

ELBARN – Central Workshop in Kutna Hora, February 2008

Rescue and Quarantine Group – contribution from Gustavo Gandini (22-01-2007)

The objectives of livestock breeds Arks and Rescue Centres, as stated in ELBARN, are:

1. To offer emergency places for endangered genetically important livestock,
2. To offer quarantine places for rare breeds in case of epidemics,
3. To keep core breeding groups,
4. To offer breeding help for livestock keepers,
5. To offer a place to the public to see animal genetic resources.

Objectives will most probably vary from country to country (for example objective n°2 “To offer breeding help for livestock farmers” might be a major objective in countries where little help is given to farmers, e.g. lack of breeder societies, extension services etc., or a minor objective in other countries). However, in order to develop Guidelines for Arks and Centres the above **objectives should be defined in details** (the terms Ark and Centre could also be defined). This will also help the field work planned for the second phase of the project.

Beside a deeper analysis of the possible objectives, several aspects need to be discussed.

Specifically two aspects are mentioned in the Agenda letter of the Kutna Hora meeting: “*What and when should be rescued?*” and “*How and when quarantine can be offered ?*” As a contribution to the preparation of the discussion expected on these two issues, below are reported some preliminary elements.

- **What (species, breeds, individuals), and when, should be rescued ?** – It is important to answer this question because resources (space and funds) are limited and choices should be taken also in order to optimise their use. Answers will vary across objectives. Type and number of animals to be rescued, and timing of rescue, might be function of the followings:
 1. Objective 1 opens at least the following questions: which level of endangerment justify the Ark operation ? what is genetically important ? is it possible to control loss of genetic variation in the rescued group ? is it possible some breed development in the rescued group ?
 2. Objective 2 opens at least the following questions: which risks there are for the other animals already present in the Centre, as a function of type/structure of the Centre ? which risks can we take ?
 3. Objective 3 opens at least the following questions: which aims for the core breeding group ? the animals forming the core breeding group allows to reach the specific aims ?
 4. Objective 5 opens at least the following questions: the education/information aim is the priority or a “sub-product” of the Centre ?
- **How and when quarantine can be offered ?** – At least the following aspects need to be discussed:
 1. As already mentioned above: which risks for the other animals already present in the Centre ? which risks can we take ?
 2. Should some space always available for sanitary emergencies (epidemics), at which costs ?
 3. Which level of breed endangerment justify the quarantine operation ?

Finally, we should keep in mind that many aspects to be discussed in the other Groups might influence the work of the Rescue and Quarantine Group, e.g. ownership of the animals rescued, structures, links within the network, links with farmers outside the network.