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Safeguard for **A**gricultural **V**arieties in **E**urope
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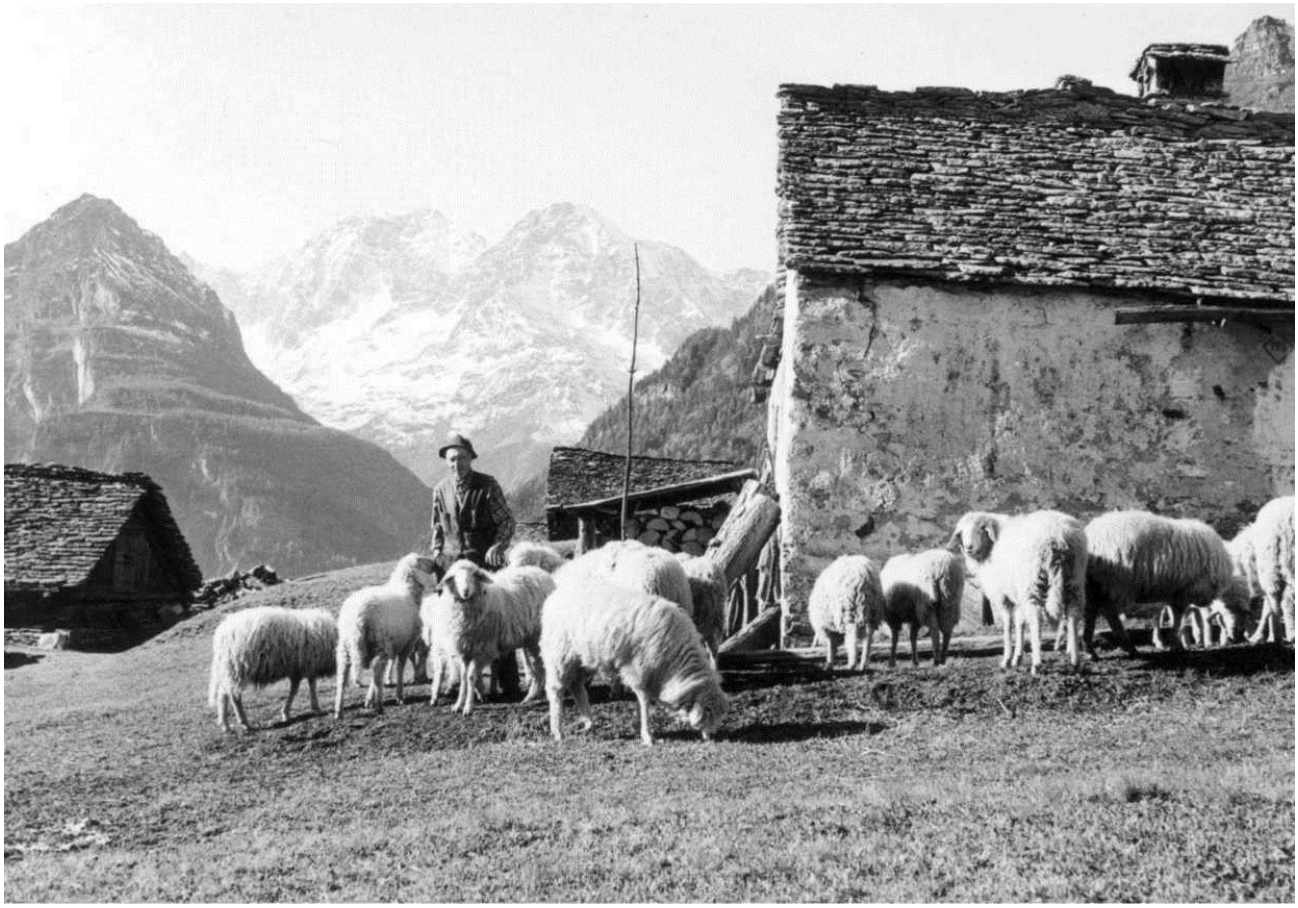
The Saltasassi Sheep



