SAVE e-News 1/2019
Safeguard for **A**gricultural **V**arieties in **E**urope
The quarterly electronic information service of the SAVE Foundation

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Persecuted, ostracized and yet loved

Concord (former Ripatella) – Grapes. Photo: Wikipedia

When searching for new wine delicacies, gourmets often come across “direct carriers”. This refers to unrefined vine varieties, which are not grafted onto a different root stock. However, the use of root-resistant varieties is not unproblematic. In the case of vines, the legal situation is complicated and almost the subject of a cultural struggle.

The vine is one of the oldest crops. The range of varieties is correspondingly large. And accordingly widespread were the vines. Historical drawings show much larger growing areas in most European countries than today. No wonder: water used to be polluted. That's why even children drank wine. But at that time all the vines of the European species (vitis vinifera) were direct carriers. Then from America not only potatoes, corn, tomatoes or pumpkins came, but also the disease phylloxera (Daktulosphaira vitifoliae). Around 1860, the neozoon occurred for the first time in Europe. By World War I, most European wine-growing areas had been decimated or destroyed. Although phylloxera is an opportunistic pest, where monocultures exist, it causes great damage, especially root radicles (radicicola). The apparent solution of the problem also came from the Americas: sufficient Phylloxera tolerance root-stocks (Vitis riparia, Vitis berlandieri, Vitis rupestris, Vitis cinerea or their hybrids produced therefrom) are used. These rootstocks process nurseries with the native vines

(Vitis vinifera). Thus, the reproductive cycle of phylloxera can be interrupted. The rootstocks are therefore used wherever phylloxera has occurred.

Uhudler Hochkogel Austria. Source: www.eltendorf.at/uhudlerinfo.html

However, some winegrowers worked from the beginning with the resistant American grapes and developed them further. But the juice and the fermented wine has a different taste. In Southern Switzerland, they are grown as Americano and also vinified. The German Swiss epithet "Chatzeseicherli" (cat piss), however, indicates that the wine is a matter of taste. Experts speak of the unwanted "Foxton" in taste and bouquet. The continued breeding of American direct carriers yielded wines that enjoyed a growing fan base. In Austria, the crossed successors of the direct carrier grapes from America are called Uhudler. Although the Uhudler has an intense aroma, it also bears some "Foxton". You either love it or hate it. The different, and now improved, direct carrier varieties are called Noah, Isabella, Elvira, Concord, Jacques, Herbemont, Clinton and Delaware. They are sturdy and inexpensive. Their advantage: they need hardly be treated against Peronospora (downy mildew) and Oidium (powdery mildew, Uncinula necator).

Most winegrowers use the American vines only as a base to graft the more or less common varieties. But how did the degradation of American varieties come about? Apparently, this has quality reasons or it is a product of the classic wine-growing lobbying. In the 1930s, the simple and cheap wines of these varieties were among the most popular drinks in France and competed seriously the precious wines. The prices dropped into the cellar. A ban on American vines was supposed to calm the situation. Only communists and trade unionists fought against it.

Winegrowers lobbyists began to spread rumours: the direct carriers have a high proportion of fusel oils or methanol and are harmful to health. Therefore, even before the Second World War, a ban on transplanting direct bearer varieties was issued in Austria. Where there were still plantings, the trade in wine was limited. It was only allowed to be used as a "house wine". After the glycol scandal in 1985, the term "house wine" was deleted. Direct carrier wines were now completely illegal. However, only until 1992. Since then, the Uhudler may be produced again and sold in eight Burgenland communities. The regulation for the trademarked wine is valid until 2030. Officially, the European Union took over the French ban in the 1980s. The EU regulation on the market organization for wine from 2013 therefore lists the American grape varieties for which a classification for the wine production is not possible. Furthermore, although it is said in Article 24 (paragraph 3) that for scientific purposes, the cultivation of all varieties is possible.

