SAVE agrobiodiversity

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Dutch dual-purpose chicken

Surprisingly multifunctional

Wild fruits creative workshop

Borrowing seeds - harvesting diversity

The VEN project enters its 3rd round

Dutch dual-purpose chickens

surprisingly multifunctional

Of the more than 20 original breeds of chickens, there are some that traditionally have the dual-purpose traits, meaning that they were selected for and valued for their laying qualities as well as their high-quality meat. In the emerging nature-inclusive and multifunctional agriculture, there seems to be a great opportunity for these dual-purpose chickens. SZH asked a group of students to explore the opportunities and obstacles for Dutch dual-purpose breeds in small-scale agriculture. And as it turns out, these chickens offer many more uses than just meat and eggs.

With the help of selective breeding, chickens have been bred in all shapes and sizes. Modern, commercial chicken breeds are selected solely on the basis of their laying performance or high meat production (i.e. rapid growth). In addition, there are ornamental chickens (including bantams), often selected for feather color and other appearance. Ornamental chickens and the original breeds are nowadays mainly kept on a hobby basis. The original Dutch dual-purpose breeds, which were selected for their production characteristics until about 70 years ago, have lost their commercial function in recent decades to modern specialised chickens. Examples of dual-purpose Dutch breeds include the Chaams chicken, the Noord Hollands chicken, the Barnevelder, the Welsumer and the Twents chicken. Although these breeds are now mainly kept as a hobby, the demand for these breeds is increasing, especially from small-scale food initiatives where people are looking for a chicken with more characteristics.

Permaculture, among other things, has been used to visualize the inputs and outputs of chickens. This overview shows a wide range of products and benefits that a chicken can offer us. Eggs and meat speak for themselves. But the fact that chickens can also be used against pests is an interesting one to include. For example, chickens can effectively keep pests away from cattle or sheep. They catch snails from the fruit and vegetable beds and are also good at catching flies. Free-range chickens can therefore partly provide for themselves through the (pest) animals and the plants or crop residues they scavenge.

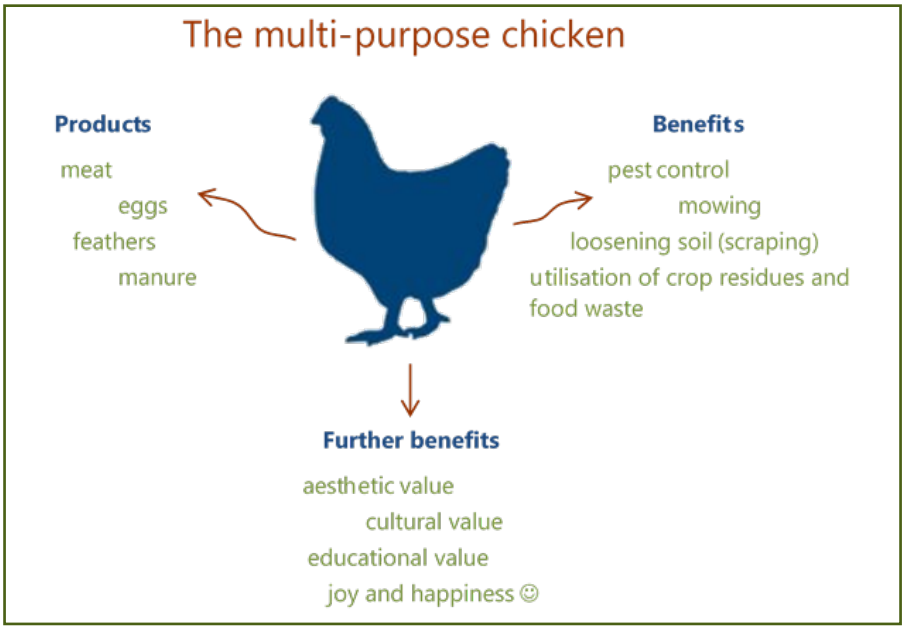
If chickens were also allowed to eat food scraps, which European regulations currently prohibit for chickens whose eggs or meat are sold, another nice purpose would be added. This would also economically be interesting because giving food waste saves feed costs. And feed costs are the main costs when keeping chickens.

