

# SAVE eNews 3/2013

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(Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe)



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## **Feral and free ranging Livestock and Nature Conservation: International Workshop of Nature Conservation in the Balkans**



Feral and free ranging populations in Europe mainly live in large habitats which are of importance for nature conservation. This is also the case in the Dinaric karst fields. The largest depression and perhaps the largest periodically flooded karst field in the world is the Livno karst field. The site comprises all characteristic elements of the typical karst: seasonally flooded agricultural land and alluvial forests, seasonal marshes and pools, streams, sinkholes, karst springs and the largest peatland

in the Balkans. Euronatur performed with the local partners Naše Ptice and Naša Bastina the "First International Workshop on Dinaric Karst Fields as Wetland of National and International Importance" in Livno, Bosnia-Herzegovina on September 30<sup>th</sup> – October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013. SAVE Foundation took the opportunity to inform and discuss about free ranging livestock and feral populations and their impact on nature conservation not only within a presentation but also at a workshop as a side event of this conference.

In Mediterranean countries, grazing activities were traditionally based on a set of management techniques that were adapted to the local socio-economic constraints and traditions. Due to the relative lack of water and the absence of large area deep soils, land was always only extensively used in the sense of transhumance (a seasonally adjusted semi-nomadic herd migration) for grazing in the Mediterranean karst soils. The Koliba tradition in western Montenegro is similar to a typical example of the economy of remote pasture in the Alps. Dolinas and poljes were farmed arable.

Grazing is an important tool to maintain biodiversity in a mosaic of plant communities and animals. But this only runs well, if the system is adapted to the environment. Indigenous livestock fulfills this precondition of adaptation to the environment. The build-up of dry forage and shrub encroachment is reduced especially in such areas where grazing was

common in former times. Besides the direct effect on the vegetation, like the promotion of the emergence of low competitive types of open landscapes, also the danger of natural fire will be reduced. Another ecosystem service is caused by the dung of the animals,



which closes the food web through the existence of dung beetles and other insects for the dung removal and also through the undigested material as a base for the micro flora. Grazers produce much more dung than any other existing wild animal in Europe.

Conservation grazing is the use of semi-feral or domesticated grazing livestock to maintain and increase the biodiversity of natural or semi-natural grasslands, heathlands, wood pasture, wetlands and many other habitats. The influence of livestock

differs from species to species and sometimes also within breeds. There is a difference in the grazing behavior of “grazers” which need mainly grass like cattle and “browsers” which prefer at least partwise foliage as protein rich easy digested food like e.g. donkeys.

In the Balkans and especially in the Dinaric karst, some populations of feral livestock have been observed. Already since 1916 the Livno wild horses are living free in the area of Livanjsko polje. The horses take the salt they need from the road and get sometimes hay in winter. They do not use any shelter and develop under natural selection. To avoid upcoming conflicts with farmers the ranging area needs to be mapped. Often the ownership is not clear. To prevent abuse recently new legal obligations were developed.



In other areas e.g. goats escaped in the last two decades and live in a feral state ignored by the people in some valleys. Sporadic views and photographs show, that their influence on the vegetation pattern is much less dramatically as it is usually mentioned. This may be an advice that the population develops according to the feeding conditions.

One of the biggest problems for biodiversity in the Balkans is rural depopulation. Large former open grazed areas are going to become scrubland with a loss of biodiversity. Free ranging adapted livestock maybe a good method to keep at least some of these areas open.

In a one-day workshop some of the problems mentioned above were discussed and different needs for regions and habitats were determined. To determine in which habitat which species and breed can be used, a framework for a management plan with special emphasis on livestock was developed.