Logo of the Uhudler association in Austria: www.uhudlerverein.at

However, this is no legal basis for the ten percent of wines made from unlisted grapes. The vines are on Greek islands, in Cyprus, in certain regions of Portugal, Slovenia, Hungary, Italy or Spain. But even in small areas of Germany and as mentioned Switzerland and Austria have preserved root-like grapes. Although the Uhudler got a reprieve until 2030, the first wine-makers are being asked to clear their vineyards. But Meanwhile, SAVE members Arche Noah, Pro Specie Rara and the French organization "fruits oublié" are also opposing the "discrimination of grape varieties".

Scrapie resistance in the native Hungarian Cikta sheep

András Gáspárdy and Endre Kovács, Dagene research

Cikta rams Duna-Dráva Nationalpark

Scrapie in small ruminants prevails all over the world. The scrapie as a generally lethal infectious, notifiable disease caused by a prion, and is manifested in a degenerative change of the brain substance. The pathogenic isoform of that cellular protein (PrPSc) is not broken down at the cell membrane by the enzyme Proteinase K, compared to the normal (PrPC), and they multiply indefinitely, thus destroying all cells.

The EU regulation No 999/2001 lays down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of contagious spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) in sheep.

In accordance with state regulations, suitable brain tissue samples have been collected since 2005 for prion examinations of slaughtered, died or culled animals (infected herds).

Our aims were to determine the prion haplotypes and genotypes against scrapie in the Cikta Sheep as the Hungarian descendant of the Zaupel Sheep and to compare them to the results from 10 years ago in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of a prevention program introduced at that time.

MJKSZ employees collected biological samples (ear cartilage tissue) during the identification of the lambs using TypiFixTM. Then the samples were sent to the Agrobiogen GmBH Laboratory for typing.

The table below shows the distribution of the haplotypes from current years (2013 to 2015), where the most frequent (74.93 %) ARQ haplotype is followed by ARR (14.19 %) and AHQ (10.70 %). The occurrence of ARH and VRQ haplotypes is insignificant. The most resistant haplotype ARR of the current analysis, as well as in the former analysis (2004), shows much lower values than desirable. The Chi^2-test shows no significant difference ($p = 0.519$) between the current and the former results concerning the haplotypes. Only eight of the prion genotypes could be identified

The most frequent genotypes were the least favourable ARQ-bearing genotypes which comes from the highest frequency of the ARQ haplotype. These are followed by the more favourable ARR- and AHQ-bearing genotypes. The most sensitive homozygous VRQ/VRQ did not occur. With regards to the genotypes, there were no significant differences ($p = 0.083$) between the populations over time, despite knowing that the least favourable genotype increased by 10 %.

The Chi^2-test proved that the current population of Cikta Sheep is in complete Hardy-Weinberg genetic equilibrium.

Cikta ewes in the Duna-Dráva Nationalpark

Our investigation confirms that for the Cikta sheep population resistance against a scrapie infection must be rated as low. The risk classification of that breed (especially concerning haplotype ARR) has not improved. At the same time, in the other Hungarian indigenous sheep breeds (Tsigai, Milking Tsigai, White Racka, Black Racka and Gyimes Racka) the response to selection for scrapie resistance was successful.

Groups	2004	2013-15
Haplotypes: Chi^2=3.235; df=4; p=0.519	(n=138)	(n=2290)
ARR	20.29 (28)	14.19 (325)
AHQ	9.42 (13)	10.70 (245)
ARH	0.00 (-)	0.13 (3)
ARQ	70.29 (97)	74.93 (1716)
VRQ	0.00 (-)	0.04 (1)
Genotypes: Chi^2=12.564; df=7; p=0.083	(n=69)	(n=1145)
ARR/ARR	1.45 (1)	2.45 (28)
ARR/AHQ	4.35 (3)	2.79 (32)
ARR/ARH	-	-
ARR/ARQ	33.33 (23)	20.70 (237)
AHQ/AHQ	0.00 (-)	1.31 (15)
AHQ/ARH	-	-
AHQ/ARQ	14.49 (10)	15.98 (183)
ARH/ARH	-	-
ARH/ARQ	0.00 (-)	0.26 (3)
ARQ/ARQ	46.38 (32)	56.42 (646)
ARR/VRQ	-	-
AHQ/VRQ	-	-
ARH/VRQ	-	-
ARQ/VRQ	0.00 (-)	0.09 (1)+
VRQ/VRQ	-	-