Pastures and stone housing of the Alps, picture Valerio Sartore 1944

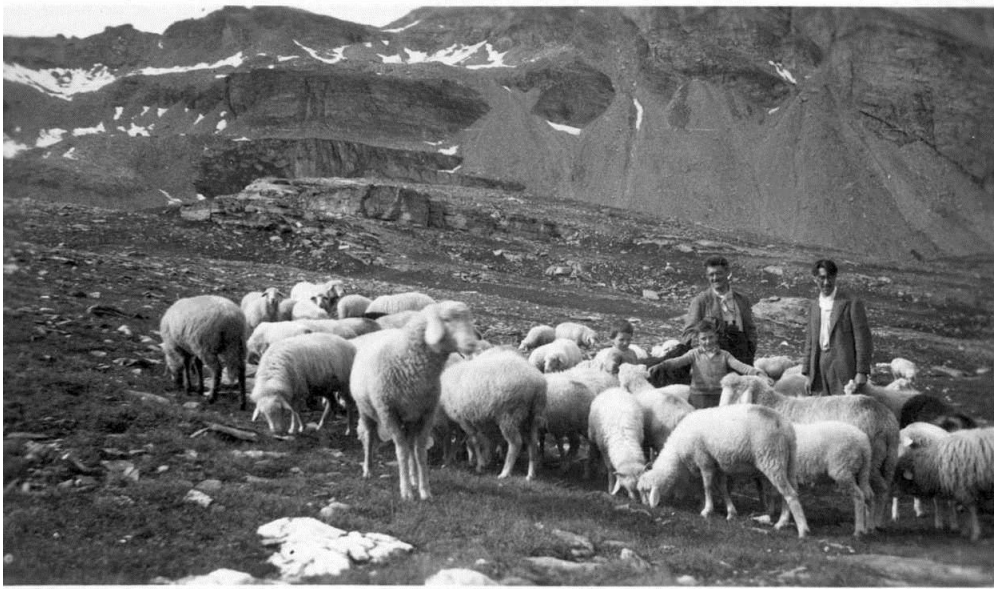
Some sheep breeds in Italy have been systematically disappearing over the years.

Sheep that have, over the centuries, adapted to all different kinds of terrains: hills, mountains, alpine pastures, islands and coastal areas, not to mention cold and hot weather conditions. Sheep have nourished and clothed generations of us humans throughout time. They have formed pastures and landscapes as well as entire regions through transhumance paths which still today bear the name 'tratturi'.

This history of Sheep can be seen all over the globe, but raising sheep post-war onwards has consistently diminished year after year in favour of 'modern innovations'.

Sheep meat and milk products are no longer agricultural commodities, wool has become a waste product and the environmental impact is immense as mountainous regions become covered with bushes and trees through the years, former pasture land in the south dries up.

In the beginning of 2000, the Saltasassi breed was declared as extinct. This breed originated in the far northern region of Val d'Ossola, in Piemonte, in the river basin of the river Toce, where Switzerland lies on the northern border; and to the east, Monte Rosa, a massive rocky mountain of 4634m. and Monte Bianco. The Saltasassi Sheep were bred in this high elevation mountainous region. They are medium to small bodied, agile and rustic, adapting perfectly to high pasture life,



Saltasassi pasture, picture Valerio Sartore 1944

easily able to jump and hop, feeling completely at home around overhanging edges and stone heaps. Their dialect name is: 'sauta-sesc', the rock hopper (salta=hop & sassi=stones) produced mainly meat, but we all know that nothing was wasted back then, wool was worked raw, then spun for clothing and apparel.

picture Valerio Sartore 1944In 1983 ("Atlante delle razze autoctone" D. Bigi and A. Zanon, EdAgricole), a census was taken by CNR in Val d'Ossola, where 2.500 heads were registered. In the year 2000, as stated previously, there was no evidence left of the Saltasassi breed

Some time ago, Chiara Motta, a veterinary doctor and sheep and wool lover gave the interview below. She had, over the years, systematically observed the decline of sheep rearing all over Italy and elsewhere, and became active in RARE, an association which keeps track of local breeds under high risk of extinction and a SAVE partner organization (http://www.associazionerare.it).

Chiara found and bought probably the last existing animals of Saltasassi, which had been destined for the slaughterhouse and she breeds them with love and respect in the countryside near Lake d'Orta, not far from Val d'Ossola.

Chiara can you tell us how you first heard of the rare Saltasassi breed?
As I was interested in sheep breeds, I visited livestock fairs and there I met the association RARE and became aware of their appeal of saving the last flocks of Saltasassi sheep destined for the slaughterhouse. That was how I was able to save and start my own small flock of Saltasassi, who have become my pets.

How would you describe the Saltasassi breed?
Saltasassi are medium/small sized, weighing about 50-60 kg, compact, small-headed, and pro-filed with a straight nose. Both sexes are horn-less with smallish ears, which aren't floppy but are pointy and horizontal. Their fleece is dense and white, possibly with blackish/brownish spots around the head or on limbs.

