

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

Actions undertaken during the past year

1. A National Breed Inventory has been set up for all breeds in the UK using the EFABIS country based system using data from a 2006 survey of breeds, as part of the EFABIS rollout project under the EU GENRES Regulation 870/2004. This database has been integrated into the UK GRFA portal.
2. Under the Heritage Sheep Project – also part funded through GENRES – a review of heritage sheep breeds in the UK has been conducted with more in depth studies of selected breeds.
3. The Sheep Trust were also commissioned to further investigate parameters for defining geographic endemism for breeds which are at risk, not because of numerical scarcity – but because of geographical isolation, in preparation for a wider R&D project to define more robustly what is the minimum size of a breeding nucleus that should be conserved when threatened, for example, by an exotic disease such as FMD.
4. A meeting was held to discuss which biodiversity indicators should be produced for Farm Animal Genetic Resources under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and a programme put in place to develop a suitable set of indicators. This co-incided with discussions in Brussels on European 2010 Biodiversity indicators

Actions planned for the next year

1. The National Breed Inventory will be developed to improve the accuracy and frequency of the data input and to populate the fields that are currently blank. It will be integrated into the UK GRFA information portal.
2. Guidelines setting parameters for describing the minimum size and content of a nucleus (breeds at risk and herds/flocks of high genetic merit or distinctiveness) will be produced to provide protection to herds and flocks in the event of an exotic disease outbreak.. A more detailed project to describe scientifically robust definitions of a nucleus and breeds at risk through geographic isolation will be commissioned.
3. Development of a toolkit to allow more accurate molecular characterisation of breeds and identification of traits in populations that are of growing significance in more holistic breeding programmes e.g. disease resistance, meat quality, fitness for environmental management and conservation grazing etc.
4. A project will be commissioned to define UK biodiversity indicators for FAnGR using cattle and sheep and based on calculated or estimated effective population sizes.
5. Improvement in the identification and monitoring of poultry genetic resources

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 2: SUSTAINABLE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Actions undertaken during the past year

1. Under the Heritage Sheep project (GENRES), success stories in marketing lamb and other livestock products from heritage sheep breeds from across the EU have been brought together.
2. Payments to support the use of native breeds in conservation grazing under EAFRD have been made through special measures under the Higher Level Agri-environment Scheme.

Actions planned for the next year

1. Ongoing encouragement under Agri-environment schemes to support the use of native breeds in conservation grazing programmes and meat marketing schemes.
2. Commissioning of a project (subject to availability of funding) to determine the cost benefit of FAnGR to the rural economy

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 3: CONSERVATION

Actions undertaken during the past year

1. The RBST has broadened the scope of its work to incorporate all native breeds in programmes of conservation

Actions planned for the next year

1. Publicising the need for all keepers of at risk breeds to vaccinate their flocks and herds against Bluetongue.
2. Provision of advice on the maintenance of a closed population of indigenous Jersey cattle on the island of Jersey.
3. Instigation of a programme for prioritising the conservation of rare and at risk native breeds in the UK whilst at the same time monitoring genetic diversity in mainstream breeds

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 4: POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Actions undertaken during the past year

1. UK Ministers endorsed the creation of a UK National Standing Committee for FAnGR as an advisory non-departmental public body and appointed the Chair (Professor Geoff Simm of the Scottish Agricultural College) and 14 members + representatives from the Devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Committee is made up of geneticists, conservation management specialists, database managers and species breeding experts from mainstream and conservation sectors. The first meeting was on 6 March in London. The main task of the Committee is to deliver a 3 year National Action Plan with 37 Recommended Actions.
2. The UK participated fully in the FAO International Technical Conference in Interlaken in September 2007 and the drafting of the Interlaken Declaration.
3. The UK contributed to the activities of the ERFP through chairing the Steering Committee

Actions planned for the next year

1. Ongoing consolidation and development of the work of the NSC for FAnGR at national level will be continued through the Defra Secretariat with the objective of mainstreaming FAnGR policy into mainstream livestock policies
2. Continuing support and development of the work of the ERFP will be given