Prion haplo- and genotypes (%) of Cikta Sheep and the distribution of scrapie risk groups

+ the single VRQ-carrier individual, a ewe was promptly selected

The still frequent haplotype ARQ and risk group 3 in the Cikta breed must be considered as breed specific. Their use is permitted, and the genotypes are also applied as markers for the preservation of breed diversity.

Owing to the elimination programme, the proportion of scrapie-resistant sheep (mostly in intensive breeds) has increased worldwide, evidenced by the increasing frequency of the ARR haplotype. However, in breeds other than the indigenous Hungarian breeds we may encounter even worse and unsatisfactory results.

A gradual selection for resistant individuals and for resistant rams should be associated with a reduction in the possible incidence of scrapie. On the other hand, the maintenance of productivity and genetic diversity must also be considered. Some investigations revealed that individuals of improved mutton type carrying the ARR haplotype have a lower daily gain than those without ARR. Others concluded that ARR heterozygotes should be chosen first before the beginning of a selective conservation programme, and not all the individuals of undesirable genotypes should be rejected from breeding to avoid the diminishing diversity of autochthonous sheep breeds.

More information is available in the following articles:

Kovács, E.; S. Mitro; K. Tempfli; P. Zenke; Á. Maróti-Agóts; L. Sáfár; Á. Bali Papp and A. Gáspárdy: A specific selection programme is required in the autochthonous Cikta Sheep which is endangered by own frequent ARQ prion haplotype? Landbauforsch - Appl Agric Forestry Res., 67:3/4, 141-146, 2017

Gáspárdy, A.; V. Holly; P. Zenke; Á. Maróti-Agót; L. Sáfár; Á. Bali Papp and E. Kovács: The response of prion genic variation to selection for scrapie resistance in Hungarian indigenous sheep breeds. Acta Vet Hung, 66:4, 562–572, 2018

Global seed companies and the pragmatic agrobiodiverse portfolio

Seed companies are often seen as the nemesis of agricultural biodiversity. At the same time, farmers around the world, large and small, are in dire need of good quality seed to produce the food needed for 9 to 10 billion people. What is the state of the balance between agrobiodiversity, world food production, and the seed industry? The Global Access to Seeds Index 2019, published on 28 January 2019, provides some insights on this dilemma.

The Index takes stock of to what extent, and how, the seed industry provides good quality seed of suitable crops and varieties to smallholder farmers – the base of the world's agricultural pyramid.

Overall, 13 leading global seed companies were found to address climate change and nutrition needs, but to reach only around 10% of the world's small farmers. Lack of crop diversity is a major constraint; hybrid seed dominates while legumes are largely ignored.