In addition to saving and breeding these sheep, you are also a skilful spinner. How would you describe the Saltasassi wool?
Their wool is predominately white, has a soft/medium handle, is slightly crimped, the staple length is 10-12 cm, and the micron range is 27-30. It is easily spun and I would compare it to something similar to Jacob wool.

Could you tell us a story about your sheep?
Sheep are very timid and shy animals. They are apt to run at the slightest sign of danger and so it wasn't easy at all gaining their faith and trust in me. But when this did happen, little by little, with time and patience, I was overcome with a feeling of joy, pleasure and satisfaction. Especially when they started answering to their names.

What in fact, did you name them?
Ariel, Candy, little Doris, Nalle and Ombretta. And the rams Macchianera and Moscato.

Do you have a particular favorite?
Each one of them has, of course, their own personality, which becomes obvious when you spend time with them, but maybe my favourite would be Nalle, who enjoys being petted and then likes to settle down near me, resting on my lap.

Does your flock have 'the' black sheep?
Yes, black isn't a dominant colour; but it does appear from time to time. Ombretta is almost completely black, and very reluctant to show her trust. But during time, I was able to, in the beginning, first just brush up against her, and then

scratch her nose. This has been as much as she will grant as warmth and affection.

Who is helping you in this 'binding' lifestyle?
When I am working as a vet, my friend, who is a farmer gives me a hand, checking that they always have fresh hay and water and seeing that they are happy and everything is under control.

Are there other breeds in Italy that are in danger of extinction?
Italy is a country with an enormous diversity of livestock. Sadly, many breeds that have characterised the history and culture of many Italian regions are disappearing. The Savoiarda and the Garessina breeds are near to extinction, while, suitable plans have been made to recuperate the Sambucana and the Brogan breeds.

Does funding exist to recuperate breeds which are on their way to extinction?
Very, very little, and the funding is not substantial enough to convince livestock breeders to protect the Saltasassi and other breeds potentially in danger. In fact, since I am not a licensed breeder I wasn't even able to apply for funding! Here in Italy, protecting endangered sheep is virtually in the hands of singular private enthusiasts and sadly, there is no demand economically speaking, which would justify raising these magnificent and extraordinary animals.

What do you think the future will bring to your small flock of Saltasassi?
It surely will continue to be an 'uphill climb' but as long as I am able to combine my love and passion for them and my work as a vet, my sheep will surely be safe and happy.

How are you able to let people know about your sheep and their wool?
Unfortunately, in Italy there aren't Wool Festivals like there are in The UK and elsewhere. But we do have Craft Fairs where wool products play a small but important part. And it is important that I participate. Because in this way, I am contributing and spreading the awareness of wool, where it comes from, and of the singular beauty of hand spun wool.

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Written by Manu, RARE: melamaglia@yahoo.com

Biodiversity in Food

Within the LIFE project "Biodiversity in Food Indus-try Standards and Labels", an EU-wide initiative by Global Nature Fund, Agentur AUF !, Bodensee Foundation, Fundación Global Nature (Spain), Solagro and agoodforgood (France) and Instituto Superior Técnico (Portugal) has issued recommendations for effective biodiversity criteria in food industry standards and procurement rules for food companies.

