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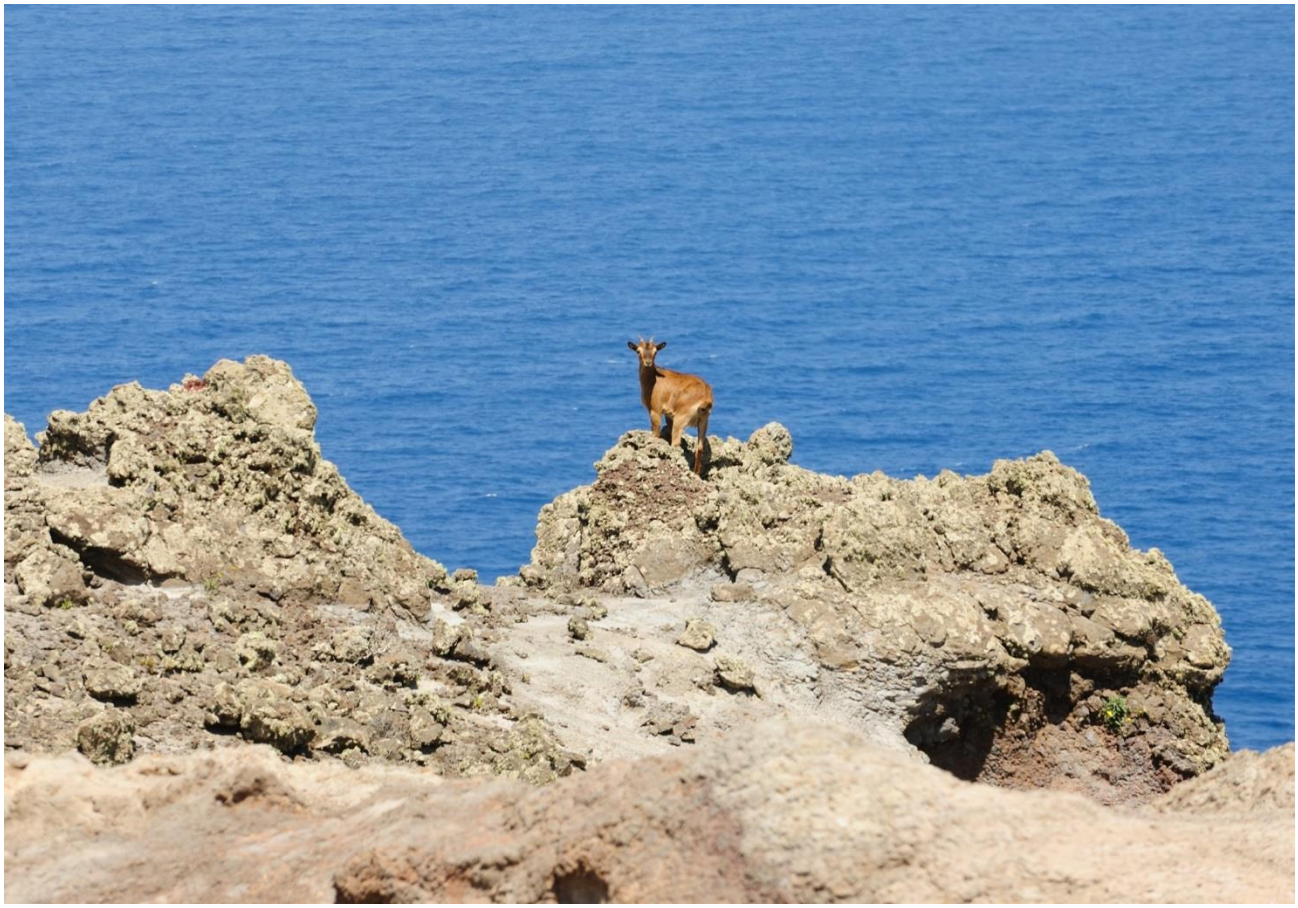
Feral Goat populations on the Atlantic Islands: The Case of Deserta Grande Goats

Christo Guiterrez, Spain



Deserta Grande. Young adult female. photo H. Reis

Feral goat populations occur on some islands in the Atlantic area. Some of them are the result of recent release of current domestic stock but other populations of feral goats are considered ancient introductions, such as the feral goats of Deserta Grande islet, one of three islands (Chao, Deserta Grande and Bugio) that form a sub-archipelago of the Autonomous Region of Madeira (Portugal).

The probably oldest introduction of goats on the Atlantic islands took place more than two thousand years ago on the Canary Islands archipelago with the arrival of the first settlers the "Guanches" who introduced the prehispanic goat, pig and sheep. Later on, other feral goat populations were introduced to Selvagem Grande islet, Deserta Grande, Bugio, Madeira and Porto Santo islands, northern atlantic Santa Maria island (Azores archipelago) and also down to the south Atlantic, Rombo islets (Cape Verde archipelago), Santa Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha islands. Some of them disappeared within the past 150 years due to intensive hunting or as a result of environmental actions to restore island habitats.