The chickens of the original Dutch dual-purpose breeds are somewhat larger and less productive than modern commercial chickens. That is precisely why they seem to be able to cope well with the partial scavenging of their own feed and they are also more resistant to predation by, for example, birds of prey. A few roosters among the chickens can also help with that.

Regulations have often been discussed as a threat to Dutch breeds. Especially for small-scale farmers, but certainly also for small slaughterhouses and self-slaughterers, who want to market the meat. The relatively high costs and increasingly strict regulations do not make the production of poultry meat with these animals on this scale economically attractive. However, if feed costs can be kept down, the eggs can be a nice source of income. Therefore, there is hope, because the Dutch chicken breeds have even more values. Namely, educational and cultural-historical values.

Based on their interviews, the students identified a few conditions when it comes to successful entrepreneurship with the heritage breeds:

First of all, there must be an intrinsic motivation to keep the breeds. Because of their qualities, their unique appearance, or to contribute to the conservation of our living heritage. In addition, the keeper must also believe in the added value of the heritage breeds and be able to use them for these different functions, for example with a mobile chicken coop and a movable, or completely free-range, run. An on-farm shop helps to get a good price for the various products of the chicken, with the eggs offering the most opportunities



Infrastructure and breeding programme needed

To really put Dutch dual-purpose chickens on the agenda in small-scale farming, a lot of promotion is needed. But if demand then increases, something must also be done on the supply side.

If hobby breeders are currently mainly responsible for breeding, it may be necessary to involve a (breeding) organisation to clarify the needs for expansion. After all, such a small-scale multifunctional company will want to have about 100 to 200 chickens at once. And it also means something for the selection of animals. To avoid inbreeding, proper registration of breeding animals is needed. To ensure that the breeds that are currently rewarded primarily for their external characteristics can actually be used as dual-purpose chickens, they must be selected primarily for egg production. And then there is the question of how all those involved in the value chain, even if it is a short value chain, from the breeder to the producer to the slaughterer and the local restaurant, can come together to build a functioning infrastructure in good co-operation.

Nonja Remijn, SZH

SAVE Foundation and the SZH invite other countries to share their experiences on chances for local dual-purpose chickens. For more information please contact Nonja Remijn (info@szh.nl) or the SAVE project office (office@save-foundation.net).

Actual capabilities of old hen breeds in traditional utilization

partial results of a Hungarian study

According to the most likely assumptions, conquering ancestors brought the ancestors of the Hungarian country fowls from Asia. Later, larger-bodied Asian chickens brought to Europe during the Tatar invasion, as well as chickens of Balkan and Asia Minor origin that came to Hungary with the Turkish conquest, also played a major role in the development of the Hungarian common chicken.

Figure 1: Cock of Partridge-coloured Hungarian country fowl

From the second half of the 19th century, from these, with the cooperation of several famous breeders, the Hungarian country fowl, and the Transylvanian naked-necked fowl, which is also different in type, were only developed in.

Improved breeds from abroad, such as the Brahma, Plymouth Rock, Leghorn, New-Hampshire, Rhode Island, or Langshan contributed to this process. Today's breeds of the old Hungarian country fowl, protected as indigenous, are already quite different from the ancient versions of the Hungarian hen, but they still carry the most characteristic features.