To keep a landscape with diverse pattern of vegetation free ranging livestock in the right composition is necessary. The grazing effect of different livestock breeds was determined. It has to be noted, that herbivores are not “grazing machines in different sizes. According to a livestock unit a horse is in its effect to the vegetation not equivalent to seven goats. A meadow will not be conserved in its biodiversity with a herd of deer because of the grazing behavior of this species. So called “Grazer” like cattle need grass. They can stop the plant succession or turn it on grassland. Depending on the bandwidth of herbs and grass we have to distinguish between generalists and specialists. The general effect on the vegetation lies in cutting the grass. “Browsers” need foliage as a protein rich easy digested food. They can influence wood vegetation through browsing damages. In some Garrigue and Maquis shrublands this browsing is a good method to open overgrown bush and tree vegetation. It could be observed that e.g. donkeys “create their own free grassland by browsing trees so that they die. Instead of scrubs and trees, small places of open grassland can develop.

The table below shows, which livestock is suitable for which habitat (table amended to “Wilde Weiden”, NABU, Bad Sassendorf, 2008/2009).

Habitat	Horse	Donkey	Pig	Goat	Sheep	Cattle	Buffalo
Salty grasland	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Dunes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Heathland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fen, wet litter meadow	✓					✓	✓
Wetlands	✓		✓✓			✓✓	✓✓
Mesophilic meadow	✓✓		✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Dry meadows	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓	
pioneer/ruderal meadow	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Rocky landscape		✓		✓✓	✓		
Sandy soils	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Shrubland	✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
Grazing Forest	✓		✓✓			✓✓	
Deep leafy forest			✓				
Pinus/Spruce forest	✓					✓	



## 20 Years SAVE Network: Annual Meeting in Biezenmortel, The Netherlands



The SAVE Annual Meeting 2013 and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting of the SAVE Network was organised by the SAVE Network Partner “Stichting Zeldzame Huisdierrassen”. The meeting began with the 7<sup>th</sup> European Seminar on Agrobiodiversity. This year the theme was “Agrobiodiver-

sity and the CAP: a chance for rural and social development”. The theme was presented and discussed on both a policy and a practical level.

After many months of negotiations and consulting within the EU structures, agreement has finally been made on all aspects of the CAP reform (Common Agricultural Policy), the last agreements were made on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013. The formal adoption of the CAP reform by the European Parliament and the Council is expected to take place later in 2013 with a view to having the CAP reform in place as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

Dr. Hans Brand of the CAP Department, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, The Netherlands provided the seminar participants with a comprehensive overview of the CAP reform. There are many areas of the new CAP that can be of benefit to the conservation of genetic resources – for example, sustainability, support for young people starting up in farming, support for small-scale farming, farmers’ cooperatives and combating climate change are all important features of the reforms. However, not all of these features are mandatory and, in order for them to be taken on by member states, lobbying will be required. These features include the small-farm payment, the categorisation of land and the inclusion of genetic resources in the payments. It is very important that organisations and individuals concerned with the conservation of genetic resources take on this lobbying work in their own countries and make sure that support for genetic resources is included in national policy.

In The Netherlands, changes are taking place within the agricultural sector. For example, the abolition of milk quotas is changing the dairy sector. Due to the strict mineral and manure policies in the Netherlands; an increase in the numbers of dairy cows is not the logical consequence of the changes. Farmers therefore seek to produce something special or to cut costs. One way of reducing costs is to replace the high-in-put, modern dairy breeds with robust old breeds that require fewer medicines. In the light of increased fod-

der prices, the old breeds' ability to digest and utilise raw fodder is also an important aspect. Thus, it is possible to see how modern agriculture can use old breeds to economic benefit.

The seminar was an opportunity to present two interesting ecological areas that the participants were then able to visit as part of the excursions of the meeting. Firstly, the work of the Duinboeren "dune farmers", represented by Emiel Ansems, presented their work in the rural area around the national park Loonse en Drunense Dunes. The dunes are a unique landscape of over 3,500 acres of sand dune which are located between the cities of Tilburg, Waalwijk and 's-Hertogenbosch. Since 2002 it forms, with other small areas, a national park. The "dune farmers" have their farms in the buffer zone around the national park and aim to farm using ecologically sustainable methods, such as "fodder trees" traditionally used as fodder for livestock, biomass for renewable energy production, firewood and building material, wood for wooden shoes and tool handles, and twigs for wicker baskets. The trees and shrubs also served as natural fencing around farm yards and pastures, and provided fodder and shelter for livestock. The trees and shrubs also play an essential role in balancing agroecosystems and closing nutrient cycles.