Over centuries some populations of the originally introduced prehispanic type goats survived in inaccessible mountain areas of the Canary Is-

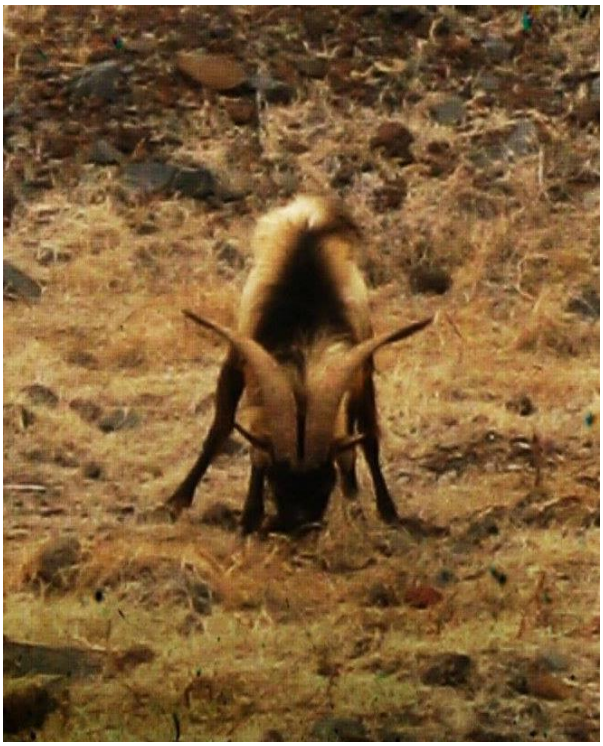
lands, but only two small populations still existed in the middle of the XX century in the "Caldera of Taburiente" on la Palma Island and Pico de la Zarza in Jandia, Fuerteventura Island. Local hunters and shepherds from la Palma island hunted the last Prehispanic type goats, whose meat was indeed highly esteemed. On Fuerteventura island a German landlord ordered the protection of "Valdomero", the remnant small feral goats of "Pico de la Zarza", for trapping and shooting in the few water points located in the cliffs. They competed for grass and water resources with the milk goat flocks and imported karakul sheep. Actual autochthonous Canary breeds are the result of a mixture of prehispanic type and new goat stocks introduced after European colonization. According to genetic characterization studies the basic haplotype of the prehispanic goat still occurs in the today Canary breeds by maternal linage.

Historic documents proved that feral goats were introduced in the Desertas islands of Madeira by Portuguese sailors in 1420. An order of the Madeiran Governors from the 18th July 1481 to buy a batch of feral bucks from the Canaries and release them on those Portuguese islands to "refresh" the existent goat population. This indicates an earlier introduction. Some feral goats were released in Selvagem Grande islet as well, it is the biggest island of Selvagens sub-archipelago located closer to the Canary Islands than Madeira. During the 20st century expeditions to Selvagens there were no reports of any feral goat viewings there. It seems as if the last feral goats were hunted by sailors and fishermen during the 19th century.

In the case of Desertas, reports about evidence of feral goats occurred over centuries but morphological description details of the animals in Deserta Grande and Bugio islet were missing. Also, local people of Madeira who went for hunting with dogs from time to time (Frutuoso G. Saudades da Terra) but did not describe the goats they hunted. Likewise, in sport magazines or geological and zoological expeditions publications descriptions were missing. Later a detailed description of the Desertas goats was made and the morphological differences between the Deserta Grande and Bugio populations were recognised. At that time Desertas were the property of the British families Cossart and Hinton who invited hunters on the way to Africa for goat-, rabbit- and even the monk seal hunting. (Country Life illustrated p 173 volume 6, December 1899):

"The goats on the Deserta Grande are of a rusty brown, with black markings on the back and shoulders. Sometimes grey goats occur. On Bugio a big deep black type occurs. The horns of the Deserta goat range from 12 - 15 inches length with a span of 15 to 18 inches, the largest on Bugio measured 25.5 inches from tip to tip, 20 inches round the curve, 16 inches from corner to corner and 7.5 inches each horn round the base. The she-goats are as slight and active as gazelles, and their small straight horns are never more than 3 or 4 inches long" (1 inch = 2.54cm).

An article from 1909 describes: "Deserta goats are brown in colour, although here and there one may meet some with a light grey buck. On Bugio there are a number of both rabbits and goats, the latter are of much larger size than those on Deserta and are of a jet black colour" (Koebel W.H.1909: Goat shooting in the islands. In: Madeira Old and New Chapter XVI p.212).



Adult male of Deserta Grande. Photo Dário Abreu

Koebel described the island adaptation, morphology and possible origin of the goats. There is some evidence of protective coloration and reversion to the wild type in the markings and colour of the Deserta goats which continues to approximate more closely to that of the rocks among which they live. Black and white animals were eliminated possibly through their conspicuousness. The goats of Desertas were usually hunted by drive-hunting. The beaters came from a village called Caniço and learned their work while hunting puffins on the cliffs. A hunted buck was 30 inch high at shoulder and of brown colour with dark forequarters and beard, a black saddle and dark line running down the back, 13 inch long horns had the spiral twist (J.B. Stat-ham 1922: Through Angola - A Coming Colony chapter I - Wild goats of the Desertas).