The aim is to make wholesalers and supermarket chains aware of how much they can do for an intact nature. However, the analyses and recommendations also provide standard organizations with an additional working tool. The recommendations are intended as an orientation for biodiversity-compatible agricultural products. As it is mentioned in the introduction, 1000 times more species become extinct through human agricultural activities, as this would be the case under natural conditions. On the one hand, those responsible for products and quality receive guidelines for procurement, on the other hand, a "Biodiversity Performance Tool" should help farmers to recognize the potential for biodiversity on their own farm. On 50 certified pilot companies in Germany, France, Spain and Portugal the compatibility with other existing sustainability and steering instruments is tested. During the process on the distributor side, 54 standards and procurement guidelines were examined for their relevance to biodiversity conservation. The degradation and destruction of ecosystems, the overuse of natural resources, the loss of species and the spread of invasive, alien species are among the major problems that cause intensive food production. As a measure against the loss of species, the authors also recommend contributions to companies that maintain typical regional structures. In principle, the recommendations abstain from genetically modified organisms and prefer the promotion of crop diversity. "Reproducible crop varieties are better adapted to the sites, making them less susceptible to pest infestation and disease, and therefore less likely to be treated with pesticides," it says. On the other hand, the standardization of the cultivation systems and the concentration on a few high-performance varieties lead to species loss. Old varieties are often not protected and thus no longer tradable, which significantly reduces the exchange of seeds and the further breeding processing. In addition, production and quality standards also contributed to the standardization of the cultivated varieties. Here countermeasures must be given. To protect agrobiodiversity, the authors recommend a regular verification with other market players of the introduction of products from traditional varieties and livestock breeds. At the same time, local and regional initiatives which protect agro-biodiversity should be promoted. This also applies to biodiversity-friendly production methods such as agro forestry systems, permaculture and organic farming. In addition, the industry should work to ensure that the EU protects and promotes seed diversity through legal requirements. Specifically, the licensing and trading conditions for traditional seeds should be facilitated. In addition, initiatives to develop traditional varieties deserve their support. In order to achieve all this, the farms would need biodiversity management. In other words, a farmer should know about the existing biodiversity on his soil, he should know the endangered species of his region and formulate biodiversity goals. Of course, these goals depend on the actual individual situation. Farmers should be supported by the appropriate institutions and organizations. In addition, above all projects deserve support that would improve market access for traditional cultivars and livestock breeds. Companies and suppliers should be encouraged to cultivate old cultivars and breed traditional livestock breeds. The same applies to the conservation of local seed banks. An extended gene pool increases the resilience of the entire agricultural system.

Download here:
http://www.business-biodiversity.eu/en/recommendations-biodiversity-in-standards

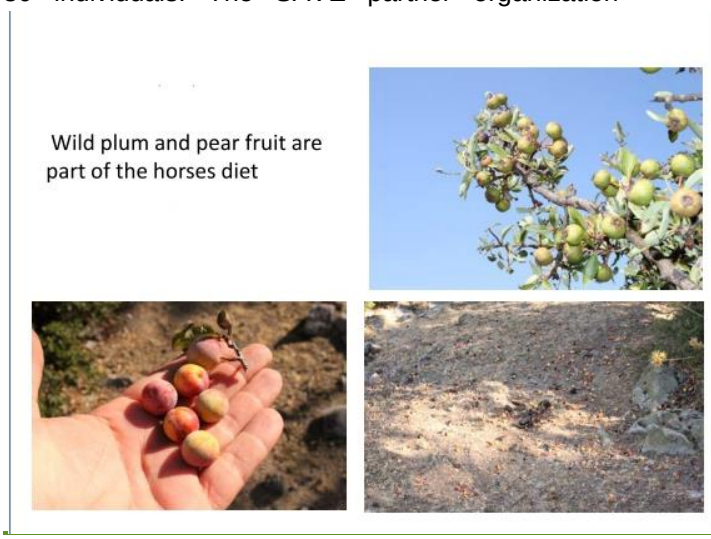
An amazing discovery: Small Horses on Lesbos



On the island of Lesbos in all probability an old, today wild horse breed was rediscovered. In the mountainous regions of the island of Lesbos there are - as in many regions of Greece - free roaming horses. Reports on the occurrence of the small horse breed, the Mindilli horse made the SAVE partner organization Amaltheia listen up and caused more precise observations. The aim was to find out whether the horses correspond ethologically and phenotypically to the Lesbos Pony, which has been lost since the First World War. The Mindili small horse was known for its surefootedness and robustness. It was used as a pack animal and for various agricultural activities. Mindilli horses were also exported to the eastern Mediterranean. After the original Mindilli horse was considered to be extinct, the name was transferred to the larger pacer horse on Lesbos.

The less than 110 centimetres small horses were rediscovered in four areas on Lesbos. They live in small wild populations and together make up about 30 individuals. The SAVE partner organization Amalthia found that the animals seem not to be crossbred with other breeds. But the number of individuals is too small to survive longer without breeding measures - a difficult task in times of low funding. The Mindili is a strong and robust horse well adapted to the harsh geo-climatic conditions of Lesbos. Thanks to its hard-working, frugal character, it was popular in the Mediterranean. The survey of a stallion revealed a withers height of 108 centimetres. The incisors have a triangular shape with an acute angle between the upper and lower incisors. The coat colour is brown and the skin is dark. It has a star on the forehead, but is otherwise single-coloured. Proportional to the body, the horse has narrow cheekbones. The body is square, the withers are well formed and the tail is set relatively high. The front limbs are thin but strong. The hooves are small and oval. Mane and tail are long compared to the body. It has a calm nature and is not a pacer, in contrast to the horses commonly referred to