The Kempen Heath Sheep were already known to the SAVE Network members since the "sheep hero" Stijn Hilgers presented his work at the European Agrobiodiversity Seminar in Dimitrovgrad, Serbia. The ecological and historical features of the heathland were presented in Biezenmortel by Loek Hilgers and participants also had the opportunity to "walk with the shepherd" and experience the heathland in real life. The complex and closed cycle of nutrients between the grazing on the heath and the growing of traditional crops in manure-enriched soil in



the "out-fields" is a practice that creates a biodiversity rich environment, keeps an old breed of sheep prospering and, also, keeps the ancient tradition of shepherding alive in the modern society. This type of low-intensity farming has been largely discriminated against in the old CAP but should be promoted in the reformed, sustainability-friendly CAP 2020 as methods such as this offer a good chance of improving nature values as well as local economic systems.

The last presentation at the seminar was a study of the "ZeldzammLEKKER" label used by SZH to promote products of rare breeds. This study included interviews with restaurants, butchers, retailers etc and a SWOT analysis of the results. The study found that there are good opportunities for this kind of marketing. Food professionals are interested in this kind of product where the producer and consumer are in a short-chain relationship.

Enthusiastic restaurants can act as ambassadors for products and the label in general. The public like the small-scale as it is seen as being more trustworthy and easier to keep an overview of. All these aspects are very helpful input to the discussions about the SAVE Heritaste® label and more detailed information will be requested.



One of the breeds sold under the ZeldzaamLEKKER label are the Lakenvelder cattle. The Lakenvelder, black and red cattle with white belts are used in the logo of SZH and are characteristic in the landscape of The Netherlands. As one of the oldest breeds, already established in the Middle Ages, it bears noble, traditional Dutch genes. It is a very robust and frugal true dual-purpose cow suitable for milking and meat. It is fully adapted to the Dutch climate and landscape.

Lakenvelder beef is special, the meat is finely fibred and the fat melts at low temperatures, leaving a tasty, richly flavoured meal to enjoy. The participants at the SAVE Meeting visited a farm with Lakenvelder cattle but, unfortunately, the meat was only available for those who stayed on after the SAVE meeting to attend the ZeldzaamLEKKER dinner.

In order to celebrate 20 years of the SAVE Network, SAVE invited all the participants to raise a glass of champagne to a successful 20 years of work. SAVE founder member and executive vice-president Hape Grunenfelder thanked everyone for their engagement over the years. Long-standing members, founders and funders were thanked for their support and the SAVE staff were presented with flowers as thanks for their work in the project office. In return, the SAVE Network thanked both Hape Grunenfelder and Waltraud Kugler for 20 years of work for SAVE and presented them with a small selection of local products to enjoy. At this point in the SAVE meeting the presidency of SAVE was passed from Riccardo Fortina (R.A.R.E, Italy) to Geert Bokink (SZH, Netherlands) and Pauline Wolters (Federation of European City Farms), who has resigned from the board of directors, was also thanked for her engagement with SAVE.



The SAVE meeting ended with a chance to attend the “breeders and friends” day of the SZH where the “breed of the year” the Dutch Shepherd dog was presented and there was an opportunity to take part in workshops and enjoy a chance to network and discuss with members of the SAVE network and SZH.

SAVE would like to thank SZH for the organisation of the meeting. The date and the location for 2014 will be confirmed and communicated as soon as possible.



## New members of the SAVE Network

Two new members were welcomed to the SAVE Network at the



Annual Meeting: Sortengarten Südtirol is from the German speaking part of Italy and concerns itself with the conservation of local varieties of fruit and vegetables as well as local livestock breeds. The Foreningen Gamle Danske Husdyrracer is from Denmark and works for the conservation of Danish livestock breeds. SAVE welcomes both organisations to the Network and

looks forward to fruitful collaboration with them in future.