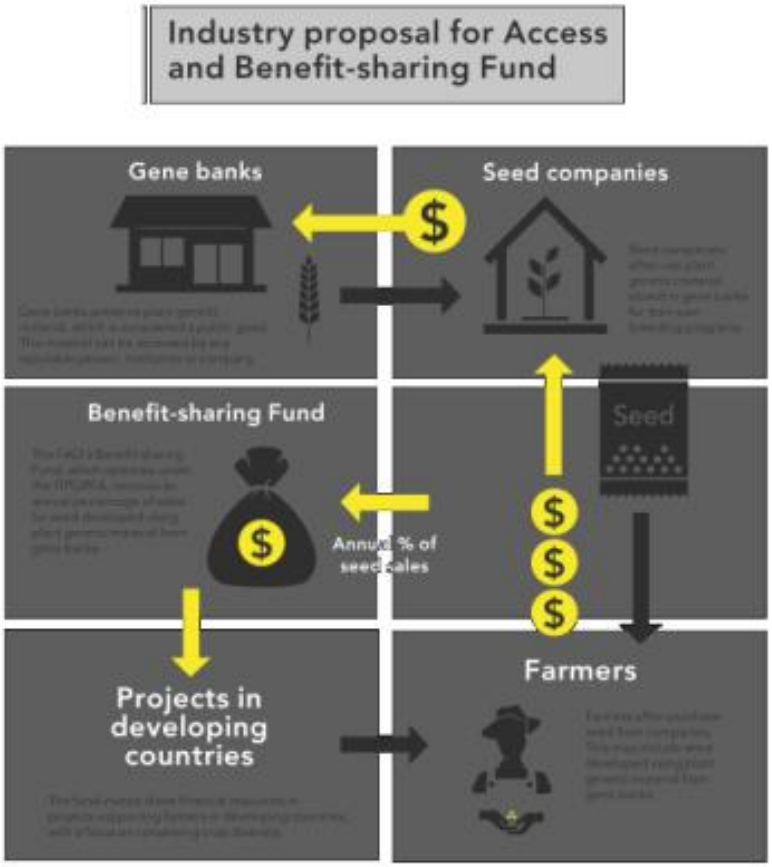
Companies have diverse portfolios

The Access to Seeds Index investigated whether companies sell major field crops and vegetables that are important for food and nutrition security and require at least annual replanting. Companies were found to develop and market varieties of many such crops, but with a very clear gap for dry legumes. Not one company was found to market groundnut, pigeonpea or cowpea, and only single companies have dry bean and chickpea in their portfolio.

About half of the companies invest in local crops, providing professional quality seed and/or setting up breeding programs. Most local crops – 15 – were found in company portfolios in South and Southeast Asia; there were only two such crops in Latin American portfolios. East-West Seed, across the world, with 14 local crops, and Limagrain with seven local crops in its portfolio, are leading in investments in agrobiodiversity through local crops. Yardlong bean can be called a 'global-local' crop, since it is being sold in all four regions, and by three companies.

As far as variety development is concerned, in addition to yield, companies give very high priority to breeding for local adaptation through breeding for tolerance to abiotic stress and pest and disease resistance. But fewer than half breed for local tastes and preferences.

Global seed companies contribute to formal genetic resources conservation



To a large extent, companies are actively involved in developing workable global Access and Benefit Sharing arrangements and have suitable track and trace systems. Most collaborate with CGIAR in genetic resources matters. A majority have active 'in-kind' collaborations, for example through testing and multiplication of (local) genebank materials.

Some have made considerable financial donations to the Plant Treaty's Benefit Sharing Fund and/or the Global Crop Diversity Trust. But no company was found to support in situ conservation efforts or community genebank initiatives.

Companies are flexible on intellectual property when it concerns small farmers

Most companies support the breeders' exemption under plant variety protection regulations, allowing varieties to be used by other breeders. Also, most companies do not block on-farm seed saving of their commercial varieties, with several being particular lenient when it concerns smallholder farmers. However, a focus on developing hybrids, as opposed to ensuring the availability of OPVs, effectively restricts the practice. Only East-West Seed, Advanta, Sakata and Limagrain have a company policy to sell OPVs in addition to hybrids because of their smallholder farmer clientele.

Agrobiodiversity is on company radar screens, but…

The global companies studied were found to take agrobiodiversity seriously, both expressed by company portfolios and by the sector's willingness to contribute to ABS, its recognition of the breeder's exemption and – with some clear reluctance – its respect for non-commercial on-farm seed saving. But obviously there are gaps. There is a clear lack of interest in in situ and community conservation of genetic resources, showing that companies prefer to stay on one side of the line between formal and informal genetic resources conservation activities. And companies are shying away, probably presently for good commercial reasons, from legumes.