Abundant hoof prints and dun-heaps on paths and plateaus in the investigated area


Wild plum and pear fruit are part of the horses diet

as Mindilli on Lesbos. The small horse was caught in 2000 in the mountainous region of Plomari in the south of Lesbos along with other wild horses by a trader to be transported and sold to Italy as a meat supplier. Due to its small size, the Mindilli horse was unprofitable for transport and should be sold on the island. The new owner finally looked for such small horses on the island but was initially not able to find any. However, locals have referred to at least four places where these wild horses can still be found. Two of these places were examined more closely.

Three of the 4 water sources in the area where horses roam.

After a long search, two groups of four animals each were clearly identified.

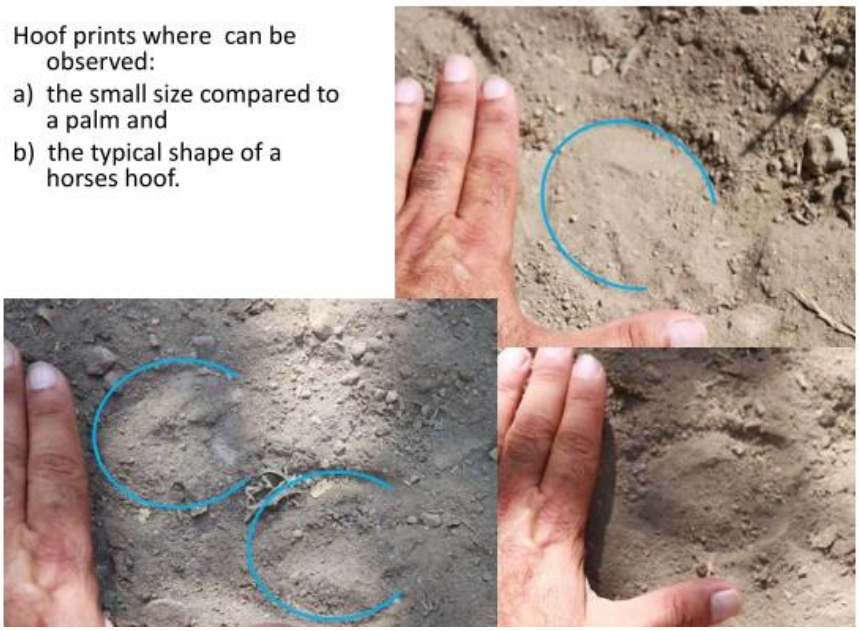
The search had to be concentrated and coordinated. Some attempts were unsuccessful, but then the Amaltheia members found on a plateau on different paths both footprints and dung. The footprints had a diameter of less than seven centimetres, which suggested a small body growth. Then they discovered two groups of four horses each. The first herd consisted of three brown and one grey animal, the second of four brown animals. However, they were only observed at a certain distance. The findings on Lesbos suggest that they are indeed the considered to be extinct Mindilli horses: they have no resemblance to the mainstream breed on Lesbos. Imports of the very similar Skyros ponies can also be excluded, as the Skyros Ponies are strictly controlled and marked. Also missing are the caudal hooks in the tooth position, which are common in Skyros ponies. Likewise, an import of Rhodes ponies can be excluded.

Today Lesbos apparently has a small horse repre-sentative of the Aegean family, probably Mindili horses. Although other animals could not be clearly assessed so far, it is likely that Mindili horses still live in one or more areas as wild groups. The recent finds are encouraging. It is necessary to study the wild populations to better identify the animals. The Mindilli horses are part of Greek history and part of the Greek biological and cultural heritage. Whether there are other groups on Lesbos would therefore require further investigation.

This example shows that there is still a large genetic treasure hidden in feral livestock populations, and the Greek islands are always offering surprises in terms of agrobiodiversity. Efforts to preserve agri-cultural diversity and natural habitats in Greece therefore need support.

Hoof prints where can be observed:

a) the small size compared to a palm and
b) the typical shape of a horses hoof.



Conservation of Plum Varieties in Luxembourg

Thanks to a project supported by the Luxembourg Ministry of the Environment and the EU LEADER project "Uebstkultur", natur & ëmwelt Fondation Hëllef fir d'Natur has been continuously involved in surveying traditional plum varieties in the municipality of Wintger in the northeast of Luxembourg near the Belgian border.

