned and carried out actions.

When SAVE was formed, Europe was rapidly changing: the fall of the Iron Curtain was opening up parts of Europe that had been closed for many years. A rush to “modernise” but also “conserve” started. The SAVE Network was created to stand together to coordinate the competence and activity for the conservation of European agrobiodiversity. SAVE Network plays an important role in the coordination, networking and the field-work that has since taken place on the subject of agrobiodiversity.



In Autumn 1993, through the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Union became an economic reality. Life has changed a lot in the last 20 years, these days people, businesses and organisations all over Europe – both within the EU and beyond its borders - are feeling the effects of the current, global, economic problems. Many people are remembering the benefit of growing their own food by planting a vegetable garden and keeping animals, they are often also keen to support small, local businesses. The message about autochthonous breeds and crops is being spread by SAVE and the network members and is being received by an interested audience. However, this is only one side

of the coin. Whilst people are enthusiastically embracing a more sustainable lifestyle in order to cut living costs, organisations like SAVE are struggling to cover costs and governments and donors are cutting budgets. For organisations that rely on donations and grants, this means that donors and grant-givers are awarding less money and that each available penny has to be stretched as far as possible.

For SAVE Foundation to continue to work professionally as an umbrella organisation, funds need to be raised.



In the anniversary year 2013 we will be sending you a series of special SAVE eNews that celebrate 20 years of the SAVE Network. At the end of the year it will be possible for you to order a bound copy of the history of the first 20 years of SAVE. Other donations will be collected throughout the year. Donations can be made using all the usual payment methods to the SAVE Paypal account, see:

SAVE Paypal Account: <http://tinyurl.com/brhnucb>

Or direct to the SAVE bank account:

SAVE Foundation, Joseph-Belli-Weg 5, D-78467 Konstanz
Postbank Hannover, D-Hannover/Germany; BIC: PBNKDEFF
IBAN: DE81 2501 0030 0648 4643 00

***20 for 20 is a fund-raising campaign that lets everyone join in
– for 20 years work done and 20 still to come –***

help us to raise money by donating 20 to our fund.

We accept 20 in all forms – from 20 € through to 20'000 € and everything in between!

***The more money that is raised the more we can do to raise the profile
of our traditional livestock breeds and cultivated plants!***

**Do you have photos or anecdotes to add to our “History of SAVE”?
Please send us your photos and stories to add to our 20th Anniversary editions of
the SAVE eNews! Send to: office@save-foundation.net**

Diversity of actions in Spain to reclaim the right to sell our own seeds

Red de Semillas "Resembrando e Intercambiando"

From 16 to 28 October the 2nd week of the Agricultural Biodiversity in Spain took place through decentralized actions in different areas of the country. In this week, led by the Spanish Seed Network (Red de Semillas "Resembrando e Intercambiando") in the framework of its campaign "Cultivate diversity – Sow your rights", many activities related to traditional varieties like courses, workshops, conferences, tastings and seed exchanges have taken place all around the country.

Spanish Seed Network



The loss of genetic resources in the agrifood system and the recovery of local varieties in family farming systems were the reasons for creating the Spanish Seed Network 13 years ago.

This organisation of a technical, social and political nature, is a national network that brings together more than 20 local seed networks that exist in Spain and provides instruments for carrying out activities regarding the conservation and use of agricultural

biodiversity from the food sovereignty point of view, helping to coordinate activities amongst the different members and promoting their participation in the national and international level.

The main assets of this network are the people and the organisations that belong to it. They include farmers, researchers, consumers, technicians, local action groups, university staff, students, ecologist movements and all kinds of different collectives.

Campaign "Cultivate diversity – Sow your rights"



In 2009 the Spanish Seed Network has launched the Campaign "Cultivate diversity – Sow your rights". It is focused on promoting agroecological and family farming, the use of traditional varieties, the recovery of peasant's knowledge and local culture, the fight against patents and GMO in agriculture, the requirement of a legal framework that allows peasants to produce and sell their own seeds and the demand of support from the public administrations to the work that peasants and seed networks are doing regarding the dynamic conservation and use of agricultural biodiversity.

