

**COUNTRY REPORT
FOR 2007-2008 of**

Ireland

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

1. Population data collected on Ireland's native rare breeds of cattle, sheep and horses.
2. Three new cattle and one new horse breeding organisation were approved under EU legislation to maintain herd books for their respective breeds.
3. Funding was provided for a molecular characterisation of native Irish goat breeds
4. Funding provided for project involving characterisation and conservation of dark European honeybee.
5. Population data on Ireland's version of EFABIS was updated for a number of cattle, sheep and horse breeds.

Actions planned for the next year

1. Continue to collect population data on rare breeds.
2. Continue to deal with applications for approval from new organisations seeking to maintain herd books, studbooks or flockbooks.
3. Amend the terms of conditions of a scheme that provides funding for projects on conservation of animal genetic resources to include the strategic priorities for action in the Global Plan of Action. This will help our conservation activities follow the guidelines as set out in the Global Plan of Action.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 2: SUSTAINABLE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Actions undertaken during the past year

1. Ireland is currently reviewing its National Biodiversity Plan with a view to developing a new plan. One of the objectives of this plan was to conserve genetic diversity, both wild and domestic.
2. Ireland developed a scheme known as the Animal Welfare, Recording and Sucker Cow Scheme. This scheme will improved data collection on a number of cattle breeds in Ireland. The scheme includes the native rare breeds of cattle and will collect additional pedigree and performance data which will help Ireland respond to economic and social needs and market demands.

3. Ireland is currently developing an industry based organisation for the sheep sector. One of the responsibilities of this organisation is to progress a breeding programme for the commercial sheep sector.
4. Funding was provided to a researcher to acquire knowledge and skills on the requirements for the long term storage of semen and embryos with a view to ascertaining the viability of setting up a national genebank.
5. Funding was provided to the Galway Sheep Breeders Society to host a seminar on breeding and conservation of Galway Sheep.
6. Continued financial support was provided to farmers in the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme to keep native breeds in danger of being lost to farming.
7. An economic breeding index for beef cattle breeds in Ireland was launched. The economic index known as the Eurostar rating, ranks both cows and bulls on the worth or value to Irish beef farming systems.

Actions planned for the next year

1. Continue with plans to develop an organisation to progress breeding in the sheep sector.
2. Continue financial support for the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme and projects that involve the conservation of animal genetic resources.
3. Continue to review the National Biodiversity Plan and assist with the development of a revised plan.
4. While reviewing regulations for Cattle AI, the need to develop systems whereby genetic diversity can be monitored and corrective action taken if necessary, will be taken into consideration.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 3: CONSERVATION

Actions undertaken during the past year

Funding was provided for a number of projects involving conservation:

1. Development of a conservation strategy for Ireland's native rare farm animal breeds.
2. Collection and storage of semen from the following rare breeds, Kerry and Irish Moiled cattle, and Irish Draught horses.
3. DNA typing of bulls in the Kerry Cattle herd book.

Actions planned for the next year

1. Seek applications for funding for projects on the conservation of Ireland's domestic farm animal diversity.
2. Continue developments on establishment of National Genebank

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 4: POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Actions undertaken during the past year

1. The annual meeting of the National Advisory Committee for the management and conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture took place in March 2007.
2. Ireland has participated on the Steering Committee of the European Regional Focal Point. Ireland continued to provide funding towards the operation of the ERF.
3. The Department of Agriculture will host a forum on Animal Genetic Resources to include national stakeholders such as the breeding industry, government agencies, advisory committees and non-governmental organisations.

Actions planned for the next year

1. Meeting of the Advisory Committee for the management and conservation of genetic resources scheduled for March 2009.
2. Examination of the Global Plan of Action to see where Ireland can further develop and improve AnGR.