Surprising and remarkable in the community Wintger and surroundings is the richness of plum varieties found here. This diversity makes it clear that plums in the region used to play an important role in self-sufficiency. They provided the basis for preserves, prunes and brandy. Of the total of varie-ties of plums found, over two-thirds are rarities that are thought to represent limited common regional varieties.

Another peculiarity of the plum culture in the community is the "self-rooting" of the varieties, which means that many of the traditional varieties of plums form root shoots that are genetically identical to the mother plant. Today it is usual to reproduce varieties by grafting and not by excavating and replant root-suckers. This has the advantage that for this no finishing skills are necessary, so the varieties can be passed on by anyone "over the garden fence". In addition, root-resistant plum varieties are more durable than grafted varieties, as they survive through their root-suckers even after felling the mother tree. In a grafted tree, the variety has disappeared with its death.

In order to conserve the traditional and regional varieties of plums, they are propagated in a nursery on behalf of "Natur & Umwelt Fondation Hëllef fir d'Natur" and then planted in specially designed variety gardens. One of these variety gardens is now near the village Emeschbaach. It was started in November 2014 and completed in January 2016. 112 trees with 56 varieties were planted, most of them from Wincrange.

More information: Hellef fir'd'Natur www.naturemwelt.lu/natur-an-emwelt_ShowNews_News.110-1-520-0.htm, Richard Dahlem secretariat@naturemwelt.lu.

Plum collection Emeschbaach, Luxembourg. Between the rows of trees, the area is used agronomically. www.naturemwelt.lu

Newsflash

SAVE Annual Meeting in Hungary 25-27 June 2018

The topic of the SAVE annual meeting 2018 is "Ecossystems, Products, Conservation" The meeting will take place in Hungary and will be hosted by DAGENE, which will hold its annual conference also on this date, in collaboration with Pro Vertes. Pro Vertes is a nature conservation organization and SAVE partner, which uses traditional breeds in the Vértesi Nature Park for landscape protection and sells their products.
The main office of Pro Vertes is the Geszner house (picture) in the municipality Csákvár on the southern slope of the Vértes mountain about 60 km west of Budapest.
After exactly 10 years, the SAVE annual meeting takes place again together with DAGENE in Hungary. DAGENE and Pro Vertes will provide a diversified excursion program and the presentations at the seminar will again spark many inspiring discussions.
In addition to these highlights, the SAVE Network celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2018. So there are many reasons to partixcipate the meeting!

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DYNAVERSITY

Dynaversity (DYNAmic seed networks for managing European diVERSITY) is a project funded by the EU Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation program under Grant Agreement 773814. In January 2018 a kick-off meeting with 10 partner organisations and 12 participants of the so called SKEP, a Sharing Knowledge and Experience Platform within the project took place in Leuven, Belgium.

DYNAVERSITY analyses and describes the actors involved in plant genetic conservation for agriculture in order to suggest management and governance models and to construct new forms of networking. It facilitates exchange and integration of scientific as well as practical knowledge on how to best manage diversity in agriculture and in the entire food chain, restoring evolutionary and adaptation processes DYNAVERSITY will facilitate co-construction between actors like farmers, gardeners, natural parks, seed craftsmen, community seed banks, researchers, ex situ actors and consumers. New forms of seed networking and socio-environmental knowledge and practices shall be established. The project will facilitate exchange and integration of scientific as well as practical knowledge on how to best manage diversity in agriculture and in the entire food chain, restoring evolutionary and adaptation processes.

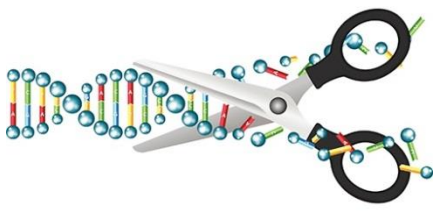
The “Sharing Knowledge and Experience Platform (SKEP)” is a new concept to integrate as much actors in the field as possible and to spread the outcomes of the project to a wide audience. The SKEP sustains the project consortium in analysing opportunities, challenges and bottlenecks for the design and implementation of best practices for in situ and on farm conservation. By starting this platform at the ignition of the project and by setting-up several meetings, the objective is to make this platform self-sustainable after the completion of DYNAVERSITY. More information on the new established website: www.dynaversity.eu. As a SKEP member of this project SAVE will keep you informed about the ongoing development of the project.

