

**Work Group  
Characterisation of Ark and Rescue Centres**

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**Why Ark and Rescue Centres (ARC's) ?**

**Traditional breeds of farm animals are threatened for many different reasons:**

- **industrialisation and globalisation of agriculture and breeding**
  - dual purpose breeds are eliminated in favour of breeds, highly productive for one single characteristic: meat, dairy products, .....
  - modern techniques of selection and breeding allow for very rapid replacement of dual purpose animals with high productive mono purpose breeds
  - tractors replace draught horses
  
- **policy decisions**
  - More stringent European sanitary standards for production of dairy products, meat derived products, ...tend to alter the traditional production process. Traditional production of cheese and other milk products on the spot in mountainous area's is under threat and as such also the breeds of farm animals at the basis of these products.
  - Many former Eastern and Central European countries encourage rapid transformation of their traditional agriculture and breeding according to Western European standards where input of local breeds is minimized.
  
- **diseases**
  - industrialisation, globalisation, concentration of production, breed selection criteria increase vulnerability of farm animals for diseases.
  - international mobility of animals, of their products and of human beings in general, increase the risks of rapid spreading of contagious diseases (FMD – AI - ....)
  - most countries don't have special provisions for dealing with rare breeds in case of an outbreak of a contagious disease
  
- **political unrest, military conflicts**
  - reference is made to the situation in former Yugoslavia

## Different sources of threats for traditional farm animals justify different types of Ark and Rescue Centres (ARC's)

- **Educational ARC's**

- Purposes
  - > inform public about
    - different breeds, endangered breeds
    - qualities, merits of the breeds
    - importance of genetic diversity
    - why endangered
  - > special information program for schools and organisations of farmers, scientists, hobby breeders, ....
- Requirements for educational ARC's
  - > have a representative sample of endangered and well preserved, typical local farm animals
  - > guiding facilities
  - > documentation
  - > well equipped meeting rooms
- Type of facilities
  - > Farm parks, show farms
  - > Open air musea, national parks
  - > Zoo's and zoological gardens
  - > School farms, university research farms
  - > Children's farms

- **Farm ARC's**

- Purposes
  - > breeding of endangered farm animals:
    - maintenance and multiplication of local breeds
    - production and sale of (labelled) local products
    - combination with nature preservation – grazing projects
    - combination with caring for handicapped people (care farms, hypo therapy)
    - farm tourism
  - > sustainable farming with local breeds
- Requirements
  - > professionally run Ark farms, Arche hofe, biological farms, ...
  - > farms should be self supporting, profitable
  - > majority of animals present on the farms should belong to local endangered breeds

- > open to the public
  - > guidance
- Type of facilities
  - > Ark farms
  - > Care farms
  - > ARC's should be well spread geographically in order to minimize risks in case of outbreak of contagious diseases.
- **Rescue stations:**
  - Purposes
    - > to save herds of endangered farm animals from slaughtering in case last remaining breeder(s) (have to) stop breeding
    - > to save endangered breeds of farm animals in case of outbreak of contagious diseases
    - > to save animals in case of political unrest, military conflicts
  - Requirements
    - > facilities that are acquainted with caring for animals and have room, time and personnel available to welcome additional animals
    - > in most of the cases these facilities will have to care for the animals the time necessary for finding a definitive solution.
  - Type of facilities
    - > all type of facilities that are equipped and can take care of farm animals during a certain period of time.

<b>Remaining questions to be dealt with</b>
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- **How many of each of the Educational, Farm ARC's and Rescue stations a country should have ? Is this a function of:**
  - the number of endangered breeds ?
  - the surface of the country ?
  - the vulnerability of a country to contagious diseases (because of geographical position of a country, lack of regulation and controls, .....) ?
  - the political situation ?
- **How to develop ARC's in case a country has insufficient facilities ?**
  - Does the country recognize the need to protect endangered breeds and is the country prepared to provide for financial support ?
  - If not, can NGO's play a role ? Who will provide for financial support ? European Union ?
  - Support of SAVE, other supra-national NGO's ?

- **Rules and regulations applicable to different types of ARC's**
  - Common European rules, national rules
  - Zoo's and animal parks open to the public are subject to different and more stringent rules than Ark farms
  - Are zoo's and public animal parks allowed to become a rescue station ?
  
- **Quality standards for the different types of ARC's**
  - who will set quality standards for the different types of ARC's ?
  - which quality standards ?
  - How to control respect for these standards ?
  - Who will and how to sanction in case of non respect of the minimal standards ?
  
- **How to develop cooperation among ARC's ? Cooperation is important for**
  - exchanging information and experience
  - promoting each other's premises
  - helping each other especially in case of emergency
  
- **How to facilitate transborder transport of animals in cases of emergency ?**
  - many traditional breeds live in different neighbouring countries
  - transborder transportation of farm animals is handicapped by very stringent regulations
  - exchange in between animals of a rare breed, but living in different countries, should not be subject to the same regulation as cross border transportation of industrial breeds for commercial purposes
  - Recommendations to EU ?

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