It is well known that dwarfism is an evolutionary response of large mammals to islands habitats where is less space and food. In a closer study of horn type, body proportions and colouration pattern of the stuffed prehispanic goats of the Canary Museum in comparison with Deserta Grande feral goat populations several similarities such as small size, similar physical proportions, shape of the horns and predominant coloration that manifest the wild allele. This suggests a common link between both populations, but also with some domestic Serrana goats from Madeira and Azores. It was generically considered that the origin of the domestic goats of the Portuguese islands were introduced from Portugal (Algarve). The Bugio black goat population is an exemption because of its size and colour. Bugio islet proves habitats for mammals only in the southern half of its territory, because of its extreme orography, lack of permanent fresh water and scarce pastures it has a capacity for not more than about eighty individuals. This raises the reasonable doubt regarding the "antiquity" of this black breed of the Bugio Islet. Actually, due to several droughts the population decreased, and fresh animals were introduced to the islands for hunting.

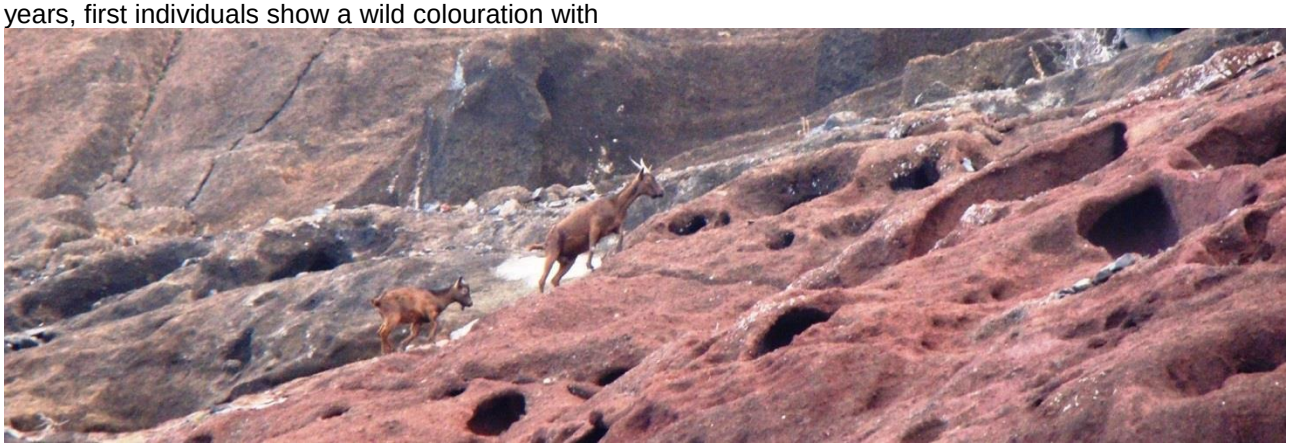
In fact, a variety of different species were introduced on Deserta but didn't survive over time, such as the introduced Mediterranean Sardinia Moufflons on Deserta Grande or hares introduced in the smallest islet Chao and Deserta Grande, chicken, cats and Guinea fowl too.

The Bugio black goat population suggests that they are like the black feral goat population introduced around 1800 in Île Europe located in the Mozambique Channel. The Bugio black goats were eradicated in 2009 as collateral effect of invasive rodents poisoning under the EU Life Project SOS Freira de Bugio. The eradication of the Île Europe black goats is "pending". That population located in the Indic Ocean where the original black and white domestic goats were introduced two hundred years ago, still a black population occurs in almost 99% of individuals. In recent years, first individuals show a wild colouration with brown and dark markings (TAAF reports). Currently, in the Mid-Atlantic islands area, only the feral brown goat population of Deserta Grande is still alive, reputed to be an ancient introduction in the Madeira Islands, regardless of its possible prehispanic origin or landrace breeds (Serrana) introduced in the past.

Such feral populations need more attention by the Institutions. On the Canary and Azores islands, local projects for recovering and standardising autochthonous breeds have been developed after first investigations in the eighties. It is very probable that Madeira island area has its specific genotypes present in local sheep, pigs, and goats. There are also varieties of cultivated plants need to be conserved.

The Madeira local domestic goats so called "Serrana" often occur as a mixture of introduced foreign and popular commercial breeds. This is a direct cause of local genotypes disappearance. The isolated feral population of Deserta Grande could represent a local genotype in the Madeira and Azores area.

