



SAVE

agrobiodiversity

The quarterly newsletter of the SAVE Foundation

3 | 20
24



**Malta: Local breeds
as national heritage**

Campaign launched

**European Seminar on
Agrobiodiversity &
SAVE Annual Meeting
2024**

Arca-Deli® Award 2024

Presentation of the award
winners



European Seminar on Agrobiodiversity & SAVE Annual Meeting 2024

Traditional livestock breeds and crop varieties in times of climate change - from 9-11 September SAVE partners and those interested in agrobiodiversity exchanged on this topic and presented their activities. This year's European Seminar on Agrobiodiversity & SAVE Annual Conference was hosted by the organisation R.A.R.E. - Razze Autoctone a Rischio di Estinzione, the Italian partner of the SAVE Foundation.

The first presentation was given by Nonja Remijn from the '[Stichting Zeltzame Huisdierrassen](#)' (SZH; Foundation for Rare Domestic Animal Breeds) in the Netherlands. Farmers believe that the three local dual-purpose cattle are the breeds of the future, even though no scientific data is yet available. But how can money be made with breeds that do not have the highest production figures? A shift towards extensive, nature-integrative farming could prove beneficial. A stronger focus on the ingredients of the milk and less on the pure production volume can also be helpful. Educational programmes and tourism can provide additional sources of income. Small farmers in particular should

receive support for the economic utilisation of local livestock breeds.

The Belgian organisation [Steunpunt Levend Erfgoed \(SLE\)](#) is a place of diversity not only for local livestock breeds, but also for their keepers: both large professional and small 'hobby farms' are represented in the SLE. Traditional livestock breeds and high-tech - can this combination work? Yes, it can, as Prof Dr Staf Van den Bergh, SLE board member, explained using the example of the Belgian farm [Het Bolhuis](#). The farm uses 'virtual fencing' for its livestock. The farm animals wear a sensor in their necks that can be used to locate them. When the animals reach the boundary of the grazing area, they receive a light electric shock so that they do not cross the boundary. This allows the animals to move freely in an area without fences. Other SLE members, such as the hobby farms [te Weyenbrouck](#) and [Hof ter Hoeven](#), offer educational activities for children from the neighbourhood.



Prof Dr Riccardo Fortina, R.A.R.E.
Host of this year's annual conference

When you think of Hungarian landscapes, you think of vast steppes. However, this was not always the case: there were many wetlands in Hungary, the number of which rapidly decreased due to human intervention – specifically the straightening of rivers. According to predictions, the landscape will become barren and drier in the future. Can traditional livestock breeds cope better with the changing environmental conditions than modern breeds? Prof Dr András Gáspárdy from the international organisation [DAGENE](#) presented a study on Hungarian grey cattle. It is not only the appearance of this local cattle breed that is impressi-



Orobica goats

ve; its genetic characteristics can also provide decisive advantages in times of climate change. A Hungarian research group discovered that some animals of the Hungarian grey cattle have mutations in a gene that codes for a heat shock protein. This may enable the animals to adapt to higher ambient temperatures and be advantageous for them in times of climate change.

Prof Dr Riccardo Fortina from [RARE](#) pointed out another important aspect. The livestock sector is responsible for 14.5% of greenhouse gas emissions. Looking at all livestock species, ruminants produce significantly more greenhouse gases than pigs or chickens. However, there is a reciprocal interaction between livestock and climate: climate change also has a direct (heat stress etc.) and indirect (changes in the ecosystem) influence on animal husbandry. Farm animals that are better able to adapt to changing environmental conditions should become more widespread in the future. The problem here is that these livestock breeds must be identifiable. The prerequisite for this is the characterisation of local breeds and their natural environment. Thus, instead of the current, general conserva-

Hungarian steppe grey cattle



tion goal (preventing extinction), specific conservation goals can be defined for a breed. Take [Orobica goats](#) in Lombardy, for example: the conservation objectives for this breed also include 'coping with climate change' and 'safeguarding ecological values'.

Approximately every ten years, the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#) presents a report on the global status of animal genetic resources. Dr Paul Boettcher, FAO, presented the results of the 3rd report, which is currently being compiled. Farm animals are an essential component of global food security. One billion people worldwide depend on livestock for the majority of their livelihoods. Nevertheless, there is a lack of awareness of the im-



Saltasassi sheep, a local breed of the Piedmont

portance of animal genetic resources and diversity is declining. Currently, 10% of known livestock breeds are already extinct, 20% are categorised as endangered and the status of around 60% is unknown. However, great genetic diversity is needed to overcome the

challenges caused by climate change. The report identifies the following measures as suitable for establishing or strengthening conservation programmes:

1. Set and regularly review in situ conservation priorities and goals
2. Encourage the development and implementation of national and regional in situ conservation programmes for breeds and populations that are at risk
3. Promote policies and means to achieve the sustainable use of a diversity of local breeds, without the need for support from public funds.

