

**COUNTRY REPORT
FOR 2007-2008 of**

Switzerland, Federal Office for Agriculture

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

NC Karin Wohlfender participated in the international EFABIS Workshop in Mariensee, Germany (13. – 16. 2007) and was very active in the preparation of the Interlaken Congress and was therefore several times in Rome before her sudden death in June 2007.

In February 2008, Catherine Marguerat was appointed to replace the defunt Karin Wohlfender as NC

So far, a total of 35 projects, including different endangered breeds of horses, cattle, sheep, goats, poultry and bees, have been approved by an external committee of experts, headed by the NC of the Federal Office for Agriculture. Currently, 10 projects are carried out with 12 breeds, whereof 6 goat breeds, 2 cattle breeds, one bee breed, 3 poultry breeds and one horse breed.

The 1st International Technical Conference for AnGR in Interlaken was an excellent opportunity to intensify communication between countries and it was a full success. It commits the countries to implement 23 strategic priorities by individual actions. In this context, Switzerland implements strategic area 1 by characterizing, inventorying and monitoring trends and risks of endangered breeds in close cooperation with animal breeding associations.

Actions planned for the next year

Submitted conservation projects will be evaluated and if possible approved and financially supported

Update of the EFABIS-Database.

Collaborate actively in the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS), global and regional information is initiated.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 2: SUSTAINABLE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Actions undertaken during the past year

Switzerland allocates grants for breeding programs developing local breeds of livestock contributing to a sustainable use and development of certain mountain regions, it encourages the development of conservation programs for endangered breeds.

One approved project investigates the possibilities of milking an endangered goat breed on alpine pastures

Actions planned for the next year

Submitted conservation projects will be evaluated and if possible approved and financially supported

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 3: CONSERVATION

Actions undertaken during the past year

So far, a total of 35 projects, including different endangered breeds of horses, cattle, sheep, goats, poultry and bees, have been approved by an external committee of experts, headed by the NC of the Federal Office for Agriculture. Currently, 10 projects are carried out with 12 breeds, whereof 6 goat breeds, 2 cattle breeds, one bee breed, 3 poultry breeds and one horse breed (see strategic priority area 1)

Switzerland develops cooperation within organizations active in the conservation of animal genetic resources.

The diversity of the Swiss livestock breeds is growing every year. Recently the association of “Rhätisches Grauvieh” proved, according to historic sources, that it has been part of the Swiss breeds for over 50 years

Actions planned for the next year

Submitted conservation projects will be evaluated and if possible approved and financially supported

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 4: POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Actions undertaken during the past year

The Swiss Confederation has been giving financial support to organisations involved in diversity conservation projects since 1999.

The Federal Office for Agriculture entrusted the Swiss College of Agriculture with the evaluation of the results of the conservation measures in all supported and realized AnGR projects. The aim of this study was to compare different conservation measures, applied within

one breed, by means of cost/benefit analysis and to optimize the use of the funds available. The study has shown that conservation measures are effective, breed sizes have either increased or at least not decreased, the danger of increasing the coefficient of inbreeding in small populations is under control and a growing number of breeders are interested in keeping endangered breeds. Following the interpretation of the results, the official application form has been revised in order to simplify the evaluation procedure of new projects. The next step will be the drawing up of new forms for intermediate and final reporting of the projects. They should help to improve the monitoring of endangered breeds.

In September 2007, Switzerland hosted the 1st International Technical Conference for AnGR in Interlaken. The conference included different elements: The Scientific Forum on animal genetic resources, the presentation of *the State of the world's animal genetic resources for food and agriculture*, based on country reports, the adoption of *the Global plan of action for animal genetic resources* and the adoption of the *Interlaken Declaration*. The Swiss organization committee also organized several side events: Participants were conveyed to an evening boat trip and the exhibition "Biodiversity, Food and Culture – Discover farm animal diversity" which took place opposite the congress venue. Animals of local endangered breeds were shown outside the tent and inside, visitors could learn about biodiversity, food and culture. Information booths of the Federal Office for Agriculture, the FAO and other organisations provided information on their activities, exhibition stands offered various animal products for tasting and sale and relevant movies were played. Excursions to 7 different destinations throughout Switzerland were a perfect occasion for sightseeing. A brochure on farm animal genetic resources in Switzerland was published for this occasion. It contains information on origin and development as well as characteristics and breeding objectives of the Swiss genetic resources.

At the conference closure, the participants remembered Karin Wohlfender, Swiss NC, who had passed away during preparation of the conference and acknowledged her dedication to the management of animal genetic resources.

Actions planned for the next year

With the adoption of the Interlaken Declaration on animal genetic resources, the FAO member countries recognized the important role of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture. It calls for substantial financial resources and long term support for animal genetic resources programmes. In Switzerland, the support of animal genetic diversity is part of the coherent agriculture policy, focusing on sustainability.