Within actions to eradicate invasive species on Deserta Grande more than 900 feral goats have been shot from 2014 to 2017 (Progress Report of European Life Recover Natur Ilhas Desertas published data (31 / 8 / 2017) IFCN RAM).Recent media statements talk about approximately 200 individuals remaining to be eradicated. Several wild species are critically endangered. However, the implementation of an action protocol is needed that allows genetic studies to determine occurrences of feral populations and local varieties present in nature protected areas. A greater cooperation and understanding between institutions, Ministries of Agriculture and Environment is needed. The protection of biodiversity is a priority but also the protection of local resources and the genetic diversity of local breeds are also of great importance. Agrobiodiversity is an accepted part of biodiversity; this fact often gets forgotten.



Deserta Grande feral Goat and kid. Photo: JC Gutierrez

IPBES global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assesses the state of biodiversity and of the ecosystem services. The “Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services” was launched in May 2019. It is the most comprehensive intergovernmental report of its kind ever created, with innovative methods for evaluating evidence. Based on previous IPBES reports that were thematically or regionally focused, a Global Assessment has now been prepared. In addition, the knowledge of indigenous peoples and regional know-how were extensively included. The report has been compiled over the last three years by 145 experts from 50 countries along with contributions from a further 310 authors. It assesses the changes of the last five decades and provides a comprehensive picture of the relationship between economic growth and its impact on nature. Based on some 15,000 scientific and governmental sources, it also offers a range of scenarios for the coming decades. "Ecosystems, species, wild populations, local varieties and breeds of domesticated plants and animals are all declining or disappearing. The web of life on earth is getting smaller and more and more fraying out", Prof. Dr. Josef Settele, Leipzig, Germany, stated.

In this report also agrobiodiversity is mentioned as an important part of biodiversity. This is not a new message for the SAVE community but a very important information for the public and probable also for some decision makers. Here some highlights according agriculture and agricultural diversity:

- Globally, local varieties and breeds of domesticated plants and animals are disappearing. This loss of diversity, including genetic diversity, poses a serious risk to global food security by undermining the resilience of many agricultural systems to threats such as pests, pathogens and climate change.
- More than a third of the world's land surface and nearly 75% of freshwater resources are now devoted to crop or livestock production.
- The value of agricultural crop production has increased by about 300% since 1970, raw timber harvest has risen by 45% and approximately 60 billion tons of renewable and non-renewable resources are now extracted globally every year - having nearly doubled since 1980.
- Land degradation has reduced the productivity of 23% of the global land surface, up to US$577 billion in annual global crops are at risk from pollinator loss
- Small landholdings (less than 2 hectares) contribute approximately 30 per cent of global crop production and 30 per cent of the global food caloric supply, using around a quarter of agricultural land and usually maintaining rich agrobiodiversity.
- Based on the systematic review of about 15,000 scientific and government sources, the Report draws (for the first time ever at this scale) on indigenous and local knowledge, particularly addressing issues relevant to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.
- It is stated that more than 9% (559 of 6,190) of all domesticated breeds of mammals used for food and agriculture had become extinct by 2016, with at least 1,000 more breeds still threatened.
- Many crop wild relatives that are important for long-term food security lack effective protection, and the conservation status of wild relatives of domesticated mammals and birds is diminishing.
- The reduction of the diversity of cultivated crops, crop wild relatives and domesticated breeds mean that agroecosystems are less resilient against future climate change, pests and pathogens.

But the report is not only an assessment of the current state of biodiversity. There are also pathways shown for a transformative change towards food sustainability:

- Promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, such as good agricultural practices, agroecology, among others, multifunctional landscape planning and cross-sectoral integrated management.
- Conservation of sustainable genetic resources for agriculture including diversity of genes, varieties, cultivars, breeds, landraces and species.
- Promotion of the use of biodiversity-friendly management practices in crop and livestock production, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, including traditional management practices.

Global trends from 1970 until today: 14 of 18 categories show a decline

- Promotion of areas of natural or semi-natural habitats within and around production systems, including those that are intensively managed and restoring or reconnecting damaged or fragmented habitats.
- Improvement of food market transparency (traceability of biodiversity impacts, transparency in supply chains) through tools such as labelling and sustainability certification.
- More equity in food distribution and the localization of appropriate food systems beneficial to Nature.
- Reduction of food wastes from production to consumption.
- Promotion of sustainable and healthy diets.

The loss of biodiversity is not only an environmental issue, but also a developmental, economic, security, social and moral issue as well: www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/summary_for_policymakers_ipbes_global_assessment.pdf.

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CAP for small scale Farmers?

The current policy framework that explicitly aims to stimulate and regulate the agricultural sector in the EU is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In recent years, the focus of the CAP and wider trade policies on competitiveness and international markets has led to a high concentration of industrial production. This has a big impact on the loss of soil fertility and biodiversity, but also on the rural life and especially on small farmers.

The Commission proposal for the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027 includes €365 billion for the CAP (in current prices). This corresponds to an average share of 28.5% of the overall EU budget for the period 2021-2027. Out of this amount for the CAP, €265.2 billion is for direct payments, €20 billion for market support measures (EAGF) and €78.8 billion is for rural development (EAFRD).