Too much heat, too much cold, too much wetness, too much drought - climate change brings too much of everything, says Antje Feldmann from the [G-E-H](#). It is not known exactly how the environment will change and how livestock can be prepared for it. Many high-performance breeds cannot tolerate heat well. Diseases and pests will spread to new geographical regions, the availability of water will decrease and at the same time animals will need more water to cope with the higher temperatures. Example of alpine pasture: alpine agricultural systems and the type of livestock kept have changed due to water stress. The changing environmental conditions (warm/cold) also affect the wool quality of the Alpine Stone Sheep, a local livestock breed that was saved from extinction by a conservation programme.



Local specialties from local breeds

The contact between the SAVE Foundation and the organisation '[Greek shorthorn cattle breeders association](#)' has already existed for 20 years, as Prof. Dr. Ioannis Kazoglou, University of Thessaly, explained. The view of SAVE Foundation founding member Hape Grünenfelder that the old breeds should not be part of a museum, but should be utilised, is still relevant today. That is why enormous effort is being put into the development of products - and successfully so: two of the products were honoured with this year's Arca-Deli Award. In Greece, traditional cattle breeds are of great importance for biodiversity and the prevention of forest fires.

By grazing the low vegetation in forested areas, species-rich areas are created and the threat of forest fires is minimised.

The lecture by Prof Dr Iosif Bizelis, [Amalthia](#), took us to a small Greek island in the far east of the Aegean: Kastelorizo. This island is home to a cattle breed which, although not very productive, has a decisive advantage in times of climate change: it can tolerate heat. This is due to the influence of *Bos indicus*. In general, there are

many local livestock breeds in Greece that have adapted to the harsh environmental conditions with barren, dry pastures and low water availability - however, many of these breeds are endangered or already extinct. Climate change, urbanisation and social and economic change (culture, behaviour, consumption) pose threats to local breeds.

Traditional goat breeds „Fiurinà“ and „Grigia delle valli di Lanzo“ („Gray goat of the Lanzo Valley“) in the Piemont Alps



Prof Dr Daniele de Meneghi, [University of Turin](#), pointed out that there are numerous other aspects besides climate change that contribute to global problems affecting humans, animals and the environment. Ticks are spreading as far as the Alps, diseases are spreading. Local livestock breeds play an important role here: local breeds can have a high resistance to certain diseases, such as the red Maasai sheep in Africa. And some local breeds can survive in places where modern breeds (such as the Holstein-Friesian cattle breed) would become extinct.



Arca-Deli® Award 2024: The jury (Philippe Ammann, Riccardo Fortina, Rui Dantas) is in charge. The products are carefully examined and evaluated ...

In addition to wheat for pasta and corn for polenta, Italy also grows rice, which is used to make some delicious risottos. There are 214 rice accessions in Italy. In the 'Riso Risiliente' project, a rice was selected from these accessions in terms of both cultivation and use; panel tests were carried out with farmers and end consumers. This year, the organisation '[Rete Semi Rurali](#)' was able to present the first product made from local, resilient rice.

The [SAVE Foundation](#) was also very active again last year. Numerous articles to the [online platform for wild fruits](#) were translated from German into French and English. A wild fruit creative workshop was organised with top chefs, a new project on historical vegetable varieties in Switzerland was launched and intensive networking was carried out. Since March last

year, the SAVE Foundation has been a member of the COST ACTION network [EU-LI-PHE](#) (European Network on Livestock Phenomics), which was presented by Dr Adna Ašić.

The field trip on the second day took the participants of the SAVE annual conference to an alpine pasture on the farm of a young peasant family. Here, local goat and sheep breeds are kept in their original environment. Fences? The goats only have them at night. During the day, the fence is opened and the conference participants were able to see the goats disappear over the mountain ridge in no time at all. The farm produces various cheese and sausage products, the good flavour and quality of which the participants were able to see for themselves during a tasting.

... and in the evening the festive presentation of the products and the award ceremony took place.



A highlight this year was once again the presentation of the Arca-Deli® Award, which is given to outstanding, innovative products made from traditional livestock breeds and cultivated plant varieties.

Bettina Müller
SAVE Foundation

The presentations of the meeting are available on the SAVE homepage: <https://save-foundation.net/konferenzen/>

*And which products were honoured
with the Arca-Deli® Award 2024?*

Find out on the following pages.

