



Arca-Net: an Europe-wide online directory of institutions showing rare livestock breeds and old cultivated plants

Arca-Net is both travelling guide and information portal

The realisation that “man can only protect what he knows well” has been the trigger for the Internet presence of Arca-Net <http://www.arca-net.info>. Rare and endangered livestock breeds and old cultivated plants have meanwhile disappeared from agricultural production units but they continue to live on numerous Ark-farms, livestock parks, variety gardens, open-air museums and other institutions. Arca-Net makes these institutions known and initiates visits. Moreover, Arca-Net offers well-understandable background information and sensitises for the topic of conservation.

Arca-Net is international

Arca-Net is a database-supported Internet presence with comprehensive search functions and numerous extension options. The first version of Arca-Net contained data of institutions in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. But this was only the beginning: Now, Arca-Net is also available in English, French and Italia. It shows possibilities to experience old breeds and rare cultivated plants in the whole of Europe. At the moment (March 2010) over 470 institutions in 40 European countries, from Iceland to Malta North-South and from the Azores to Ukraine West-East. A google map to zoom with all the locations is also on the website: www.arca-net.info. The actualisation process by the institutions themselves is of course password-protected and not openly accessible. Arca-Net will thus be a Europe-wide network of institutions in the conservation sector.

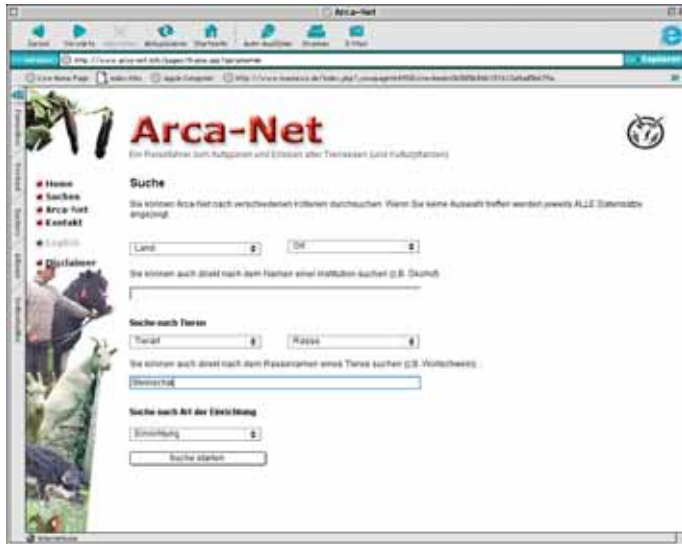


Arca-Net is extendable

As mainly institutions with livestock breeds were recorded in the starting phase of the database, priorities have now shifted towards the extension of the plant sector, including variety gardens, arboreta and other institutions in the area of cultivated plants. Thanks to relational databases (RDB), Arca-Net has all possibilities for extension. The offer of sales products such as seedlings, young plants or sausage products, wool and furs can also be included and will increase the motivation to visit an Arca-Net institution.

Arca-Net in detail

The search site is the heart of the Arca-Net in the Internet. Here, the user may select any combination of factors. The selection of a country, animal species or even breed name facilitates specific search. The list with the results offers a direct link to detailed information. Here, interested users do not only find the complete address of the institutions, but also far-reaching



information on infrastructure, opening hours and entrance fees. Housing conditions for animals are described, all endangered breeds kept in an institution are listed and deposited in a pop-up window with detailed information. To facilitate the journey, an individual site map and a pre-defined link to a route planner is integrated in the website to generate the route to the envisaged destination.

User prompting has deliberately been kept simple. Easily understandable symbols are used, and a help pop-up explains all symbols. Even less-experienced Internet users will be able to cope quickly.

Arca-Net is for everybody

The Internet is accessible to large parts of the public. Thus, all target groups can be addressed: persons and families interested in general in environmental issues and nature protection, school classes, friends of rural life, everybody has free access to Arca-Net. Arca-Net is thus active PR-work. It is planned to link Arca-Net broadly in the future, e.g. to tourism organisations, regional associations, nature protection circles and many others more.

Arca-Net is versatile

The database in the background of Arca-Net can be extended for other purposes not or not only presented on the Arca-Net website. Some institutions, for example, may also be used as rescue stations. Some database elements such as descriptions of the breeds or stock numbers can be useful in other contexts.



=> Internet presence of Arca-Net: <http://www.arca-net.info>

Appendix I

Arca-Net – Guidelines

Conditions for gathering data
on suitable establishments for the European Network Arca-Net

Basic conditions:

=> Establishments must have (OBLIGATORY conditions):

- Collection or permanent exhibition of rare livestock breeds or varieties of cultivated plant open to the public (also viewing by arrangement only).
- Pedigree breeding with participation in a breeding programme. Animals must be kept in such a way that the welfare of the animal is respected.

=> and also should (DESIRABLE conditions):

- Establishment recognised by the national organisation (e.g. GEH's Arche-Höfe, RBST's Approved Farm Parks) or a city-farm, open air museum, eco-museum, nature park centre (with membership of relevant professional association).
- The differing characteristics of the breeds and varieties should be documented (using information boards, labels or numbered to use in reference with a brochure).
- It is possible to also include interesting processing points which use traditional means to manufacture and market products from traditional breeds and varieties.

Plants:

- It must be a collection of, at least, regional importance
- Or an important cross-section of one species (e.g. Limonaio, Olivaio)

Animals:

- Breeding groups from at least three species from two size categories (see below)
- Or an important breeding station/stud of only one breed if this establishment has a significant part of the breed.
- Or an important cross-section of one species, e.g. Donkey farm with national breeds.

Processing point:

- Processing point open to the public (e.g. wool workshop, mill) which uses traditional and complete production methods and also declares the products accordingly

Appendix II

Arca-Net Categories:

- **Agritourism** (farm holidays)
- **Ark Institution** (vgl. standardisation of terms, below)
- **City Farm / School Farm**
- **Openair museum / Ecomuseum**
- **Protected area / Reserve**
- **Variety garden / Arboretum**
- **Zoo / Farm Park** (domestic animal park)
- **Processing point**

Standardisation of terms for Ark institutions:

When an establishment is not officially recognised or there is no available definition from the national organisations the following, minimum, specifications will be used:

Ark Farm:

A breeding group including sires from three of the following size categories (A: Cattle, Buffalo, Horse, Donkey, Pig; B: Goat, Sheep, Pig, Dog; C: Poultry, Dog, Rabbit, Bee). Animals should be kept according to the principles of a functioning farm. => Ark Farms housing guests or cultivating rare plants are listed also under Agritourism respectively Variety garden.

Ark Village:

At least four farms keeping animals, altogether keeping at least two breeds from each category (effective total of six breeds). Otherwise as Ark Farms.

Ark Park:

A plenty of breeds from at least three species, which are kept and bred for the purposes of publicity. => Listed also in the category Zoo / Farm Park.

Ark Reserve:

Show of old breeds in nature or landscape protection. Demonstration of farming in traditional agro-eco-systems (TAES). => Listed also in the category Protected area / Reserve.