

SAVE-News 4/2001

This newsletter is issued four times a year by SAVE Foundation (Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe)

Model Project Agro-Biodiversity at Lake Constance

The marketing of their products is decisive for the economic survival of endangered cultivated plants and livestock breeds. If marketing fails, both plants and animals will remain dependent on subsidies. Animal breeds and plant varieties have to be repositioned. Therefore, the SAVE Foundation intends to gather experiences in model projects during the next years. The international Lake Constance region around the SAVE Head Office presents itself for the task. The project is divided up into several components. The first elements are defined as follows:

- Atlas of old fruit varieties in the Western Lake Constance region
- Consumer / tourist brochure "Experience Diversity at Lake Constance"
- "Test of Taste": program of sensory events with forgotten pleasures
- Feasibility study on "Cultivation of old cultivated plants on marginal soils"

The above mentioned project components are presently being elaborated. It is planned to complete the task until the end of this year. Phrasing and processing of further components will result from the success and obtained results of the pilot project.

Expert's Meeting on Mangalitsa Breeding

At the 21st of August 2001, an international co-ordination meeting of Mangalitsa breeders in Europe took place in Budapest. The workshop was co-operatively organised by SAVE Foundation and DAGENE (Danube Countries Alliance). Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia were present. The actual co-ordination meeting was preceded by several lectures on the scientific state-of-the-art. Afterwards, questions and problems concerning the international exchange of breeding animals were discussed. Such an exchange is planned to enable urgently needed blood refreshing in the various remaining breeding groups. Because of the danger of spreading epidemics, numerous export and import restrictions are presently in force, thus increasing the difficulty of the project.

Because of the still existing uncertainties concerning the origin of the animals, it was decided to apply a test on genetic distance in all involved countries. The test was suggested by the Austrian side. Taking samples would be very simple and comparatively cost-effective with the Typifix method for DNA-analysis. A tissue sample is taken at the same time the ear tag is being punched, and collected in a little container which carries the same marking as the ear tag. The sample is easily assigned to and may be kept for one year. In order to facilitate a fast discussion and realisation of sample-taking in all concerned countries, the SAVE Foundation has volunteered to collect data and experiences with the above mentioned method, to distribute them via e-mail and to co-ordinate the further line of action.

Foot and Mouth disease, answer of the European Commission

SAVE addressed on April 11th, 2001, a letter to Commissioner Fischler concerning that rash generalised measures to fight the foot-and-mouth disease might lead to the disappearing of the last remains of still existing endangered livestock breeds in Europe. SAVE also emphasized that the European Union and the Member States have obliged themselves ratifying the "Convention on Biological Diversity" to conserve genetic diversity also in the area of agrobiodiversity.

SAVE received now an answer from the office of Commissioner Byrne, responsible for Health and Consumer Protection. The Commission shares the concern for the problems related to the current foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak and the conservation of endangered livestock breeds. The Commission intends to review the current policy on FMD in the light of the experience of the recent outbreak. This review will include disease control measures for endangered livestock breeds and conditions under which vaccination may be applied. The on-going development of new laboratory tests, which are aimed at distinguishing vaccinated animals from infected ones, might increase the available vaccination options. All this issues will be discussed during the International Conference on the prevention and control of FMD, which is being arranged for December 2001 by the Belgian Presidency with support of the Commission and the European Parliament. The Commission attaches great importance to the outcome of this conference for the preparation of its future legal proposals on the prevention and control of FMD.

Prof.Dr. Imré Bodo new chairman of SAVE Foundation

In the frame of the statutory rotation regulations Prof.Dr. Imré Bodo has taken over the chairmanship of SAVE Foundation for the next two year period 2001-2003. Imré Bodo is Doctor of Agricultural Sciences, retired from the leadership of Animal Breeding Department of the University of Veterinary Science Budapest/Hungary, now Professor at the Debrecen University of Agriculture. He has been involved in the activity of conservation of genetic resources since 1961, when he started to work in preservation of Hungarian Grey cattle, Mangalica pigs and Racka sheep at the Hortobagy State Farm (70'000 ha). As a professor, he continued to work in this field on an international level. He is chairman of DAGENE (Danubian Alliance for Gene Conservation in Animal Species) and president of two Hungarian rare breeds associations (Hungarian Grey cattle, Furioso horse breed) and an international one (Lipizzan horses). With Save Foundation he is one of the initial persons.

Biodiversity Rights Legislation (BRL)

GRAIN (Genetic Resources Action International) - an international NGO with head office in Barcelona/Spain and dealing especially with legislative and political aspects of biodiversity - announces the launch of a new information service available through Internet:

"Biodiversity Rights Legislation (BRL)" is a collection of public legal documents (laws, bills and other legislative proposals) maintained by GRAIN as a specialised information service for NGOs, peoples' organisations, policy makers, researchers and journalists. BRL contains the full texts or the Internet addresses (URLs) of emerging laws and policies that affects peoples' control over agricultural biodiversity particularly in developing countries. The BRL collection is under development and GRAIN would be grateful to receive additional materials that people would like to incorporate into it. The main entry page for BRL is: <http://www.grain.org/publications/brl-intro.cfm>

Important dates (extract)

29 October - 10 November: "International Course on Farm Animal Diversity: Dynamics, Utilization and Preservation"; Wageningen (NL); Info: International Agricultural Centre, P.O. Box 88, NL-6700 AB Wageningen. Web: <http://www.iac-agro.nl> , e-mail: training@iac.agro.nl

5-6 November: Symposium "Diversity on the Market" at Sulingen, Germany. Possibilities of the marketing of genetic resources by label production. Information: bluemlein@zadi.de; Web: http://www.zadi.de/iqr/symposium_2001/ankuendigung.htm

8-10 November: International Symposium: "Managing Biodiversity in Agricultural Ecosystems"; Montreal, Canada. Info: United Nations University, Tokyo (UNU/PLEC): <http://www.unu.edu/env/plec/>

15 November: "Elevage et enseignement pratique de la zootechnie", Meeting organised by 'Société d'Ethnozootechnie' at the Académie de l'Agriculture, 18, rue de Bellechasse, Paris 7 (from 9am to 5pm).

26-27 November: Biodiversité des Plantes. Collation, accessibilité de l'information et utilité; in Paris, France. Institut de la Vie, phone: +33-01.42.72.53.09

1 December: "Actuality and future of the national fruit heritage in France"; national meeting of AFCEV and the 'Association Danone pour les Fruits' in Paris. Information: cjbn@jardin-bota.u-nancy.fr

19-20 January 2002: "From the Past till Today"; national fruitshow of the 'Stichting Behoud en Bevordering Fruitcultuur' at Doesburg, Netherlands. Exposition of more than 1000 old, new and special fruit varieties. E-mail: fructus.doesburg@wxs.nl, Web: <http://www.tolderas.nl>

4 -7 April 2002: EAAP-Symposium "Livestock farming systems: Product quality based on local resources and its potential contribution to improved sustainability" in Benevento, Italy. Information: fez2002.benevento@tin.it

=> Further information is available from:

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