How to combat parasites in Goats

Emanuele La Barbera and Alessandra Rabittiis, organic farmers in Umbria, Italy, have found a natural way of reducing the number of parasites causing suffering to their goats. Emanuele and Alessandra herd 70 camosciata delle alpi goats and produce milk and dairy products. Emanuele says: "We have brought in black laying hens that help keep the parasites at bay by feasting on the insect larvae."Parasites in goats are common. In looking for an alternative to chemical treatments, Emanuele drew on his veterinary studies, during which he had specialised in animal husbandry: "I decided to try out an experiment that would bring in different animals which could add a product, a source of income and expand the farm, but remain complementary to the goat dairy farming." He chose the black laying hen, a robust breed of hen that is a natural predator of the parasites that were affecting his goats.

Having introduced the hens into the same enclosure as the goats, Emanuele could clearly see a positive impact: "The chicks feed on the larvae of the parasites and also flies which they find on the stable floor." Emanuele spent some time evaluating the optimal number of hens to have with the goats. He also needed to adjust the cleaning routine of the stables and find the optimal set up for supplying feed to the goats. The work of Emanuele and Alessandra has not gone unnoticed. At the end of 2016, their farm was awarded as "Bandiera Verdehttps://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/sites/agri-eip/files/2017-press-201801-goats_final.pdf

Genome editing:
Legal expert criticises opinion of Attorney General of the EuCJ



Source: https://www.genengnews.com/

According to Professor Kraemer, there is no doubt that the new methods of genetic engineering must be regulated under the current EU Directive 2001/18. At the time that the EU directive was drawn up, the only methods of plant and animal breeding exempted from GMO regulation were those which were considered to "have a long safety record". This is, however, not the case with the new techniques of genetic engineering, which make use of tools such as CRISPR/ Cas (we discussed this methods in the SAVE eNews 4/2017 edition). Consequently, plants and animals that are gene-edited should undergo an approval process and risk assessment before they can be allowed for release or import. Nevertheless, the Attorney General has not made a clear distinction between genetic engineering and conventional breeding. Furthermore, as Professor Kraemer points out, the Attorney General's interpretation of the precautionary principle is flawed. If there are uncertainties in regard to the safety of organisms in the context of new techniques of genetic engineering, the regulation requires investigation of

these risks. These rules have to be applied at EU level and cannot – contrary to the opinion of the Attorney General – be left to up to individual EU member state regulation. Major loopholes in EU GMO regulation might emerge if the EU Court of Justice follows the opinion of the Attorney General. If this is the case, Testbiotech demands that political decision makers must take action to, for example, prevent uncontrolled imports or releases of genetically engineered organisms into the environment.

Testbiotech emphasises that the assessment of the new methods of genetic engineering is not only a question of legalities. From a biological point of view, the risks and processes of genome editing are different from those of conventional breeding, even if no genes are transferred across the species. To explain these differences, Testbiotech is today publishing two short briefings on the differences between CRISPR/Cas and conventional breeding using mutagenesis.

Further information:

Legal dossier drawn up by Professor Ludwig Kraemer: https://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/2161

Briefings on CRISPR/Cas and Mutagenesis: https://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/2158

The statement of the Attorney General: http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsftext=&docid=198532&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=779174

Greening the CAP: not yet environmentally effective

Source: https://ieep.eu/

Payments designed to encourage farmers to "go green" are unlikely to enhance the Common Agricultural Policy's environmental and climate-related performance significantly, according to a new report from the European Court of Auditors. The auditors found that the new payments added more complexity to the system but had led to changed farming practices on only about five per cent of EU farmland.

Greening is a new type of direct payment introduced with the 2013 reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It was designed to reward farmers for having a positive impact on the environment which would otherwise not be rewarded by the market. It is the only direct payment whose main stated objective is environmental.

The auditors examined whether greening was capable of enhancing the CAP's environmental and climate performance in accordance with EU objectives. They conducted interviews with the authorities in five Member States: Greece, Spain (Castile and Leon), France (Aquitaine and Nord-Pas-de-Calais), the Netherlands and Poland.

The auditors found that the European Commission had not developed a complete intervention logic for greening payments. Nor did it set clear, sufficiently ambitious environmental targets for greening to achieve. Furthermore, the budget allocation for greening is not justified by the policy's delivery of environmental and climate-related objectives. They also found that greening was unlikely to provide significant benefits for the environment and climate, mainly because a significant share of the practices subsidised would have been undertaken anyway without the payment. The auditors estimate that greening led to changes in farming practices on only around five per cent of EU farmland.

