

Reported by

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 1: CHARACTERIZATION, INVENTORY AND MONITORING OF TRENDS AND ASSOCIATED RISKS

Actions undertaken during the past year

A survey at breed level was conducted for the Fresian/Holstein and the local cattle, and a survey at species level (with some information on local breeds) was conducted for sheep and goats. Among other things, the results of the surveys were used to monitor population trends.

Actions planned for the next year

Similar type of surveys will be done during the next year. The situation remains quite complicated because a large proportion of farmers (about 40%) keep sheep and goats together, and also in the same farm, purebred and various degree crosses are mixed; this is particularly true for goats, the majority of which are crossbred animals. A study is under way to investigate the genetic basis of prolificacy in the Chios sheep breed.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 2: SUSTAINABLE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Actions undertaken during the past year

The government programmes for the genetic improvement of the Chios sheep and the Damascus goat breeds, continued. In addition, the project aiming at the substitution of scrapie susceptible with scrapie resistant sheep genotypes, advanced quite well. A performance recording programme undertaken by the Cyprus Holstein/Friesian Association was initiated. Genetic improvement of the Holstein/Friesian population relies on AI with imported frozen semen from proven bulls.

Actions planned for the next year

The above mentioned projects will continue, and also, a new project aiming at increasing the scrapie resistant goat genotypes is being planned. At the same time, the necessary measures will be taken for safeguarding the existence of the native goat breeds in which the frequency of resistant genotypes is low.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 3: CONSERVATION

Actions undertaken during the past year

Two projects were implemented aiming at the in situ conservation of the local cattle and the local fat-tailed sheep. Farmers keeping purebred animals of the two breeds received subsidies based on the number of breeding males and females. The two breeds continue to be at risk.

Actions planned for the next year

The above mentioned projects, will continue during the next year, while some incentives for farmers keeping the native Machaeras goat may be introduced. Latest figures about the number of purebred Machaeras animals show a sharp decline due to extensive crossbreeding with the Damascus goat. The establishment of a national cryopreservation gene bank is under consideration.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 4: POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Actions undertaken during the past year

The operation of the molecular biology research and teaching laboratory of the Animal Production Sector, Faculty of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Food Science of the Cyprus University of Technology, is worth mentioning. This development is going to improve research prospects related to the animal genetic resources of the country.

Actions planned for the next year

To strengthen existing infrastructure and to establish links and cooperation with relevant institutions locally and overseas.