In the recent publication "*More Farmers better Food. Why and how to put small-scale sustainable producers at the core of the new CAP*" Nyeleni Europe and Central Asia Platform for Food Sovereignty (https://www.eurovia.org/campaign/nyeleni) shows facts and ideas for a new CAP which is suitable to support small scale farmers. Today 93% of the EU's 10.8 million farm holdings are less than 50 ha in size and that two-thirds of the total holdings are smaller than 5 ha. But the two-pillar system of the current CAP fosters the agricultural industrial production and increasingly small farmer fall out of business. But it is small farmers, who keep agrobiodiversity. It has been mainly peasants who have bred and preserved 2.1 million crop varieties of around 7,000 domesticated species around the world. They are also responsible for domesticating livestock species, continuing to breed 8,774 varieties. The organic sector is traditionally closely connected with agrobiodiversity and increased by 25% between 2012 and 2017. Today it covers 7% of the total utilised agricultural area (UAA) in Europe.

A transition to a fairer, more sustainable and resilient food system based on food sovereignty is urgently needed if we are to overcome the environmental, social and economic challenges at hand. It is evident that the EU must carry out a radical reform of the CAP and other related policies in order to support small-scale sustainable producers. Nyeleni points out the following key areas to be addressed:

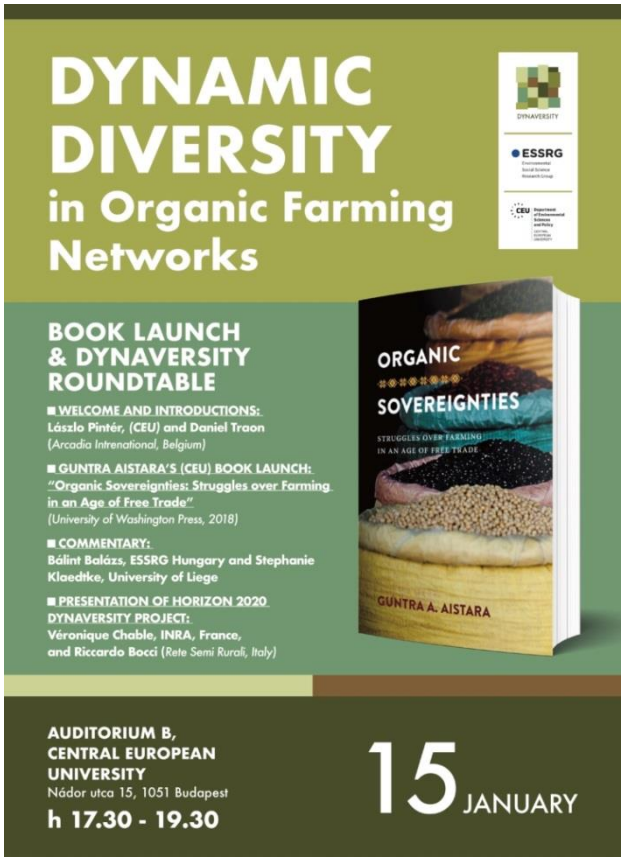
- Production and Distribution
- Sustainable consumption, diets and lifestyles
- The right to natural resources and the commons
- Democratic decision-making processes. The CAP and other relevant policies must be subject to transparent and open decision-making processes.

According to the Nyeleni report, the possibilities to engage in the ongoing CAP reform lies mainly in a good contact and discussion with the own EU member state because the proposals for the post-2020 CAP outline a structure in which individual member states will have to submit their own National Strategic Plans. Therefore, producer and civil society groups should influence the content of the CAP in their country and put small-scale sustainable producers in the spotlight.

These positions are not far away from that, what the EU CAP discussion in Brussels vote for officially. But the rules must be accepted and adopted by each member state. A good overview about the ongoing CAP reform process you can find here: http://www.arc2020.eu/cap-reform-state-of-the-play-in-april-2019.

For more information have a look at the report: www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Nyeleni-Europe-More-farmers-better-food.pdf.

Dynaversity



As already described in previous SAVE eNews, the H2020 project 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.

In January 2019 the first DYNAVERSITY annual meeting took place in Budapest, in the "Impact Hub" and at the Central Eastern University.

Terms and concepts to describe the work done by multiple actors in Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) have been defined and discussed as well as the link between in situ and ex situ conservation and possibilities for collaboration of protected areas and local farmers. The book "Organic Sovereignties Struggles over Farming in an Age of Free Trade" by Guntra A. Aistara, who is also a consortium member of the project, was launched during the meeting. The book is the first sustained ethnographic study of organic agriculture outside the United States traces its meanings, practices, and politics in two nations typically considered worlds apart: Latvia and Costa Rica. Situated on the frontiers of the European Union and the United States, these geopolitically and economically in-between places illustrate ways that international treaties have created contradictory pressures for organic farmers.