Arca-Deli® Award 2024 - the winners

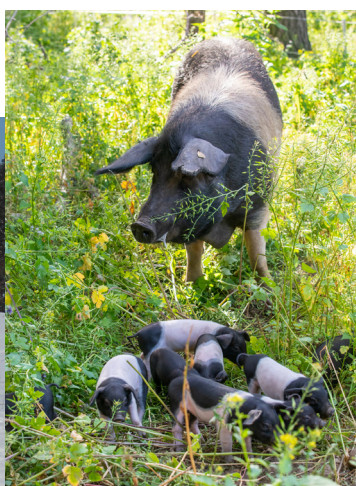
The Arca-Deli® Award is a prestigious award for specialities and innovative services from owners and breeders of local breeds and varieties. Since 2011, the Arca-Deli® Award has been given annually by the SAVE Foundation to selected products and services. The Arca-Deli® Award label can be used for marketing purposes and is intended to emphasise the special character and value of the products and services.



Smoked ham from Porco Wéndico® (Anglen saddleback)

Hutewaldhof, Germany

Smoked ham from Porco Wéndico® packed in pieces, slices 2 mm and 1 mm thick. The ham is processed by a local butcher (Karsten Lankat in Dannenberg): pickled in brine, seasoned, smoked, then dried in the farm's own cold store for 1-4 months (depending on how quickly it is sold). The Hutewaldhof keeps and breeds Anglen Saddleback pigs all year round outdoors. All fattening pigs are always significantly older than 1 year. Green fodder is grown on the arable land, which is offered to the pigs to harvest themselves in generous portions. This gives the animals plenty of exercise every day. The areas are rotated regularly, depending on the growth of the feed. The areas with the huts also change. Only a small amount of grain is fed, as well as hay. In the fall, the pigs are allowed into the forest, and in many years there are also acorns. For all products, the Hutewaldhof has registered the name Porco Wéndico® for these characteristics of their form of husbandry. www.hutewaldhof.de



Anglen saddleback

Angler Saddleback pigs are large-framed animals, dark-colored with a white saddle and white forelegs, floppy ears, very robust and weatherproof. They digest green fodder. The sows show excellent maternal qualities. The meat has a high intramuscular fat content. Due to the free-range husbandry, the age of the sows and because we keep our own females as offspring, the farm works with artificial insemination, naturally with saddle pig boars!

Air-dried salami & beef chips

Genes & Nature INDIGENOUS BREEDS, Greece

Air dried 100% beef salami, from organic, free range Greek shorthorn cattle meat, without any kind of chemical preservatives. The ingredients are meat, salt, pepper and olive polyphenols.



Beef chips, from dehydrated lean organic, free range Greek shorthorn cattle meat. Without any kind of preservatives, marinated in white wine and spiced with salt, pepper, garlic, drier tomato and olive paste.



Genes & Nature INDIGENOUS BREEDS was established in 2020, based in Trikala (Thessaly region), by breeders of productive animals of indigenous Greek breeds. The aim is the production of meat products, from meadow to plate, of high quality and nutritional value, free preservatives, additives, residues of pharmaceuticals and with a minimum environmental footprint. The first advantage of this effort is the breeding of indigenous animals adapted to Greek pasturelands where they have lived and developed over thousands of years. Greek mountain regions with their great biodiversity are the second advantage, since the rich and unique Greek flora assures the animals of their natural and regular growth. Following traditional breeding methods and providing the animals with only as much care as is considered necessary, an unrivalled dining experience is ensured for the consumer. Respect for animals, the environment and the consumer are sacred tenets for the team. The formula is simple: let Nature do her work, without rushing and with the least possible intervention. www.fyles.gr



Greek shorthorn cattle

They are small animals, with height at the withers of up to 110 cm and male body weight reaching 320 kg and female 240 kg, while the horns are short and thin. They have a slow growth rate, but are hardy, frugal, long-lived and of great reproductive performance. They live outdoors almost all year round. Shelters and stables are used only during harsh winter conditions. The color of the hair, because of the breed's great variation, differs and can be blond, reddish blond, and all shades of brown and grey while there are also animals that are completely black.



