



Amalthia



Dodecanese cattle project
Nisyros-October`25-May`26



Dodecanese project - Nisyros



NISYROS-2025

Beginning October 2025, the island of Nisyros was visited, within the scope of the project agreed with SAVE for the year 2025, regarding all bovine breeds/populations of the Dodecanese islands. Aim was to monitor the cattle population of Nisyros, rediscovered and known to Amalthia since 2015. Initially the situation did not look very promising, since main breeder G. Sfakianos went through some setbacks with reduced subsidies and some other struggles. Visiting the herd, it was immediately clear that several good animals of the Nisyros type were missing! Additionally, due to the issues, it looked that the long collaboration with Amalthia was going to be very difficult in the future. The Nisyros cattle number at Sfakianos' farm had been drastically reduced to around 15 animals including newborn calves. The basic important adult cows (5-6) somehow related to the previous old owner Elefteria Orsaris "Stoula", are still present, but two main adult bulls purchased last year, had been already slaughtered together with other animals. Unfortunately, the future of this herd is not guaranteed, but a minimum sort of collaboration was at the end maintained, due to longer discussions and longstanding mutual respect.

Last year it was agreed to establish a new small group of cattle nearby G. Sfakianos farm, with the vice-mayor Giorgos D.; this plan has not yet been realised, due to various reasons. The cattle that will be purchased, will not come from G. Sfakianos' farm, but from another source. For this reason, the visit and duration on the island resulted to be decisive, in order to find other breeders willing to closer collaborate with Amalthia. A few other breeders with some Nisyros cattle are known, but weren't considered until now, due to the past close collaboration with G. Sfakianos; with a situation change, contacts are being made with other minor breeders! Some animals are known to exist in other places outside the area of the caldera, where the main herd is grazing. So, looking for those few additional animals, it was with a great surprise that in a secluded area, at least 15 animals with good characteristics of the Nisyros type were



Dodecanese project - Nisyros



spotted, belonging to a young breeder. According to him, more of the type are present in the area, roaming freely. This fact of course gave much hope that the population is still able to survive and increase. This new herd is healthy, although some inbreeding issues could be present due to their isolation (see slides with all the animals recorded).

As a priority action, along with the planned small group to be formed on the island, at least a new group of these cattle needs to be established, outside Nisyros. This important aim was pursued for long time but without success. Now it seems that a few breeders have been found in and outside Nisyros, and it was agreed with the owner of this second herd, that some young animals will be purchased by Amalthia, thanks to the SAVE project, but possibly only early Spring 2026. Discussions with the interested people are ongoing.

NISYROS-2026 update

A short visit to Nisyros was paid February '26, before the workshop in Rhodes, to meet some breeders and to keep the contacts, but most importantly the short visit beginning of May '26 together with the breeder from Leros, was decisive to choose finally the animals to transport to Leros. This is a major achievement, that has been sought for long time. The selected breeder is really motivated to receive the cattle and to take good care of them. The plan was to choose three cows and one bull, at the end only two young cows and a two year's bull were chosen, with 2-3 young cows to be booked for the next year. All animals chosen have excellent characteristics of the Nisyros breed, especially the black bull is very impressive (see pictures). A final fair price was also agreed between Amalthia representant and the local breeder (thanks to the sponsoring of SAVE Foundation). Now the difficult part of preparing the papers and taking samples for the analyses has to follow. Hopefully, every issue will be overcome, although it could take some time to achieve. Bureaucratic hurdles are present due to some restrictions for transportation outside the island. Another achievement was to agree with the choice of the next breeding bull, to keep a healthy and correct breeding program for the future; the brownish bull that will be left is 13 months and has excellent characteristics of the breed!



Dodecanese project - Nisyros



2 years old bull that will be purchased and sent to Leros





Dodecanese project - Nisyros



13-14 months young cow
that will be purchased and
sent to Leros





Dodecanese project - Nisyros



13-14 months young cow
that will be purchased and
sent to Leros





Dodecanese project - Nisyros



13-14 months old bull that
will be kept as main bull





Dodecanese project - Nisyros



Young brownish female calf with mother in 2025



Young brownish grey male calf with mother in 2025