



Project

European Network of Rescue Stations

Preliminary Results of Potential Analysis (pilot study)

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Introduction

As each country has its own methods for ensuring the survival of farm breeds, there are many different "places" undertaking the conservation of old breeds. Many of these sites or stations are virtually unknown and the role they might play in a conservation concept has hardly been looked at, let alone assessed.

The term "Rescue Station" is to be understood as a centre for endangered farm breeds. The inclusion of these stations in a strategic conservation network means a better, more rational use of limited resources, increases the chances of success and reduces the overall costs of conservation projects, which is of great interest to both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The aims of the European Network of Rescue Stations Project are to establish an inventory of existing old-breed sites and stations, to examine their suitability and to include them in a global concept. Such an inventory and the setting up of a Rescue Station Network should, in the future, make it possible to find a safe Rescue Station for highly endangered breeds as quickly and as efficiently as possible. As the concept will include short and medium-term conservation strategies and a well-developed data bank, concrete suggestions for improvements can be made for Rescue Stations in a particular country or region.

Table 1: Facilities keeping endangered breeds - per country (1998/99)

	Belgium	Germany	France *	Greece	Italy	Croatia	Austria	Switzerland	Hungary
National parks		1	X		X		X		5
Biosphere reserves, Natureparks	2	1			X	1	X		
State farms			(X)	X	9				
agricultural colleges, estate management		1	X	X		X	X		
Universities, Research stations		6	(X)	X					3
Homes, Penal institutions								3	
Farm parks, Domestic animal parks		2	X	1	1	1		1	
Zoos and Zoological gardens	1	124	(X)		X		X	1	3
Leisure and amusement parks		10	X		X		X	3	
Open-air museums, Archaeological sites	2		(X)					1	
Exhibition farms, Show farms								3	1
School farms, educational farms	5	1	(X)						
Children's-, Old people's homes								3	
Arc-farms		55	X				8		
agricultural concerns	20	X	(X)	X	X	X	X	400	
Hobbybreeders	100	X	(X)	X	X		X	300	4

Key: x = exact figures not known

*) Assessment in particular for the Aquitaine region

Potential Analysis

A potential analysis was carried out in 1998/99 which supplied important pointers and ideas for the refinement of the whole project.

In order to assess the situation in a few selected countries, an extensive questionnaire was developed. Experts and partner organizations of the SAVE Foundation were thus able to produce a record of the ways in which old farm breeds are being conserved in their respective countries. The appropriateness of the various conservation and breeding methods was also assessed. The study was financed by the Avina Foundation (see above).

Preliminary Results

Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain an overview of the situation for the whole of Europe. However, the study showed that practically no country has a fully operational network of Rescue Stations. In most cases, suitable measures need to be taken as regards motivation, information, interpretation and linking up to a breeding system. As a first step, it was possible to make a concrete assessment of the various categories of Rescue Station as defined by the questionnaire. The results are summarized in table 1.

For several countries, the figures shown in table 1 for facilities currently involved in the breeding of endangered breeds could not be evaluated exactly. However, experience and the availability or non-availability of figures for certain categories allow certain conclusions to be drawn as to the future of conservation strategies in these countries. It is striking that some categories present in north-western Europe are sometimes non-existent in southern and eastern Europe.

Practical knowledge of these facilities also allowed certain judgements to be made as to the suitability of the various categories as Rescue Stations. A difference may have to be made in the future between "Reception" or "Transit Stations" in cases of emergency (Rescue Stations in the strict sense) and "Breeding Stations" for the long-term accommodation of animals. The suitability criteria are shown in Table 2.

The suitability criteria do not claim to be scientifically exact. They are a summary of empirical values from various countries, and in some cases can be subject to great variability. Thus, for example, the 4 major hobby breeders listed for Hungary (see Table 1) cannot be compared with the numerous small hobby breeders listed for countries in western Europe. Conservation work is always dependent on the degree of involvement and motivation of the participants, making it important to assess each individual case. The above empirical values do however give fairly good indications for the following up of the project.

Table 2: Summary of the suitability criteria

	Reception facilities for animal groups	Recording of breeding figures	Avoidance of in-breeding	Motivation of participants	Readiness to collaborate	Suitability as Rescue Station
National parks	+	-	-	?	?	+
Biosphere reserves, Natureparks	+	+	+	+	+	++
State farms	+	+	-	-	+	+
agricultural colleges, estate management	+	+	?	+	+	+
Universities, research Stations	-	+	?	?	?	-
Homes, Penal institutions	+	-	?	-	-	-
Farm parks, domestic animal parks	-	-	-	+	+	(+)
Zoos and zoological gardens	-	+	-	+	+	+
Leisure and amusement parks	+	-	-	+	?	(+)
Open-air museums, archaeological sites.	-	+	+	+	+	++
Exhibition farms, Show farms	(+)	+	?	-	-	-
School farms, Educational farms	-	?	-	+	?	(+)
Children's-, Old people's homes	+	+	+	+	+	++
Arc-farms	-	+	+	+	+	+
agricultural concerns	-	+	+	+	+	+
Hobbybreeders	-	+	+	+	+	+

Future Steps

The great difficulties sometimes encountered in the gathering of this information make it clear that potential Rescue Stations must be registered directly and not, as originally planned, via experts and partner organizations. However, the global objective of the project remains intact. A workshop with potential partner organizations and governmental representatives should also be held, so that the experts responsible can be made more aware of the problems specific to their own countries.

A short summary (in German) of the study can be obtained for Euro 10 (plus postage) from the SAVE Head Office, Paradiesstr. 13, D-78462 Konstanz/Germany