Honey from the Black bee

Beekeeping de Kroontjes, Netherlands

Honey from a small apiculture with a limited honey yield. The heather honey has a high viscosity, a rich aroma and taste. This honey is only harvested in autumn, before that a very rich flowery honey is harvested in spring and summer. Beekeeping De Kroontjes is situated on the island of Texel in the north of Holland. On the island there is a unique isolated population of the *Apis mellifera mellifera* (the Texel Black Bee) which is probably the last remaining population in Holland. The main aim of beekeeping is to preserve the black bee population on Texel and restore it to its original state through selective beekeeping.

www.faunabeheertexel.nl



Black bee

The Black bee was assigned the Latin name *Apis mellifera mellifera* by Linnaeus in 1758. *Apis* is the designation for honey bee, and *Apis mellifera* is the collective name for 14 different subspecies, of which *Apis mellifera mellifera* is the Black bee. Black bees can be clearly distinguished from other honey bees found in the Netherlands by their dark appearance, the strikingly broad and bluntly rounded abdomen with narrow bands of felt, and the long dark hairs on the head and thorax. Dark bees have a short tongue length compared to other Western European honey bees. The pattern of veins on the wings of Black bees is distinctive from that of other honey bees and can therefore be used to determine the varietal purity of the hive. The Black bee is Varroa-tolerant and used to harsh weather. The bee is specialised in deriving honey from heather in late autumn when other bee species have already gone in rest for winter. <https://szh.nl/dieren/bij/zwarte-bij/>



©Rene Pop

Leather key fob from Glan cattle

Ark farm Windeck, Germany

For many years, the leather from the Glan cattle, which are slaughtered at Archehof Windeck's own slaughterhouse, has been vegetable-tanned in a small tannery, the Beuleke company, in Hesse. Various products are made from this leather in Saxony by the company SGT according to designs by Lisa Anschutz. The key fobs are available in several variations and many colours to match the other products in the collection. They are labelled with the utility model-protected logo of Archehof Windeck. Key fobs are ideal for using small pieces of leather that are no longer sufficient for larger products. Archehof Windeck is located 300 metres above sea level in the low mountain range and manages around 40 hectares of land with 25-30 soil points. The grazed areas are located in the Bergisches Land region to the east of Cologne and Bonn. The Glan cattle are kept in open stables in winter and on pasture in summer; the second-year bulls are also only grazed and are not fattened with concentrated feed or maize silage. Since

2000, Archehof Windeck has been keeping Glan cattle, which are listed in the herd book. <https://g-e-h.de/arche-hoefe/216-arche-hof65>



Glan cattle

Glan cattle were native to the Windeck Archehof region and belonged there. The cattle breed is on the GEH's red list because it is threatened with extinction. The extensive areas of the Archehof Windeck can be optimally grazed with the frugal cattle. This contributes greatly to biodiversity and the preservation of rare animal and plant species.

Smoked sausage from the spotted Bentheimer pig

Farm shop 't Zwien, Netherlands

The farm 't Zwien calls their meat Drents honest free-range pork. The meat is sold in their own farmshop and in farmshops in the region. Farm 't Zwien breeds with 13 sows and 3 stud boars to avoid inbreeding. When the temperature and weather are right, the piglets go outside with the sow. The pigs that are intended for slaughter are kept on the farm for at least a year. All pigs are outside in summer and winter and can spend the night in small shelters. The pigs fight plots with Japanese knotweed and hogweed in the summer and in the autumn and winter they go to arable farmers on potato land to eat the potatoes, grubs and leatherjackets. The pigs are taken from plot to plot with a trailer and thus learn to be transported. When the pigs are brought to and slaughtered in a small slaughterhouse, care is taken to avoid stress. The farm does not work biodynamically and the land does not have a Skal quality mark. Corn, potatoes, spent grains, bread, acorns, apples and whatever else is brought in are fed. This also not from organic farming. <http://www.boerderijwinkeltzwien.nl/>



Spotted Bentheimer



The spotted Bentheimer is an old breed of pig that was common in the border region of Bad Bentheim and Twente from the end of the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. Nowadays, there are not so many purebred pigs of this breed. The spotted Bentheimer is a breed that is worth conserving because of its good meat quality, its robustness, its vitality, its friendliness and the good mothering qualities. It is medium-sized and type of land pig with lobes and irregular black spot pattern on white or light gray background.

Survey on new EU rules

Impact of new EU rules on seeds and other plant reproductive material on the production and marketing of cultivated plant diversity

The EU is working on [new rules](#) for the production and marketing of seeds and other plant reproductive material (fruit tree cuttings, seed potatoes, etc.). Do you work with seeds? Then the new rules will also affect you.

The Austrian organisation Arche Noah is asking for your feedback so that it can better advocate for changes that protect and support your work as well as cultivated plant diversity. Specifically, the proposed new EU regulation would introduce new bureaucracy for all farmers, companies, and organisations who produce and/or offer seeds or other planting material.

There is reason to fear that this bureaucracy will most adversely affect small producers who specialise in making available a diversity of varieties and species – this needs to be prevented.