This story isn't finished yet. What is the contribution of regional and local seed companies to conservation and use of agrobiodiversity? The final synthesis report of the Access to Seeds Index 2019, that will bring insights together across regions, and across global, regional and local companies, will be released in May 2019. So watch this space for further updates, and in the meantime keep checking out the Access to Seeds Index website. www.accesstoseeds.org/index/global-seed-companies

Posted on: Agricultural Biodiversity Weblog

https://agro.biodiver.se/author/luigi/ by Luigi Guarino

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Kosovo Sheep: Rescue the last Remnants

Kosovo Sheep ***Foto: S. Gill***

As a part of a larger EU project in the frame of EuropeAid a livestock breeding component to provide technical assistance to the MAFRD (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development), Department of Livestock Breeding, the four native breeds of Pramenka sheep in Kosovo have been described. Individuals and groups identified and possible strategies for conservation with focus on the supply chain of products were discussed with stakeholders and a practical and methodological framework for the characterisation of the breeds were developed. In the case of two of the sheep breeds, with rapidly declining populations, the situation has become critical - the Balusha and Kosovo sheep - and there is a significant threat of not being able to sustain their genetic viability unless there is intervention of experts and academics to formulate a structured recovery programme. For the Bardhoka and Sharri sheep the population numbers are higher, however, the continuing decline of their commercial value will also begin to threaten these unique gene pools and cultural heritage.

The Pramenka sheep breeds are found in many strains throughout the Balkans and have been adapted especially to regions where livestock breeding is difficult. The sheep sector in Kosovo is under high economic pressure. For the native Pramenka sheep breeds this means a dramatically declining population number. SAVE already reported about that situation in the eNews 3/2017.

The declining sheep numbers and with that lower grazing activities have also an effect on the environment. There are large areas of mountain pastures which have been developed over the centuries by pastoral grazing. Without sheep they are rapidly changing.

The Kosovo Sheep was bred in the northern plain parts of Kosovo. Today the numbers of individuals are estimated to be around 1000. the long tailed black tailed and black headed Kosovo Sheep show characteristics of Uniform Wool Breeds commonly referred to as Ruda sheep with origins from the Romanian Tsigai Sheep or Kivircik Sheep of Tur-key . They are different from the other Valachian (Zackel) strains of sheep found in Kosovo. The weight of the ewes is about 30-35 kg, rams 50-60 kg, the height at withers is around 66-70cm, rams are horned, ewes are polled. Usually pure black, there are also speckle faced sheep occurring.

The Kosovo sheep is classified as a triple purpose sheep for meat, milk and wool. But the milk performance is with 180 days and a total lactation yield around 100kg low in comparison with the other native sheep breeds. Like in other European countries the wool price is low and accordingly the wool production is of low importance.

Mixed herd of Ruda / Kosovo Sheep ***Foto S. Gill***

There is no flock found where only Kosovo sheep are kept. This increases the danger of crossbreeding rapidly. Therefore, it is important to create a separate flock with pureberd animals as a nucleus flock. The interest of farmers to keep these sheep needs to be increased through subsidies like in other European countries. The situation shows that a conservation flock is likely to be all that will survive of this strain, it is therefore essential that in the near future as many founder animals be collected together as possible.

A group of 25 males and 50 females is recommended as a minimum for a live conservation programme (FAO). This has been calculated to result in a loss of less than 1% of the possible genetic variation present in the original population. A target however would be a larger flock of more than 100 females and 25 males. The optimal strategy for conservation will be to increase the population size of a nucleus group within the flock and with participating farmers as soon as possible. A significant challenge will be the identification of a Kosovo sheep ram. During farm visits a Kosovo ram has not been found. Identification and (cryo-)conservation of males is a high priority if a flock can be identified in Kosovo.

Kosovo Sheep ***Foto: S. Gill***

SAVE is already engaged with the most endangered Balusha sheep (only about 500 animals are left and there is only one bigger flock existing) in Kosovo. With a very low budget this year the first genetic investigations with blood samples will take place and according to the results a herdbook breeding will be established.

There are still committed people in Kosovo who are working hard to preserve their cultural heritage, even if their financial resources are very limited.