In April 2019 the exhibition "DYNAVERSITY – Plant, People and the Future of Food" started in Scandicci, Tuscany, in the new headquarter the Casa della biodiversità (House of biodiversity) of Rete Semi Rurali, a DYNAVERSITY partner. The exhibition portraits communities and people experimenting new ways to promote agrobiodiversity, combining tradition and innovation in agriculture. Under the title "Knowledge, Innovation, Heritage, Networks" 40 photographs show their work in the four thematic pathways, featuring the stories of different farm sites and promoting the value of diversity in agriculture, from the seed to the plate. The exhibition will travel across Europe during the next months. You will be kept informed on twitter #dynaversity or on http://dynaversity.eu/blog.

Photo credit: Italo Rondinella – www.italorondinella.com / DYNAVERSITY Project – www.dynaversity.eu / CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Donkeys –Mission in Nature Protection

Text and pictures: Astrid Fölling & René Reifenrath, Germany

Provence donkeys are working at a slope to freed it from bushes

The last decades have been characterized by a progressive loss of species; this has manifold reasons. Essentially through re-use, intensification of use, intensifying use and fragmentation of the remaining habitats. In addition to these obvious factors, there is a strong nutrient input through the air. This changes the species composition of habitats sustainably. Nutrient-loving species are booming, displacing formerly common species.

This development has prompted us to seek for a solution that is equally suited to our increasingly threatened pine steppe forests, species-rich dry habitats, and agricultural intensive uses in conversion. With the domestic donkeys we have come across partners who fulfil our requirements to the highest degree. However, donkeys are not generally recommended for biotope care.

The original ancestor of our modern donkey, the Nubian donkey, has been considered to be extinct or lost since the end of the last century. With its small proportions, probably the still existing Somali wild ass is the progenitor of today's donkey. They are thus probably from North-East African scree deserts. This heritage characterizes their grazing characteristics.

What donkeys like to eat

Donkeys are extremely good feed converters, they can manage with very nutrient-poor vegetation, they also absorb dry super-organisms, and trees are an important part of the diet. Plants that sheep and horses tend to avoid are preferred food for donkeys; these are, for example, most prickly plants, such as thistles, cardoons, stinging nettles, sloes, hawthorns, roses, etc. Other species (often protected species, such as orchids) are avoided. Donkeys have a different metabolism than horses. Some species that are toxic to horses are unproblematic for donkeys (e.g., privet).

The donkey droppings are extremely low in nutrients, as donkeys practically extract all nutrients from their diet. Post-pasturing with other livestock, as in sheep, is therefore not necessary. Donkeys are therefore very suitable for lowering the nutrient content of the land.

This strength is also the greatest weakness of the donkey. Animals that are standing around bored on permanent green pastures, quickly become obese with subsequent serious health problems. Donkeys are suitable for the care of dry steppe biotopes. Juicy meadows can have a negative impact on their life expectancy!

Through their behaviour (creation of rolling points and tracks) donkeys create special sites that can be colonized by annual plant species. Insects also benefit from these sites and e.g. the droppings.

Birds in turn are positively influenced by the number of insects and the compact shrub forms (breeding habitat and raised stands). Often, yellow wagtails scuttle directly between the donkey hoofs. Red-backed Shrikes and Stonechat take advantage of the bushes.

Landscaping with donkeys in suitable locations brings together several positive aspects: Good care of the areas with the promotion of species diversity, animal welfare, conservation of the donkey as a species (former forms of use are decreasing also abroad) and donkey breeds, still with us are Provence donkey, Cotentin donkey, Pyrenean donkey, German donkey and Thuringian forest donkey.

In nature conservation, donkeys have proven to be particularly effective in suppressing bush en-

croachment and problem species such as riding grass (Calamagrostis epigeios). Here, grazing from spring to flowering has proven to be very effective. The management always depends on the intended goal.

The year-round robustness in larger groups with consistent individual composition on sufficiently large areas has been proven.

Donkeys are social animals

The animals can build long-lasting friendships. Related animals should not be separated without necessity. Especially when changing to a new area this must be considered. Donkeys want to interact socially. If they can do so, they are relaxed overall, appear satisfied and balanced.

When kept in social groups on larger areas, donkeys consume more energy. They remain lean and they are much more muscular.

In a large enough area, the animals have the possibility to choose preferred locations for resting, romping, rolling, etc. Unlike in a restricted area, they are not forced to use surfaces twice (eg loo and resting area). This is shown, among other things, by the fact that donkeys in a robust condition have barely any odour on sufficiently large areas.

On large areas, donkeys can choose food according to their preference and experience. According to their experience and within the single herd, they purposefully identify poisonous and indigestible plant species. For experienced animals with a sufficient range of plants the risk of poisoning in our experience is low.

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Donkeys create open areas at certain points

Nevertheless, attention! Inexperienced animals and animals, which come from other forms of husbandry, first have to learn how to handle their "natural" environment without harm. They should first get no access to poisonous plants. In any case, be careful of green waste deposits near residential areas. Often these include yew, oleander, cherry laurel, thuja and other poisonous plants. Dead plants may not be safely evaluated by the donkeys for toxicity. These areas are to be taken out of the grazing range.