Please help to get improvements to the proposal by taking 15 minutes to respond to this short survey on the possible impact of the new rules by 17 November! <https://archenoah.limesurvey.net/979918?lang=en>
You are also welcome to forward the survey. Thank you for your participation and for sharing the survey.

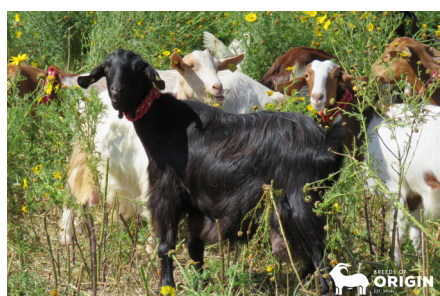
A Maltese goat with black markings
on Tulliera Farm in Delimara
(2023, D. Grech)



Breeds of Origin Conservancy launches the campaign „Inħarsu l-Wirt Nazzjonali“ (Safeguarding National Heritage)

Malta. The non-profit organisation [Breeds of Origin Conservancy](#) has officially launched the campaign 'Inħarsu l-Wirt Nazzjonali' (Safeguarding National Heritage), with the aim to conserve and recognise endemic species and subspecies, indigenous livestock, and local agricultural cultivars and varieties as National Heritage.

The initial phase of the campaign aims to raise awareness about the indigenous goat of the Maltese islands, in the wake of a request made by the same organisation, together with the Maltese Goat and Sheep Cooperative (KMMN), to the Competent Authorities to classify the indigenous goat of the Maltese islands as a „Traditional Population“ in a critical state, with an estimated population of fewer than 1,000 head, and to recognize the breed as a „local“ and an endangered one.



A typical herd of indigenous Maltese goats exhibiting variations in coat colour
(2017, D. Grech)

„To further recognise the national heritage that our country possesses, we felt the need to launch this campaign through folk music. It is a great honor for us because, in addition to raising awareness about the importance of safeguarding indigenous livestock, through this traditional narrative ballad, as the Maltese saying goes, we hit two birds with one stone, since at the same time, we are keeping this cultural heritage alive to ensure that these traditions continue to be enjoyed by future generations,“ said Darryl Grech, Founder of Breeds of Origin Conservancy.

For the first time in Malta, a show specifically dedicated to indigenous Maltese goats and sheep, was held on 29th September in Żejtun. This exhibition served as

an educational platform to showcase this national heritage, unique to the Maltese islands.

Noel Buttigieg, Chairperson of the organisation's Board, emphasized that „research in this field is the key to achieve better knowledge of our country's tangible and intangible heritage. The protection of National Heritage continues to strengthen the sustainability of the Maltese product on many levels, including the continued celebration of Maltese identity with those who visit our country throughout the year.“ The voluntary organisation is in dialogue with the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, and Animal Rights to design and implement measures for the necessary protection of the Maltese indigenous goat, a symbol of our island's history and cultural identity.

An agreement was also reached with the same Ministry, similar to the agreement signed in April of this year with the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, to strengthen cooperation for the collaboration and implementation of research and conservation projects for local species, subspecies, breeds and varieties.

Darryl Grech, Breeds of Origin Conservancy
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/OjJNeHest752nnve/?mbextid=WC7FNe>



Week old twins
(2017, D. Grech)

ERFP General Assembly



The SAVE Foundation was invited to present its activities with regard to animal genetic resources at the ERFP (European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources) General Assembly in Florence at the end of September. It was an inspiring event, many thanks to the ERFP for the invitation and the exchange.

The presentations of the ERFP General Assembly are available on the ERFP website: <https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/index.php/event/general-assembly-2024-provisonnal-date-firenze-italy-day-1/>

FAO cattle identification app

But now quickly pull out your camera and head out to the pasture: the FAO is developing an app that can be used to identify cattle breeds in the field. The FAO is grateful if photos are made available.

Do you already have photos of cattle breeds? All the better, then you can upload them directly online: <https://cattle-image-retrieval-microservice-tzpoev04wq-ew.a.run.app/>



Book on local Italian livestock breeds

Dive into the world of Italian rare breeds: Daniele Bigi (from R.A.R.E.), Francesco Perri and Alessio Zanon wrote a book on „Le razze locali dell’Emilia-Romagna”.



Cavallo Agricolo TPR, premiato alla Fieracavalli, Verona (Foto Bigi D.)

You do not speak Italian? Then let yourself be inspired by stunning pictures of stunning rare breeds!

https://www.associazionerare.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/LeRazze-LocalidellEmiliaRomagna_compressed.pdf





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foundation

Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe

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