Figure 2: Cock of White Transylvanian naked-necked fowl

The Hungarian country fowl belongs to the medium-sized, dual-purpose breed group. Hens weigh 2.0–2.3 kg, roosters 2.5–3.0 kg. The trunk is of medium length, slightly cylindrical. Hens have straight and long backs, roosters have shorter and curved backs. They are characterized by a wide and convex breast, high set wings, a well-developed belly, medium-long and yellow legs, tail feathers that are overdeveloped in relation to the size of the body and figure-hugging plumage. Their heads are small, their skulls are convex, their beaks are short and strong, and their eyes are bright. The comb is medium-sized and extends backwards, standing straight up, and is often tilted in hens, and a single comb that is evenly spiked. The wattles are soft to the touch and rounded, the ear-lobe is ovoid and always completely bright red.

The main value of the fine-boned Hungarian country fowl is its fine fibre and tasty, excellent meat, which is why it is popular in both domestic and foreign markets. Its chickens could be sold from the age of 8-10 weeks. As a result of the breeding work that began in Gödöllő in the 1930s, its egg production reached 140-150 eggs per year, based on which it was considered an excellent dual-purpose breed for decades.

During its breeding, several colour variants were differentiated, some of which are now known as independent breeds or breed varieties. The most common were the white, speckled, yellow, and partridge-coloured versions, which, unfortunately, except for the partridge-coloured one, have survived to this day and can be found as separate varieties in gene bank collections. As a result of breed regeneration work, the partridge-coloured hen variety exists again today.

The aim of this study was to examine the usual production traits of the Partridge-coloured Hungarian country fowl (Figure 1) and the White Transylvanian naked-necked fowl (Figure 2). Further aspects for choosing these breeds were to obtain additional data for their gene conservation program as well as their today utilization. Chicks hatched (Figure 3) in both sexes at the Institute for Small Animal Research (KÁTKI, Gödöllő, Hungary; legal predecessor of NBGK HGI, Institute for Farm Animal Gene Preservation) were separated into two different groups according to their later fattening conditions (intensive or semi-extensive feeding- and housing systems) at a farm of the Hungarian Great Plain after a four-week long raising period. Test slaughtering of chickens was carried out at age of the 12 and 18 weeks to evaluate the raising and fattening-ability. Results were calculated and compared with the help of analysis of variance and univariate general linear model.

Figure 3 Day-old chicks of breeds investigated

Results showed that during the first four weeks of the raising body weight of the Partridge-coloured Hungarian country fowl and the male chicks of both breeds

Table 1: Raising performances of hen breeds investigated

Effect	n	Hatching weight (g) Mean	Weight at the end of week four (g) Mean	Gain by the end of week four (g/day) Mean
Breed (p-value)		<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Partridge-coloured Hungarian country fowl	48	41.51	306.0	9.45
White Transylvanian naked-necked fowl	49	34.01	261.20	8.12
Sex (p-value)		0.769	0.008	0.009
Cockerel	47	37.85	291.9	9.07
Pullet	50	37.68	275.4	8.49

Table 2: Fattening and killing out performances of hen breeds investiga of hen breeds investigated

Effect	n	Final weight (g) Mean	Total lifetime gain (g/day) Mean	Shrinkage (%) Mean	Total lifetime net gain (g/day) Mean
Effect Breed (p-value)		<0.001	<0.001	0.837	<0.001
Partridge-coloured Hungarian country fowl	48	1488	13.54	2.58	10.32
White Transylvanian naked-necked	49	1124	10.26	2.75	7.96
Sex (p-value)		<0.001	<0.001	0.682	<0.001
Cockerel	47	1469	13.35	2.83	10.37
Pullet	50	1144	10.45	2.49	7.90
Fattening method (p-value)		0.036	0.015	<0.001	0.195
intensive	49	1353	12.36	4.14	9.34
semi-extensive	48	1260	11.44	1.18	8.94
Slaughter age (p-value)		<0.001	<0.001	0.805	<0.001
12 weeks	49	964	11.01	2.56	8.15
18 weeks	48	1648	12.79	2.76	10.13

became larger than that of White Transylvanian naked-necked chicks and female chicks (Table 1).