The Spanish government, on the one hand, recognizes in the law Farmers Rights, to preserve, use and market their own seeds, the need to protect, preserve and develop the traditional knowledge regarding plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and the right to participate in the decision-making at the national level on the policies related to the conservation and sustainable use of these genetic resources. However, on the other hand, it does not start any strategy to implement these rights, as reflected in the Report on the State of the Spanish Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. This situation highlights the lack of political will that the Spanish government has on this issue.

Traditional varieties provide organoleptic quality, not just visual, they filled with flavours and aromas our food and are an inseparable part of our intangible cultural heritage (Mediterranean diet). Traditional varieties contribute to food security because their inherent diversity allows an agroecological management of our farms, facilitating the cultivation of polycultures and are more stable in adverse situations. Traditional varieties symbolize ethical values, being the expression of food sovereignty and collective values without intellectual property rights and patents (except those stolen with biopiracy).

The demands

From the Campaign "Cultivate diversity. Sow your rights" the Spanish Government is urged to implement policies to really give to the farmers the rights to save, use and commercialize traditional varieties. These agricultural genetic resources must be part of their livelihoods. A change in the legal framework and national policies that are considered unfair because of the principles that govern social life and the constitutional bases of the democratic state is expected to result from the action.

Therefore, the marketing of seeds by farmers themselves is promoted as a public, non-violent, political and conscious action against the law, committed with the intention to cause a change in the legislation and the governmental action. Acting thus the sense of justice of the majority of the community is appealed to, and declare that, in the opinion of Red de Semillas "Resembrado e Intercambiando", the principles of social cooperation between people which makes the full right to food is not being respected by forbidding farmers to sell their seeds because traditional varieties are an essential resource for healthy food, respecting the environment through the correct use of natural resources, enhancing rural culture, ethical values and quality of life.

The Manifesto

The 2nd week of the Agricultural Biodiversity reclaims the Manifesto for the right of farmers to sell their own seeds of traditional varieties, signed in 2011 and 2012 by more than three thousand persons and collectives.

This year, the week has coincided with the International Campaign promoted by Vandana Shiva "Seed Freedom".

More information about the campaign and activities: www.siembratusderechos.info



Feral Populations in Europe: Chances and Problems in the Conservation and Use

On 28 -30th November in Seville the first workshop on "Feral populations in Europe" with representatives from 9 countries took place. In the host country Spain wild animal populations have existed for centuries.

These are not, however, perceived as such. In the example of the cattle and horses in Doñana National Park the tradition and connection between the local population and the wild horses and cattle can be clearly seen. The animals have always been an important part of the national park. Once a year, the horses are rounded up, tagged and DNA samples are taken to determine the origin. All horses have an equine passport and an



official owner. For the villagers, the area is an honour to be the owner of at least one of the wild horses even though there is no economic benefit. For the cattle it is similar. In addition to the annual inspection and marking sometimes animals are caught and slaughtered. The meat of cattle Marismeña is a rare delicacy.

A completely different picture emerges in the Danube Delta in Romania: The Letea Forest is a 400 hectare nature reserve. Here 20 years ago, some horses have been set free. These have increased so much that they threaten the precious flora of the region. Currently, there are plans to sterilize the animals by helicopter from the air to stop the uncontrolled proliferation.



In Italy and Greece feral animal populations only really draw attention when they cause problems, although in Italy scientists do show a differentiated interest. In Greece, the island populations are increasingly of interest. These are goats or sheep that have been set free and were only rounded up once a year or when they were provided with drinking water. Some of these populations have been forgotten and are now a part of the island fauna, others multiply uncontrollably and disrupt the ecosystem.