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## Arca-Deli Awards 2013

The Arca-Deli Awards were awarded for the third time this year at the SAVE Annual Meeting in Biezenmortel. The Arca-Deli Awards were created to help producers add value to their products by showing that the product, and the conservation work that lies behind it, is valued on a European level. The judges of the award take their job very seriously – part of the judging is, of course, to try all the delicious products, but the judges also look carefully at the background of the product and the packaging and labelling. The judges also provide some feedback for the producers to help make the products even better.



### This year the awards were given to the following:

The Spanish organisation Red Andaluza de Semillas “Cultivando Biodiversidad” entered a box containing a variety of organic seeds of local varieties. These boxes of seeds are given to new member of the association to help them get started with growing landraces.



The box of seeds is also used as part of a campaign to get garden projects (with children, unemployed people etc) interested in using old and local varieties. The Arca-Deli judges liked the concept of the seed boxes and found the entry to be a good, well-presented example of how to promote local plant varieties.

Two entries were received from Frowin Oberrauch member of the new SAVE Network member Sortengarten Südtirol. The entries were an apple schnapps made from the variety

“Kalterer Böhmer”, an old variety of apple which gives the schnapps a soft aroma of apple, and the second entry was a jam made with a wild variety of zwetschke-plum. The judges commented that the jam was a good example of how wône can create a product from a wild variety. Conserving the so-called “crop wild relatives” is an important part of conservation of agrobiodiversity.



An entry from the Szomor Salami Production Plant in Hungary was an opportunity to taste the products of both water buffalo and Hungarian grey cattle, seasoned in the Hungarian way, with spicy paprika. The animals are kept in the national park and graze free-range as a part of a scheme to conserve genetic diversity and protect the natural assets of the area. Linking the national parks with local breeds and local projects is a concept that the SAVE Foundation supports and the Szomor Salami Production Plant is a good example of how this can be done well.

At the the 6<sup>th</sup> European Seminar on Agrobiodiversity last year in Urnäsch with the theme of “the economic value of local breeds and varieties” the marketing of organic Erteboelle sheep in Denmark was presented. This year it was possible to taste the products with an entry of a salami-type sausage from the family Kortegaard Becher. The sheep are used for extensive grazing in protected areas to restore heath land. The marketing of the products is seen by the Arca-Deli judges as a good way to add extra value to the breed.

The Arca-Deli Awards are popular in Greece and this year there was a further entry from Greece: Farmer Nikolaos Fotiadis sent two entries of products from the autochthonous black pig. The pigs range freely in the meadows of the foothills of Mount Olympus. The Fotiadis family keep a nucleus herd of the black pig that has been developed in the area over centuries and is perfectly adapted to the local climate and the altitude. Unusually for an old pig breed, the meat is very low fat. This makes the bacon that was entered for the Arca-Deli Award very special, the addition of herbs from Mount Olympus sprinkled on the bacon gives an extra-special value to the product. The fresh sausages made from the black pig are enhanced with local herbs and spices as well as local varieties of vegetable.



Overall, the products entered were all of high quality and all met the criteria for the Arca-Deli Awards. The Arca-Deli Awards are not a competition and all entries that are considered deserving of an award receive one. SAVE is pleased to see that the awards are proving so popular and looks forward to the entries in 2014!



## Newsflash

### EuroNatur Award

SAVE Foundation congratulates the Swiss forestry engineer and biologist Dr. Mario Broggi who received the EuroNatur Award 2013 at a special ceremony on the 9th October on the island of Mainau in Lake Constance, Germany. Dr. Mario Broggi has been worked extensively for the strengthening of civil society in Southeast Europe, but also for the protection of the Alps he made extraordinary contributions. 1983 - 1992 he was President of the International Commission for Alpine Protection and instrumental in materializing the Alpine Convention. As a person with a particularly integrative approach Dr. Mario Broggi has been recognized the links between agricultural biodiversity and conservation early, and is engaged in the conservation of old breeds and varieties..