Mixed herd with young donkeys

Keeping of donkey stallions

One point that is controversially discussed in Germany is the stallion stance in social groups. Stallions, which are necessary for breeding, can also be kept in stallion herds. Otherwise they are often in solitary confinement. When keeping stallions, the following should be observed:

- animals must be trained in social interaction.
- Competing animals should have enough space to dodge attacs.
- Mares are not allowed to stand in the area.

All in all, donkey stallions are much happier in a social environment. We do not consider the individual husbandry of donkey-stallions to be species-appropriate!

Our donkeys can be kept in simple stranded fences. As a shelter they need a mobile pasture tent or trees. They use this especially in the summer to avoid the heat and the pressure of parasitic flying insects.

It is necessary to ensure a constant supply of fresh water. Donkeys do not like stale or tarnished water. We provide our animals with daily delivery. Except for salt and other minerals, the donkeys receive no additional food.

The fences and the condition of the animals must be checked at least once a day.

Our team currently includes a 13-head herd, a

4-member herd of 2 geldings and 2 strong single-breed stallions, a mixed herd of 9 socialized colts. As to the breeds: 16 Provence donkeys, 1 Cotentin donkey (guest), 1 type Provence (guest), 1 Pyrene-

Thuringian forest donkey: Stallion in the pine forest

an donkey (guest), 1 Thüringer Waldesel as well as German donkeys and mixed-breed donkeys. Very small donkeys (less than 1m) should only be used on extremely poor grazing.

Besides the grazing we do not pursue any further use of the donkeys.

In principle, it should be clear that the pure nature conservation use of donkeys is a matter of concern. At most, profit can be achieved by taking into account other forms of use (trekking, therapy, etc.). The animals must be regularly worked on by the farrier and taken care of by a veterinarian.The knowledge of donkeys and their handling should be as well known to the operators as their knowledge of natural science. In addition to pure grazing, additional manual work is usually necessary! A project that involves “just putting a few donkeys in to graze” is not good enough!

further information:

www.anl.bayern.de/fachinformationen/beweidung/7_4_eselbeweidung.htm

www.ipola.de/esel

Donkey breedatlas:
www.agrobiodiversity.net/topic_network/donkey/breedatlas_donkey.asp

Newsflash

Belgium in August: Focus on Conservation

In August this year Belgium will be on the focus of the conservation scene at all levels: The 4th IMAGE Dialogue Forum will be held on Sunday 25 August 2019, following the conference of the National Animal Genetic Resource Coordinators in Europe (ERFP) in Ghent. This time it's about "Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)". Participants of the previous ERFP conference from research and science and ministries are invited. NGOs and interested breeders and owners of traditional breeds are also expected - especially since the SAVE annual conference in Belgium begins on 25th August. The SAVE partners meet at the "Levend Erfgoed Expo" in the Provincial Domein Puyenbroeck near Ghent. The actual SAVE Annual Conference will begin just after the Dialogue Forum at the Expo. Thus, all those interested can not only enjoy the diversity of the Belgian breeds, but also participate in the 4th and last Dialogue Forum of the H2020 project IMAGE. Interested? Further information can be found here: www.save-foundation.net/en. We are looking forward to meeting you in Provicial domein Puyenbroeck!

EU budget – Call for citizen messages

The CEEweb (network of organisations in the Central and Eastern European Countries) and its partners launched a campaign for a "sustainably proof" EU budget. The EU is in the process of defining its budget for the following working period of 2021-2027. The outcome of this process is of utmost importance since it will decide all financing opportunities for every EU programme for the following 7 years. This, of course, includes environmental and sustainability budgets for the EU region. One of the elements is a collection of "citizen's messages": EU citizens give their opinion and statement on how the EU budget should be in the future. With these messages, CEEweb wants to persuade EU politicians to include sustainability proofing in the EU budget for 2021-2027. Please have a look at: www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/priority-areas/eu-budget.. Write YOUR opinion to the CEE web. As much statements they get as clearer can be the picture for the relevant EU bodies!

Currently over 76% of the EU budget is managed in partnership with national and regional authorities through a system of “shared management”, largely through 5 main funds:

- the Structural & Investment Funds ERDF for regional and urban development,
- the European Social Fund (ESF) for social inclusion and good governance,
- the Cohesion Fund (CF) – economic convergence by less-developed regions,
- the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD),
- the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).
- the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) is also under shared management and it primarily finances direct payments to farmers and measures regulating or supporting agricultural markets.

Make your voice heard in Europe and participate in this action!

Write a short message (50-100 words) on why you think the EU should spend its budget sustainably. Please send it to sustainability@ceeweb.org.

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Sowing Seeds of Change

Planting the facts in a child’s mind could make a world of difference:

In order to impart the knowledge that we have gained on to our children, FAO has produced four new guides that explain the challenges facing us as we strive for a world with zero hunger. They have been developed and written specifically for tomorrow’s adults so that they can not only study the issues but turn their own ideas into actions for a better future.