Cherni Vit Green Cheese – nearly extinct

The village Cherni Vit in Teteven Municipality, Lovech Province in the northern center of Bulgaria is working to revive its nearly extinct mouldy cheese.

Three elements are necessary to make the rare delicacy known as Cherni Vit green cheese: the milk of the local goat the Bulgarian screwhorn longhair goat and Tetevenska sheep, a wooden cask, and the distinct moist air of its namesake Bulgarian village in the Balkan Mountains.

Shepherds in Cherni Vit have been making sheep's milk cheese for centuries, but they haven't always

Teteven Sheep ***Foto: mapio.net***

coveted its now-famous coating. After soaking in brine-filled wooden barrels (it must be wood; plastic containers don't produce the same effect), the cheese naturally develops a blue-green mould once it's exposed to air. Originally, many thought this meant the cheese had gone bad, so they scraped off the mould or discarded the cheese entirely. Over time, however, villagers developed a taste for the cheese, whose flavour starts as somewhat sharp and nutty, then intensifies as it matures. It becomes sharpest at about one year old.

In the late 20th century, Cherni Vit cheese (bulg. = zeleno sirene) almost became extinct. Shepherds who knew how to make the unique cheese were dying and no new cheesemakers were taking up the practice. But in the 2000s, representatives from the Slow Food Foundation helped to revive the endangered delicacy. Even the mayor of Cherni Vit tried his hand at making the village's specialty. Today, there are a few places in the village where you can sample the cheese. The cheese also has a protein

Bulgarian screwhorn longhair goat. ***Foto: Semperviva***

content that is different from that of cheeses from other Bulgarian regions. However, due to current EU regulations that prevent direct sale from small farms, it is not commercially sold.

The process of producing Cherni Vit cheese begins in the summer (after Saint George's Day), when sheep are taken by shepherds to high mountain pastures. When the sheep are brought back in September or October, the cheese, already placed in wooden casks, is stored in humid cellars in the village, at a temperature of 10 to 12 °C (50 to 54 °F). Mould develops on the surface of the cheese only after the casks are opened.

The cheese itself is not always green, as the name would suggest; the colour, like the flavour, changes as it matures.

Source: https://www.atlasobscura.com

Newsflash

SAVE Meeting 2019: Experience Diversity!

Exactly 10 years after a SAVE meeting took place in Belgium, the SAVE community will meet again 2019 in Belgium for the annual meeting. This time the venue is Vaalbeek, a small village between Leuven (6 km) and Brussels (30 km) and near the airport (25 km). The SAVE Annual Meeting takes place in "La Foresta", a former Franciscan monastery, which was converted at the end of the last century into a European center for conferences, training and contemplation. The place is well equipped for organizing events like the SAVE meeting and not expensive.
The SAVE annual meeting takes place from Sunday 25th August to Wednesday 28th August. It starts with a visit to the 23rd Living Heritage Expo in Provinciaal domein Puyenbroeck in the community of Wachtebeke (near Ghent) organized by the Belgian SAVE partner Steunpunt Levend Erfgoed.
On 26 and 27 August, the SAVE committees (Council of Cooperation Partners and Board of Directors meeting) and the SAVE Seminar will be held.
Since La Foresta is close to the Louvain University Faculty of Agriculture and Bioengineering, we plan to visit the Genebank for "Brussels Endives" and probably also the Banana Genebank, which is the largest in the world.
See https://lrd.kuleuven.be/en/news/leuven-houses-the-worlds-largest-banana-genebank
A visit to a breeder of the dual-purpose cattle breed "Belgian blue white", a goat's milk farm as well as a breeder of the natural grazing Ardennes sheep and Kempens cattle is planned. Together with "Nationale Boomgaardenstichting" a collection of rare fruits will be visited.
A varied program awaits numerous participants!