Concerning the fattening performances, the Partridge-coloured Hungarian country fowl and cockerels reached larger values in final weight and different lifetime gains than the Transylvanian one and pullets (Table 2). The semi-extensive fattening method resulted in lower shrinkage, while the chickens in the intensive group lost more weight during the transport (of 100 km for test-slaughtering back to Gödöllő), so the two classes of the effect fattening method doesn't show any significant difference in the total lifetime net gain.

In conclusion, the old Hungarian hen breeds, as is typical for them, produce at a low level. Traditionally, they are slaughtered at the age of 12-18 weeks. The intensive fattening of autochthonous breeds among the actual conditions does not realize larger inputs, since the weight advantage of the intensive groups disappeared in form of a larger weight loss caused by the transport procedure (with possible bigger stress, larger water loss, and intensive loss of mobilizable body fat reservoir).

Dr. A. Gáspárdy, DAGENE

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SAVE the date
9th – 11th September 2024, Torino, Italy

SAVE Annual Meeting & European Seminar on Agrobiodiversity

The Italian Associazione R.A.R.E. - Razze Autoctone a Rischio di Estinzione (partner of SAVE Foundation) will host the meeting and will welcome the SAVE network and people interested in agrobiodiversity. Partner organizations of the SAVE Foundation will present recent progress on the conservation of agrobiodiversity in their countries and discuss the topic of this year's meeting:

Traditional livestock breeds and crop varieties in times of climate change

Further details and the preliminary programme will be published on our website soon:
https://save-foundation.net/event/european-seminar-on-agrobiodiversity-save-annual-meeting/

Wild fruits creative workshop

It grows on the edges of forests, along paths, in clearings and natural meadows and increasingly also in gardens: wild fruits. The term „wild fruit" refers to species and varieties that have not been selected or have only been cultivated to a limited extend. Certain wild fruit species such as sea buckthorn, hazelnut and chokeberry are grown commercially on plantations and products made from these are available in supermarkets. Most products made from wild fruit can only be bought occasionally - if at all - from specialised retailers; supermarkets do not sell them. However, wild fruits offer a variety of unusual flavours.

Some wild fruit species are native to Europe, others found their way to Europe a long time ago and some have only recently become known to us. Despite the growing interest, wild fruits are still exotic on the plate. Most people are probably familiar with rosehip jam, elderflower syrup or preparations with sea buckthorn. But what other new recipes are there that turn the unusual variety of flavours of the different wild fruit varieties into delicious dishes?

The largest wild fruit collection in Europe, initiated by the SAVE Foundation in 2017 in Mogelsberg, Switzerland, is thriving and is now bearing fruit. So much so that the processing and recipe development of the many fruits is on the agenda. On 24 January 2024, the SAVE Foundation invited top chefs to a wild fruit creative workshop on the premises of dieCuisine, Zurich. After a presentation by Waltraud Kugler, SAVE Foundation, on the characteristics of wild fruits and a tasting of wild fruit preparations it was time to get down to business. There was plenty of variety: rowanberries, rosehips, ornamental quinces, hawthorn, scarlet hawthorn, mountain hawthorn, cornelian cherries, medlars, sea buckthorn, barberries, viburnum, different varieties of elaeagnus, dwarf red leaf plums and sloes were available for developing recipes. Fabian Raffeiner from Restaurant ZOE, Meret Bissegger, Marianna Buser, Andi Handke from Mühletal Gastro GmbH and initiator of GastroFutura, Carlos Navarro, chef at restaurant Rechberg 1837, Nadja Gmehling, Food Consultant at BettyBossi, Leonie Küpper from Foodways, Richard Kägi and Markus Burkhard from Lampart's Val Lumnezia devised new recipes and created unusual dishes with wild fruits.

