



Denmark - Annual report of activities on AnGR 2007/2008 (up to 15. august)

Helle Palmø, National Coordinator
Centre for Genetic Resources,
The Danish Plant Directorate
Skovbrynet 20
DK-2800 Kgs. Lyngby, Denmark

Background information - on the past!

In 2006, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture & Fisheries decided to analyze the organization of the work area: Genetic resources within the field of responsibility of the Ministry. The analysis covered farm animals and plants and clearly showed that the area would benefit from being reorganized. Based on of the report, the Ministry decided to gather all working areas, by establishing a new Centre for Genetic Resources in one of the Ministry's own directorates (The Plant Directorate). The decision was executed 1 august 2007. The Centre will address both national and international work on plant and farm animal genetic resources.

Accomplished tasks

The present Committee for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources in Denmark was appointed in December 2007 by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture & Fisheries. The members of the Committee represents breeders of national breeds, universities, research institutes, agricultural organisations, The Ministry of Culture (Danish Agricultural Museum), The Ministry of Environment (Danish Forest and Nature Agency) and finally the Ministry of Food, Agriculture & Fisheries. The latter member is also the chair of the Committee, and the Centre for Genetic Resources is the secretariat of the Committee. In July 2008, the chair retired, and the minister has just appointed head of department in the Danish Plant Directorate Henrik G. Jensen, as the new chair.

During 2007, the Committee held 3 meetings, and the plan for 2008, is to hold 4 meetings.

In 2007, 3 breeding organisations signed cooperation agreements with the Committee. All together, 14 breeding organisations for threatened breeds, have now signed cooperation agreements, and quite a few of them are beginning to work very well. Each year, the Committee financially supports the organisations.

Subsidies to breeders of national breeds of horses, cattle pigs, sheep, and goats are also administrated by the Committee. In 2008, around 1.150.000 DKK (approx. 153.000 €) were paid to 140 breeders. The total budget for the Committees work is 3 million DKK (approx. 400.000 €).

In November 2007, a 2 day meeting for the breeders of endangered farm animals was arranged, and on the agenda was information about the new structure, the future strategy, and the director of Thise Mejeri (Thise Dairy) came by, and explained why this dairy has had great success with niche production in Denmark.

In 2007, the Committee supported a breeder, in order to establish 'contingency flocks' on his own farm, for the endangered geese, ducks and hens in case of bird flu in Denmark.

In 2007, a student from the University of Copenhagen started genotyping 180 individuals of the rare breed: Jutland Cattle. The project is financed by the Committee, and the purpose of the project is to find out, if there are one or several genetic distinct 'lines' in this breed. The report will be ready around Christmas 2008.



Future activities

Each year, a very detailed work plan for the work within farm animal genetic resources in Denmark is published. This was also the case for 2008, but this year it is a bit delayed, due to election for new Danish parliament last autumn, which postponed the process of appointing the new committee with several months.

The Committee has decided to comply with FAO's suggestion to translate the Interlaken Declaration and Global Plan of Action, and 'State of the World' (short version) into national language. Information is one of the main activities of the Committee, and it is of course the intention to use the Danish versions of the FAO documents to inform about the importance of the work to decision-makers and other people. Furthermore the plan of action is an important tool for the Committee, as in future the Committee will observe the plan of action, when planning initiatives and activities.

Traditional, the Committee has focused on watching and preservation of old genetic resources threatened by extirpation. In the other Nordic countries, focus has already increased on sustainability in modern breeding work, and the Committee will observe these initiatives that may be made in other countries, and will on this background evaluate, if the Committee should recommend similar initiatives in Denmark.

The Committee still wishes to give the preservation work a high priority, and the cornerstone in the preservation work will still be the breeders and the breeding and race organisations. Furthermore, this priority appears from the approved list of initiatives and activities for 2008. A number of these are described in a short version in the following paragraphs.

In November 2008, the Committee will arrange a 1-day meeting for breeders of endangered farm animals. On the agenda will be: 'Interlaken Declaration and Denmark'.

The FAO status for the 2 pig breeds: Danish Landrace anno 1970 and the Black and White spotted Landrace is still Critical (but maintained). The trend is though not very positive, and therefore the Committee has decided to start new activities and to give extraordinary support, in order to try to save the breeds. New electronic tools for registration are also on the schedule.

The contingency flocks already started, is very successful, and the Committee is planning to support an additional breeder in 2008.

A meeting especially for the breeders of the endangered geese, ducks and hens is planned to be held in the autumn this year.

In line with former years around 250.000 DKK (33.300 €) will be spent on cryopreservation of the endangered breeds. Another 75.000 DKK (approx. 10.000 €) will be used, as usually, to support 5 historical farm animal shows.

Finally, new web-pages are under development, parts of the pages are ready, and it is now possible to subscribe for a newsletter for genetic resources. When the work plan 2008 is ready, it will also be launched on www.pdir.dk, and a newsletter will be sent to all who have subscribed for the newsletter.