In the Netherlands, experience with the "de-domestication" is well advanced. The area Oostvaardersplassen acts as prime example. But even here there are problems, because de-domestication works to undo, over a short period of time, the long process of domestication and breeding. The grazing of large herbivores is an important aspect of a healthy ecosystem, as studies have shown in Germany. The experience in the UK shows that it is important

to use adapted local breeds in nature protection. This is because they have adapted over thousands of years to the local environment.

At the workshop the following statements and specifications were made:

- A legal recognition of the special status of feral populations lacking.
- Both the moral support of the public and the support of the states are needed.
- Some problems are different from country to country. Often there is a battle between the institutions, rules and regulations are incompatible. Diseases and health conditions lead to problems, because too little cooperation between the veterinary authorities and other agencies and institutions.
- The recognition of feral populations as wildlife could, in many cases, deal with the legal hurdles. The animals would then be under the Hunting Act. So far, only marked, captured animals can enter the food chain. With a clear status as wildlife this would be different. However, this is not possible in all cases.
- Feral populations are an important consideration for the conservation of biodiversity. The environmental contribution of feral populations is little understood. The control of other species such as rats or rabbits is far from known. Subsidies are rare.
- In public, there is often misunderstanding as the sight of a dead carcass raises fears and insecurities, but is an important part of the ecosystem. Free grazing animals in ice and snow are also a largely unknown sight.
- The subject of grazing in water protection areas differs depending on country specific requirements. Thus e.g. in Germany, a grazing buffalo herd is hardly possible. Likewise heterogeneous is the subject of forest pastures in Europe.
- Documentation of feral populations in the different regions and countries in Europe is very important so that an analysis can be made of what factors influence

each other, such as the climate, predators, food, human activities. This means that important knowledge for an optimal management and control of the populations can be obtained.

- Public acceptance and perception is very important. Therefore it is necessary to communicate the theme of wide and in various media, including video documentation, (children) books, media and academic articles.

The experts concluded that there is a great need to learn more about the different situations of feral populations in Europe. It was also stated that small gatherings are preferable to a large conference because of the exchange of information is more effective. A network should consider the following issues:

National experts need to be identified. Small national networks can strengthen the effectiveness of actions within a country. Joint studies such as DNA controls and joint publications strengthen cooperation. Since the subject of feral populations includes many disciplines, such links would be helpful. These aspects will be considered in the further activities on feral populations in Europe.

The workshop presentations and the database on feral populations can be found online at www.agrobiodiversity.net/regional →Topic Networks →Feral populations.

More information: waltraud.kugler@save-foundation.net

Roundtable : Conservation of Transylvanian Fruit Varieties



Another step towards the live conservation of old fruit varieties Transylvania has been made: At the invitation of the Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET) and SAVE Foundation an expert meeting was held about the possibilities for conservation of old fruit varieties in Transylvania. The lively discussion was held on 16 November, in "Apafi Manor House" of MET in Malmkrog. There both old varieties were examined and their occurrence discussed, as well as concrete steps agreed: In various locations collections of old fruit varieties, marked accordingly, will be established to attract the interest of visitors. In winter 2012 lists of the main varieties will be merged and recorded along with information as to whether propagation material is available. In spring 2013, scions will be cut and brought to the Pomological Institute in Bistrica. There they will be then grafted onto the appropriate rootstock. The grafted young trees will be cared for for one year in the nursery and in spring

2014 is expected to spread to the intended locations. One of these sites is the orchard in Malmkrog that the MET is farming organically. The name of the place Malmkrog – Malancrav – derived from Alma Kerek (apple round, apple circle) and thus belongs to the 60 Transylvanian places whose name refers to "apple". The name says it all!



The participants form the core of a network for fruit preservation in Transylvania. There are already proposals for further meetings which will be also used to determine fruit varieties and to explain them to the public. The motivation to conserve old Transylvanian fruit varieties is very large. It is encouraging also that all three ethnic groups, Romanians, Saxons (German) and Székely (Hungarian) are willing to cooperate and excited about the varieties, synonyms, properties and possibilities for discussion.