More Information: office@save-network.com or SLE, Staf ven den Bergh: staf.vandenbergh@sle.be

SAVE Meeting in Belgium in 2009

New Bioversity International's Director General

The Boards of Trustees of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) named Juan Lucas Restrepo as Bioversity International's Director General and CEO-Designate of the Alliance between the Centres on 27 November 2018. Restrepo, who is currently director of Agrosavia, the Colombian Corporation for Agricultural Research, the country's largest agricultural research organization, started his new assignment based in Rome on 1 March 2019.

Restrepo is a seasoned leader who brings decades of experience and a proven record of accomplishment improving the capacity, quality, effectiveness and impact of agricultural research-for-development organizations. During the dialogue with the Boards, both Chairs and the elected Director General/CEO-Designate showed their appreciation to the Directors General of Bioversity International and CIAT, as well as all their staff members for their commitment to building the Alliance.

Bioversity International and CIAT are world leaders in research for agriculture, nutrition, the environment, biodiversity and technology. The Alliance between Bioversity International and CIAT will combine decades of research expertise to develop and deploy innovative, demand-driven, evidence-based and scalable solutions for sustainable food systems and improved land management. The research-for-development agenda will harness agrobiodiversity and explore frontiers of the digital and genomic revolutions.

Through the Alliance, the Centres will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement, Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Bonn Challenge, among other critical global objectives. The Alliance will deepen the Centres' involvement in regional and national research-for-development agendas in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Working with government agencies, the private sector, multilateral institutions, development banks, non-governmental organizations and civil society, the Alliance will deliver greater impact.

The Alliance's strategic presence in Rome will strengthen partnerships with the Rome-based UN organizations, especially the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme.

Different Mineral Concentration in Historic Tomatoes

Tomato (Solanum lycopersicum) fruit quality and yield are highly dependent on adequate uptake of nutrients. Potassium, magnesium and calcium are essential elements that influence fruit quality traits such as colour, uniformity of ripening, hollow fruit, fruit shape, firmness and acidity. Sodium is not an essential element for tomato and can detrimentally compete with the absorption of potassium and calcium. Daily intakes of potassium, magnesium and calcium in human diets are typically below healthful levels, while sodium intake is often excessive. The objective of this study was to compare 52 diverse commercially important varieties of tomato for concentrations of potassium, magnesium, calcium and sodium in fruits. The tomatoes were produced in replicated plots in Geneva, NY in 2010 and 2011. Multiple fruits per plot were harvested vine-ripe, homogenized and assayed for cations. Analysis of variance showed significant differences among the 52 varieties for all four traits, i.e. cation concentrations (df = 51, P < 0.0001–0.0034) and no significant differences between years for any trait (df = 1, P = 0.3432–0.6770). Factor analysis showed a

strong interrelationship between potassium and magnesium that was independent of calcium and sodium. Potassium and magnesium were highly significantly correlated with each other (r = 0.64, P < 0.0001). No other correlations between pairs of traits were observed. Results supported a genetic basis for potassium, magnesium, calcium and sodium concentrations that was consistent across environments (i.e. years). Results can contribute to the development of cultivars with favourable cation profiles in terms of human health and fruit quality.

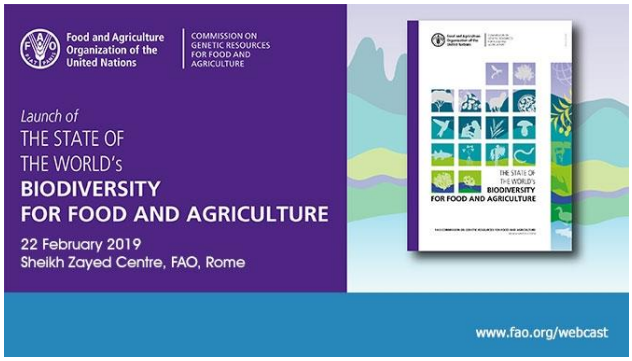
Source: Labate, J.A., Breksa Iii, A.P., Robertson, L.D., King, B.A., King, D.E. 2018. Genetic differences in macro-element mineral concentrations among 52 historically important tomato varieties. Plant Genetic Resources: Characterization and Utilization, 1-9.: www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=345210

New CEO at RBST in the UK

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) is the national organization that monitors, rescues and promotes the domestic livestock breeds in the UK.