### Key role of traditional Knowledge in implementing the CBD

Governments and indigenous and local communities at the Eighth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8(j) recently have reaffirmed the need to recognize and integrate traditional knowledge systems of indigenous and local communities into the future work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), including its Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization. The 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of Article 8(j) concluded on 11 October 2013 with recommendations for work that will build knowledge networks, support capacity-development and integrate the traditional knowledge and customary practices of indigenous and local communities into the science base of the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2013/pr-2013-10-12-8j-en.pdf>

### Schrödinger Prize 2013 for Work on Nitrous Oxide Emissions



The greenhouse effect of a certain amount of N<sub>2</sub>O in the atmosphere exceeds that of the same amount of CO<sub>2</sub> by a factor of about 300. About 60 % of anthropogenic nitrous oxide emissions are produced by agriculture, e.g. when microbes in the soil decompose nitrogen-containing feces of grazing sheep or cattle. Scientists consequently assumed that livestock breeding in steppes and prairies contributes to the constant increase of nitrous oxide concentration in the atmosphere. Researchers from Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) are granted the 2013 Stifterverband Science Award – Erwin Schrödinger Prize. The widely noted study by Butterbach-Bahl's research team refuted the so far prevalent opinion that large-area grazing contributes to the constantly increasing nitrous oxide concentration in the atmosphere and, hence, to global warming.

<http://www.alphagalileo.org/ViewItem.aspx?ItemId=132736&CultureCode=en>

## European Specialist in Traditional Orchards



The ESTO Project „European Specialist in Traditional Orchards” is a European project supported by the Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme. It involves partner organisations and associated experts in the field of traditional orchard farming,

management and education from six European countries - Austria, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, France and Germany.

Traditional orcharding in Europe has had a changing history over the last decades. In some regions there exist still agricultural models guaranteeing the continuity and development of this hot spots of biodiversity, but in other regions changes in land use, missing marketing actions and the widespread loss of professional knowledge about traditional orchards are threatening their survival. The overall aim of the project is to contribute to keep traditional orchards as a multifunctional (ecological and economical) sustainable system guaranteeing high biodiversity. See: <http://www.esto-project.eu/>

### Important dates (extract)

6-7 November: Conference on innovative entrepreneurship in mountains, in Brussels, Belgium. Web: <http://www.euromontana.org/en/agenda.html>

8 November: DG-Regio Conference: "Regions as motors of new growth through smart specialization" in Brussels, Belgium; Web: [http://www.ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy](http://www.ec.europa.eu/regional_policy)

10-14 Nov.: International Plant Breeding Congress. Antalya, Turkey. [info@intpbc.org](mailto:info@intpbc.org), Web: <http://www.intpbc.org>

14-17 November: BioCultura Fair, Madrid, Spain. Contact: [biocultura@vidasana.org](mailto:biocultura@vidasana.org)  
Feria Internacional de Productos Ecológicos y Consumo Responsable.

21-22 November: European conference "Towards creative rural entrepreneurship" in Amay, Belgium. Contact: [info@reseau-pwdr.be](mailto:info@reseau-pwdr.be), Web: <http://www.reseau-pwdr.be>

30 Nov. - 1 December: "Journées de la laine (wool-days)", at Montbrun Bocage (Haute-Garonne), France. Contact: [chavigny.k@wanadoo.fr](mailto:chavigny.k@wanadoo.fr)

11 December: ELN-FAB Seminar "Functional agrobiodiversity in North-West Europe: What does the future hold?", in Brussels; Web: <http://www.ecnc.org/200913/>

11-12 December: Youth and young farmers' workshop, Brussels, Belgium. [info@enrd.eu](mailto:info@enrd.eu)

16 - 20 December: Central and Eastern Europe Regional Workshop on Mainstreaming Biosafety into National Measures; in Batumi, Georgia; Web: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

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