Finally, they found that the policy's results were unlikely to justify the significant complexity which greening adds to the CAP. Part of this results from overlaps between greening and other CAP environmental requirements.

The auditors recommend that the Commission develop a complete intervention logic for the CAP's contribution to EU environmental and climate objectives in the next CAP reform. In its proposals for the reform, the Commission should follow the following principles:

•farmers should only have access to CAP payments if they comply with a set of basic environmental norms. Penalties for non-compliance should be sufficient to act as a deterrent;

•agricultural programmes to address environmental and climate needs should include performance targets and funding which reflect the costs incurred and the income lost as a result of activities going beyond the environmental baseline;

•when Member States can choose among options for implementing the CAP, they should have to

demonstrate that their selected options are effective and efficient in achieving policy objectives.

Special Report No 21/2017: "Greening: a more complex income support scheme, not yet Agricoltura" in Italy, an award given to farms using innovative agricultural methods. Source: environmentally effective" is available on the ECA website (www.eca.europa.eu) in 23 EU languages.

Genetic Analysis of Busha Cattle

Busha cattle is one of the most endangered autochthonous cattle breeds in SE Europe. There are only small flocks that live isolated in the Balkan countries. As part of the FAO supported transnational project BushaLive of the SAVE Foundation Ivica Medugorac, Head of the Population Genomics Veterinary Research Unit of the Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, for the first time recorded the genetic diversity of this population and compared it with other European cattle breeds. The study is published in the latest issue of the journal "Molecular Ecology".

In collaboration with colleagues in SE Europe, the LMU researcher analysed DNA samples from 1828 animals of 60 different cattle breeds and strains. 350 genome-wide genotyped Busha cattle from seven Balkan countries are divided in 14 strains, but are part of a metapopulation. The genetic analyses show that Busha cattle contribute significantly to the genetic diversity of the worldwide cattle population. "The Busha cattle are unique, barely selected and therefore valuable for sustainable animal breeding. Their conservation is of great importance for the genetic and functional diversity of cattle worldwide," says Ivica Medugorac.

Busha cattle are among the world's smallest cattle and are considered as robust. They are extensively kept in Southeastern Europe as suppliers of milk and meat. In the study, the authors developed a model for a Busha cattle cross-border conservation program, which is also applicable to other domesticated and captive populations (zoos).

I. Medugorac, J.Ramljak et al.: Conservation of a domestic Metapopulation. In: Molecular Ecology 2018)

ERFP Working Group "In situ Conservation"

The European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources launched a working group on in situ conservation. Overall goal is the improvement of the in situ conservation (on-farm conservation) and valorisation of AnGR to provide a base for their sustainable use. Experiences on different initiatives with sharing of information among countries about implemented and planned activities related to on-farm conservation, success stories and projects need to be exchanged. The group will review legal conditions and financial support measures in order to optimize their implementation in on-farm conservation strategies. The WG will also support the on-farm conservation efforts for transboundary breeds as well as the promotion of the utilization of rare breeds and respective R&D activities to relevant stakeholders, for value chains and landscape management, the identification of "added value"-arguments (e. g. cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, ecosystem services, local marketing, organic agriculture). Approaches for a better integration of in situ and ex situ conservation activities in Europe need to be elaborated and promoted together with the WG "Ex situ conservation". https://www.rfp-europe.org/working-groups/

Last but not Least: Bill Gates Is Working with Geneticists to create the "Perfect" Cow

Bill Gates has donated a huge sum of money in order to create a 'super' cow that can cope with extreme temperatures along with producing high quantities of milk, as compared to a normal cow. An Edinburgh-based nonprofit organization Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines (GAL-Vmed) received $40 million donated by Microsoft founder Bill Gates, in order to carry out genetic research to produce a genetically engineered cow. Talking to The Times, Gates said, "You can have a cow that is four times as productive with the same survivability."

Geneticists aim to make this cow by combining traits from European and African cow breed and Gates desires to help in creating this perfect cow that can produce as much milk as a European cow but be able to withstand heat as well as an African cow. However, it is still not clear how will these cows be created yet, Gates formerly suggested to create them through artificial insemination.

As per Business Insider, climate scientists have previously warned that cows and dairy products can lead to further environmental degradation but Gates, on the contrary, believes that they can help lessen global poverty and starvation.

Source:
http://www.brecorder.com/2018/01/30/396135/bill-gates-donates-40m-to-make-a-super-cow/

We wish you happy Easter Holidays
The SAVE Foundation Team