The result was a multi-course wild fruit menu: the starter of pumpkin carpaccio with sea buckthorn juice, olive willow and barberry was followed by a vegetable curry with wild fruits and a celeriac escalope with olive willow glaze on potato snow as a main course. The final course was a colourful dessert potpourri with apple compote with ornamental quince syrup, sloe blossom meringue, cornelian cherry parfait and roasted hazelnut catkins. Modern cuisine could hardly be more varied, wild and creative.

The recipes are published on the SAVE Foundation website https://wildobst.info/wp-content/uploads/rezepte-kreativ.pdf.

The SAVE Foundation hopes you enjoy cooking them and bon appétit.

Bettina Müller, SAVE Foundation


Wildobst Degustationen


herzlich
WILLKOMMEN


COOKING
WITH
PASSION

Borrowing seeds - harvesting diversity

The successful VEN project enters its third season

The project of the Association for the Conservation of Crop Diversity e.V. (VEN) in cooperation with libraries is now in its third season and is becoming increasingly popular. The participation of numerous new libraries as well as experienced institutions shows that word of the project has spread far beyond the region.

From the end of February, library users in Germany will be able to borrow more than just books at many locations. The VEN project is expanding the range of services offered by libraries by making open pollinating vegetable seeds available to borrow. This takes the concept of libraries as places of knowledge and diversity to a new level. The idea of sharing not only literature but also the diversity of open pollinating varieties is very popular and contributes to the promotion of our crop diversity. This gives users the opportunity to grow their own vegetables using traditional, open pollinating varieties. This innovative extension shows how libraries can actively contribute to spreading knowledge and at the same time help to preserve the diversity on our plates.

To ensure a smooth process, VEN is happy to share its expertise in seed production with interested newcomers.

An accompanying educational programme guides participants through the gardening year, supported by ten informative newsletters. These texts provide all the essential information needed to successfully harvest and return seed from a simple seed at the end of the season.

Four self-pollinating vegetables were selected for this project: Tomatoes, beans, peas and lettuce. In addition, a lesser-known species, the garden melilot, is included. VEN offers particularly tasty, robust and vigorous varieties of these five species - all without plant variety protection, of course. The seed for these varieties comes exclusively from VEN members.

The progress made at the end of a season is impressive. Because the participants in the project

- enjoy tasty vegetables that are not available in conventional supermarkets.
- collect a surprisingly abundant amount of seeds, which are ideal as a small gift for friends.
- develop new skills in sowing and caring for vegetable plants.
- acquire knowledge about the importance of biocultural diversity in our food.
- learn lots of little stories about special varieties, their names and their origins.

All of this is free of charge for library card holders. Even those who are not avid readers but would like to explore the world of plants can usually do so free of charge, as most libraries do not charge a lending fee for the seeds.

The numerous positive responses from the participating libraries encourage both them and VEN to continue the project. With the support/great interest of the new libraries and the dedicated work of the existing partners, the project grew a little further this year.

It is not only a tribute to biocultural diversity, but also to the power of community and shared learning. VEN is looking forward to another successful season of diversity and sustainable gardening.

press release VEN

Association for the Conservation of Crop Diversity e.V. (VEN)
www.nutzpflanzenvielfalt.de
project website: https://www.saatgutleihen.de/

In memory of

Prof. em. Dr. Imre Bodó

(1932-2023)

Former vice-director of SAVE Foundation, president of DAGENE

Imre Bodó was born in 1932 in the city of Budapest. After attending the elementary schools, he studied at the secondary schools in Kőszeg and in Budapest (Gymnasium Scholarum Piarum). He was accepted into Gödöllő University for Agricultural Sciences, where he achieved his Master of Science in Agricultural Engineering in 1956.

First he worked in agricultural practice. His highest position was director of animal breeding in the large State Farm Hortobágy. In 1971 he took a position as a researcher for the Dept. of Horse Breeding in the Research Institute for Animal Husbandry. From 1975, he became first an assistant professor at the University of Veterinary Science, and later a full professor as the head of the Dept. of Animal Breeding up until his retirement in 1998.