As well as discovering many different facts and figures relating to the planet’s food habits, children will learn that every single one of us needs to take action to achieve Zero Hunger, be they government official, farmer, businessman or even a school-ager like them.

http://www.fao.org/members-gateway/news/detail/en/c/1146183/.

Rare Breeds Management (FAO activity book http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5685e.pdf)

Europom 2019

Europom is a cooperation bond between several volunteer associations from various European countries. Main objectives are the conservation, the promotion and the study of regional fruit varieties.

One of the members annually organises an international meeting. Have you ever seen the smallest red apple of Europe? ever held the biggest pear? Or does the name red Summer Calville ring any bells? You can discover it all at Europom. The 2019 meeting takes place on 19. - 20. October in 3740 Bilzen, Belgium: http://www.europom.be

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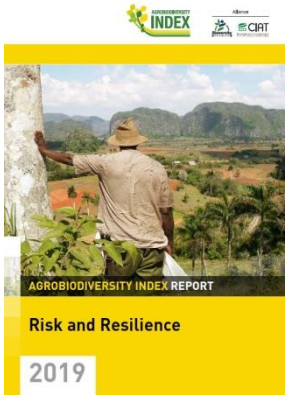
Agrobiodiversity Index Report 2019: risk and resilience



The first Agrobiodiversity Index Report assesses dimensions of agrobiodiversity in ten countries to measure food system sustainability and resilience. Countries receive an overall Agrobiodiversity Index score that indicates their progress in using and safeguarding agrobiodiversity to create sustainable food systems. They receive also individual scores for their progress for healthy diets, sustainable production and genetic resource conservation. The focus of this report is agrobiodiversity, risk and resilience. Eight thought pieces, authored by experts from around the world in diverse fields from nutrition and agricultural sustainability to seed systems and genetic resources, stimulate thinking on aspects of agrobiodiversity and risk and/or resilience. From Europe only Italy was included in this study.

Download:
https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/100820.

Bioversity International (2019) Agrobiodiversity Index Report 2019: risk and resilience. Rome (Italy): Bioversity International 182 p. ISBN: 978-92-9255-125-4

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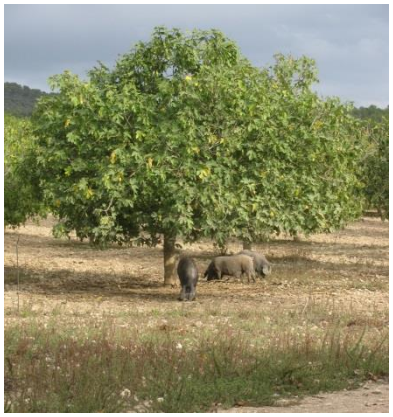
Global relationships between biodiversity and nature-based tourism in protected areas



The relationships between biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services (ES) are widely debated. However, it is still not clear how biodiversity conservation and ES interact with different strategies in and surrounding protected areas (PAs), the cornerstone for biodiversity conservation. Here, we present results on the interplay between biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism (a cultural ES), while controlling for environmental and socioeconomic factors in and surrounding terrestrial PAs worldwide. Results indicate that nature-based tourism is more frequent in PAs that are of higher biodiversity, older, larger, more accessible from urban areas and at higher elevation. High population density surrounding PAs and national income levels are also major socioeconomic factors related to nature-based tourism. Furthermore, PAs managed mainly for biodiversity conservation have nearly 35% more visitors than those managed for mixed use. Strict management for biodiversity is also associated with increased biodiversity. These results show the importance of biodiversity in addressing nature-based tourism and suggest this interrelationship could be altered by different management strategies used by PAs.Source:

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2018.09.004..

Last but not least

The most expensive Potato of the world

Bonnotte de Noirmoutier, an early potato and terroir par excellence, is anchored in the memory of Blackmoutrins. Its production starts in the 1920s and 1930s, when a smart farmer brought a small round potato variety from the Barfleur region of the English Channel. The potato is watered exclusively with seawater and fertilized with algae. This results in a very mild, salty taste.

The production was - as with so many old varieties - abandoned with the increasing mechanization of agriculture in the 1960s, because the Bonnotte is very sensitive and cannot be harvested by machine. In 1995, production resumed, with Noirmoutier Agricultural Cooperative turning to INRA in Brest to resettle seedlings. This allowed the farmers of Noirmoutier revive the traditional cultiva-tion. Today, "La Bonnotte" is a universal ambassador of Noirmoutier's Savoir-Faire. At an auction in Drouot, it was declared the most expensive potato in the world. One kilogram has already been auctioned for over 500 euros! For the last 18 years, it has been planted in February and harvested in early May. On the first Saturday in May, the farmers of Noirmoutier celebrate their most emblematic potato with the "fête de la Bon-notte" (www.ile-noirmoutier.com/fr, www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYoltCrungo,).

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