Newsflash

NEW!! Books and More Store

Support the work of SAVE Foundation by buying from SAVE's Amazon Associates Store. We have started to put together a list of interesting books (and more) for you to enjoy. If you have suggestions for us to add to the store, please let us know. You can visit the store via <http://variety-savers.net/> or directly: <http://astore.amazon.co.uk/safo0e-21>

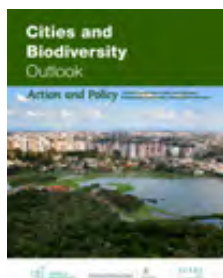


Breed Atlas Romania

A Breed Atlas of Romanian livestock breeds has been compiled as a part of the project Animal Genetic Resources in Romania. The Atlas is based on SAVE monitoring tours, literature and information from stakeholders. The purpose of the Breed Atlas is to gather together all the information that is currently available in order to create a basis for future work. There is still a need for better descriptions and, especially, photos and information about stock numbers. We will be glad to receive any information you can add.

SAVE hopes to be able to intensify the work in Romania together with local organisations as a part of the Swiss Contribution to Romania, Thematic Fund Civil Society Participation – Partnership Block Grant. The results of this call are expected by the end of the year.

The Breed Atlas can be found on <http://agrobiodiversity.net/national> → Romania



Cities and Biodiversity Outlook

The Cities and Biodiversity Outlook combines science and policy in a global assessment of the links between urbanization, biodiversity and ecosystem services. It showcases best practices and provides key advice on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Book is freely available online: <http://www.cbd.int/en/subnational/partners-and-initiatives/cbo> (ISBN 92-9225-432-2)

Important dates (extract)

18 - 27 January: International Green Week 2013, the world's biggest fair for food, agriculture and horticulture; in Berlin, Germany. Web: www.gruenewoche.de/en/

23 Feb - 3 March: Salon International de l'Agriculture 2013; Porte de Versailles, Paris, France. Web: www.salon-agriculture.com

28 Feb - 3 March: Natur Messe Basel, with "Natur Kongress" on 1st of March; at Congress Center Basel, Switzerland. Web: www.natur.ch

5-9 March: BIOAGRA 2013 in the frame of the International Agricultural Fair in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. E-mail: vpopov_bg@yahoo.com, Web: www.fair.bg/en/events/BioAgra-En.htm

7-10 March: Biologica in Athens 2013, Athens, Greece. Web: www.helexpo.gr

7-8 April: "Natural and Organic Products Europe 2013", The Natural Food Show, Natural Beauty & Spa, Health & Nutrition and Natural Living; at Grand Hall, Olympia, London UK. Web: www.naturalproducts.co.uk

12-16 May: Quantitative traits breeding for multifunctional grasslands and turf; 30th Meeting of the EUCARPIA Fodder Crops and Amenity Grasses Section; at Vrnjacka Banja, Serbia. Web: www.eucarpia2013.ikbks.com

29-31 May: ICAR Technical Workshop 2013, Aarhus, Denmark. <http://www.icar2013.dk>

12-15 June: 2nd Meeting in Italy: "Let's cultivate diversity" at Azienda Agricola Bio Floridia, Peccioli, Italy (Tuskany). Contact: info@semirurali.net Web: www.semirurali.net

20-24 June: European Federation of City Farms - Conference 2013; in Bodø, Norway: Contact: ingeborg.tangeraas@4h.no, Web: www.cityfarms.org/events/view/23

26-30 August: EAAP 2013 Annual Meeting in Nantes, France. Web: www.eaap2013.org

3-5 October: BALNIMALCON 2013 (Balkan Animal Science Conference) in Tekirdag, Turkey. E-Mail: balnimalcon2013@nku.edu.tr, Web: <http://balnimalcon2013.nku.edu.tr/>

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