His well-beloved field of research is still horse and cattle breeding as well as the maintenance of genetic diversity of domestic species. In 1990 he was requested to organize the section meetings and discussion on animal genetic resources at the fourth World Congress on Genetics Applied to Livestock Production in Edinburgh and also at the fifth WCGALP in Guelph, he was one of the authors (with D. Simon and L. Ollivier) of the report on the conservation of genetic diversity of domestic animals in Europe.

He was also a member of the following Hungarian and International organizations: FAO Expert Panel for Conservation of Animal Genetic Resources (1982-1992), EAAP Working Group for Conservation of Genetic Resources (1985-2000), Hungarian Grey Cattle Breeders' Association (president from 1989), National Association of Furioso-North Star (president from 1989, honorary president from 2010), EAAP Horse Commission (vice president 1986-1992), Breeding commission of Lipizzan International Federation (president 1986-1990), Lipizzan International Federation (president1990-1994), Rare Breeds International (board member from 1991), SAVE Foundation - Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe (vice-director 1997, board member till 2009), DAGENE - International Association for the Conservation of Animal Breeds in the Danubian Region (president 1999-2010, honorary president from 2010). Emeritus Professor at the University of Debrecen and University of Veterinary Medicine Budapest.

Imre Bodó and his wife raised seven children, and he was a proud grandfather of 36 grandchildren.

On December 18, 2023, in the 92nd year of his life, Imre Bodó gave his soul back to his Creator after a long illness he endured with patience and dignity. His funeral took place on January 11, 2024 in Budapest. His loss is touched by the University of Veterinary Medicine and SAVE at a personal level. We are trying to follow his personal and professional example and preserve his memory.

Andràs Gaspardy

In memory of

Pavel Beco

a pioneer for the conservation of agrobiodiversity

Pavel was a man with so many different interests and activities that an obituary of him and his commitments would fill pages. However, there is one commitment that made him well known across all national borders and this will be honoured below: His commitment to the conservation of agrobiodiversity in Switzerland and throughout Europe.

Pavel came from a family of physicians who fled Prague in 1968 as a result of the Russian occupation of what was then Czechoslovakia and came to Switzerland. He developed into a „nature boy" with the Scouts - where he was also involved throughout his life. He studied biology and then became a primary school teacher. His work at the highest located school in the canton of Zurich in Hörnlibergland brought him closer to mountain farming, to which he felt committed from then on. I came into contact with him back then when he asked me, as the then „head" of the newly established ProSpecieRara Foundation, which old livestock breeds and cultivated plant varieties I could recommend to him for a mountain farm. We stayed in contact. Right from the start, he seemed „promising" for the projects we had just started.

When he was offered a mountain farm in the Neckertal valley in Toggenburg, he seized the opportunity and expanded the farm, the residential building for a large family and the farmstead to accommodate endangered breeds and varieties. At that time (1984), we were looking for emergency space for "Stiefelgeissen" (booted goats) when we had to take over the last herd within 72 hours and move them across Lake Walen due to the shepherdess's accident. Pavel offered space. Incidentally, this event later led to the Europe-wide project to set up „Rescue Stations" that can accommodate livestock in case of emergency, which was subsidised by the EU Commission. Other endangered breeds, Bündner Oberländer sheep, Mangalica, chickens and geese soon followed on Pavel's farm Albisbodenhof, sugar root, old potato varieties and much more grew in the vegetable garden and Pavel continually contributed old fruit varieties. Pavel's farm soon became the figurehead of ProSpecieRara. We kept sending interested journalists to visit him. As a result, Pavel was soon overrun and his farm became a „show farm". Pavel's unique ability to cater for the exact level and field of knowledge of his audience during the guided tours further increased the influx of interested visitors. He was able to inspire school classes as a teacher and even agricultural teachers as a scientist. As a result, before his visit to Switzerland, the then Deputy Minister of Agriculture Bartak from the Czech Republic made an express request to the Swiss authorities to be allowed to visit Pavel's farm.