Christopher Price has been the new chief executive officer at RBST since February 2019. Previously, he worked for CLA (the membership organization for land, property and business owners in rural England and Wales) where he served as Director of Policy and Advice. With his extensive knowledge and understanding of key issues, landscape and agriculture, he brings to the role a clear under-standing of the challenges and issues of animal husbandry and livestock farming of traditional livestock breeds. SAVE-Foundation congratulates Christopher and looks forward to a good cooperation with the RBST.

State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture



Biodiversity that supports agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture is vital to efforts to meet humanity's growing need for food, feed, fibre and fuel while protecting the planet for future generations.

The first report on "The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture" is an essential step in creating a comprehensive picture of the state and use of this biodiversity, thus providing a strong foundation for the design of effective interventions towards more sustainable, resilient food systems.

Five years in the making, the report engaged over 175 authors and reviewers, who based their analysis on 91 country reports prepared by over 1,300 contributors. This global and participatory report is a milestone in the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity.

The report prepared under the guidance of FAO's Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture details the many benefits biodiversity brings to food and agriculture; examines how farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers and fisherfolk have shaped and maintained biodiversity; identifies major drivers of both positive and negative trends, and presents trends in biodiversity-friendly production practices.

Download: http://www.fao.org/state-of-biodiversity-for-food-agriculture/en/

Crossing Boundaries: Legal and policy arrangements for cross-border pastoralism

In many countries, pastoralism has historically been practiced in areas that are now partitioned by international boundaries. This is a major barrier to sustainable resource management and to pastoral development. However, there are examples from around the world of efforts to facilitate transboundary movements and transboundary ecosystem management by pastoralists. This publication examines how pastoral mobility has been impacted by the creation of unnatural boundaries within their landscapes and how societies cope with these constraints through legal or informal arrangements.

Securing transboundary mobility for sustainable pastoralism

New FAO-IUCN publication reviews legal and policy arrangements for cross-border pastoralism

Mobility is the key strategy of pastoralists to adapt to variable resources and manage uncertainties found in the rangelands. In doing so, they may move within national territories or across borders, following fixed or flexible routes. At the same time, this strategy allows rangelands to regenerate and provides a host of environmental benefits across a large area.

Despite the many benefits of pastoral mobility, several government initiatives tend to restrict this movement, especially across country borders. This leaves pastoralists vulnerable to growing human-induced and climate-related risks such as rapid population growth, shifting land-use, droughts and floods, and climate change effects. This, in turn, could lead to livelihood insecurity, conflict, lack of social services and food insecurity.

Jointly published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Crossing borders: Legal and policy arrangements for cross-border pastoralism, provides recommendations to enable and secure transboundary mobility for sustainable pastoralism. It provides an overview of several legal and policy mechanisms that can support safe and sustainable transboundary movements.

http://www.fao.org/3/ca2383en/CA2383EN.pdf

Last but not least

Stop sponsoring the EU Presidency!

Foodwatch strongly criticizes Coca-Cola's partnership with the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In an open letter foodwatch called on the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, and the Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă, to immediately stop Coca-Cola's partnership with the Romanian EU-Presidency.
It is completely inappropriate that in a time of major obesity problems and additional disease burdens such as type 2 diabetes, the Presidency of the Council of the EU is sponsored by Coca-Cola. In addition, this kind of relationship between major EU institutions and corporate interests further undermines public trust in European politics and decision makers, whereas we need on the contrary to reinforce transparency and democracy in Europe. foodwatch asks the EU-presidency and the President of the EU Council to put in place a policy with clear rules for future Presidencies in order to ensure that potential conflicts of interest are effectively and transparently avoided. The consumer organization launched an online petition against Coca-Cola's sponsoring. This petition can be signed on the French, German, Dutch and English website (https://www.foodwatch.org)