

COUNTRY REPORT CYPRUS
FOR 2010-2011

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

Actions undertaken during the past year

A report at breed level was published for the Fresian/Holstein breed and for the local cattle breed. For sheep and goats, a survey was conducted at species level with some information on local breeds and crosses included.

Actions planned for the next year

Similar surveys are planned for the next year. For sheep and goats, the situation is complicated by the large proportion of farmers (about 40%) who keep sheep and goats together in mixed flocks. It is also common, purebred and various degree crosses to be found in the same farm; this is particularly true for goats, the majority of which are crossbred animals. In the Chios sheep breed, the genetic basis of prolificacy and the identification of genes affecting milk yield, are under investigation.

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, a project aiming at the increase of non-susceptible to scrapie sheep and goat genotypes, has made substantial progress.

A performance recording programme undertaken by the Cyprus Holstein/Friesian Association continued. 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. 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. The population of these goat breeds has fallen sharply.

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 have to be introduced. The sharp decline in the number of purebred Machaeras animals is due to extensive crossbreeding with the Damascus breed of goat.

The establishment of a national cryopreservation gene bank has begun, as part of the National Scrapie Plan. Through the collaboration of relevant government institutions (the Cyprus Veterinary Services, the Agricultural Research Institute and the Department of Agriculture, all belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment), the development of cryopreservation bank is in progress. The bank will contain primarily embryos and semen from sheep and goats. Animals included will have susceptible genotypes scrapie or come from local breeds at risk. The organisation and management of the bank shall be placed under the supervision and guidance of the National Coordination Committee for Animal Genetic Resources. The National Committee shall be appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 4: POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Actions undertaken during the past year

The FAO publication “Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration” has been translated and published in Greek, through fruitful collaboration between FAO, the National Agricultural Research Foundation (NAGREF) in Greece and the Agricultural Research Institute (ARI) in Cyprus.

The infrastructure and equipment for a cryopreservation bank, along with facilities to conduct all treatments and operation to acquire sheep and goat embryos and semen for the cryopreservation bank have been established.

Actions planned for the next year

To disseminate the Greek translation of the “Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration” to relevant stakeholders and to the general public and to promote the implementation of its policies and proposed actions.

To install suitable software (such as CryoWEB) in Cyprus, in order to establish the necessary database for the cryopreserved material.

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