Visit by the then Czech Deputy Minister of Agriculture Bartak to Pavel's farm

At the time, Pavel had a dedicated trainee, Sigrid Kownatzki. Together they developed a concept for setting up so-called ark farms, one step simpler than the domestic animal parks of the time. Sigrid then implemented the concept at GEH in Germany. It was so convincing that other countries followed suit.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and the entire Iron Curtain was torn down, Pavel returned to Prague for the first time. He was thrilled and said I had to come with him next time. I agreed and said that we should also take this opportunity to visit people who had heard about ProSpecieRara, get in touch with us and tell us about their own efforts to preserve rare breeds in their respective places. So after an extensive visit to Prague,

Pavel with woolly pigs

we first went on a tour of Bohemia and Moravia. We were amazed to find enthusiasts there who, completely on their own, went to incredible lengths (often even against the former state functionaries) and really achieved a lot. However, although they knew us from newspaper articles in Switzerland, they were not networked within their country. We spontaneously decided to set up a coordination office in Prague, which we called „Eko-Team Praha". Pavel took on the organisation and interpreting, I took on the „financing". There wasn't much to finance, as the heating costs at the time exceeded the employees' salaries because the state was still bearing the social security costs. The Eko team's work performance was rather modest, which is why we took the project coordination back to Switzerland after two years. But the mere fact that we took this step made us known throughout the former Eastern Bloc (even an expensive TV advert would not have done us so much good!). We received letters to Prague and St. Gallen from all the former Eastern states, which Pavel and I then travelled to, for 2-3 weeks every year, sometimes here, sometimes there. Pavel and I became close friends.

Pavel at the inauguration of the wild fruit collection in Mogelsberg, Switzerland

After studying the former diversity (with documents from the library of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna), Pavel and I then visited those areas where we hoped to find remnants of the former agrobiodiversity. These were mostly remote (mountain) areas that had escaped nationalisation or regions with traditional minorities. Pavel was the interpreter and interested in plants, I was interested in old breeds of domestic animals. That's how Pavel came to collect fruit and wild fruit varieties and together we found many old breeds of domestic animals in the most remote valleys of the Beskids and the Carpathians.

This commitment led to the founding of the „Monitoring Institute for Rare Breeds and Seeds in Europe" in 1995, whose task was to show what existed in the past, whether it still existed and whether there was a need for action to conserve it. We called this „Mapping - Watching - Alarming". If a conservation project still appeared to make sense, the European SAVE Foundation, which we had co-founded in the meantime, took over and the Monitoring Institute was later incorporated into it. Pavel's outstanding work included the creation of a multilingual online synonym register of European fruit and wild fruit varieties, which he developed with Vaclav Tetera in Moravia and with experts from other countries. In the Neckertal valley in Toggenburg, Pavel set up a tree nursery for old fruit varieties that were particularly suitable for higher mountain locations. Interested parties from all over Switzerland (and neighbouring regions) made a pilgrimage to Pavel, sought advice and bought their supplies from him. He also set up publicly accessible fruit variety gardens in several places. However, wild fruit collections were particularly close to his heart. He set up several such collections with the SAVE Foundation project office in Eastern Switzerland. In north-eastern Slovenia, he finally built up a comprehensive wild fruit collection in which he wanted to show accessions from the Atlantic to Siberia. Unfortunately, he was unable to complete this project, which was particularly close to his heart.

With Pavel's passing, an immense amount of lexical knowledge and expertise was laid to rest. Fortunately, however, he had made and left records of most of it. We all owe Pavel a great deal. We will always honour his memory. Rest in peace!

Hape Grünenfelder

SAVE foundation

Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe

Association for the promotion of
the SAVE Foundation Switzerland
Neugasse 30
9000 St. Gallen
Switzerland

We appreciate your support and thank you very much.

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