

Editorial

Dear colleagues,

The 4th issue of the ERFP Newsletter, coming out in the beginning of the summer, just before our Annual Workshop. This August we will meet in Vilnius, Lithuania. It is the first time we have our Annual Workshop in a Baltic country and we are looking forward to be acquainted with the the animal production and animal genetics sector of Lithuania and the region.

Inside the present issue you will find information regarding our 14th Workshop and also on the Training Workshop, which is dealing with the implementation of the Global Plan for Action in the European countries, including the role of NGOS,

and the exploitation of the EFABIS reports.

With this opportunity, I would like to underline the attention that ERFP gives to having an updated and well developed database for AnGR at European level and urge you to continue your efforts on updating and completing your national data in EFABIS database.

ERFP is working together with FAO and EAAP in coordinating the European Database for AnGR, on the acquiring and updating the information on the European farm animal breeds and on the roles of access to this information. The Workshop on Friday 22, will be an excellent opportunity to discuss our experiences on using the EFABIS Database and on

the exploitation of its reports for the management of FAnGR.

In this issue you will find an article on the German Animal Breeding act, the Workshop of the ELBARN project, details on the ERFP Annual Workshop news on ERFP projects and the AGRIGENRES projects.

I hope that you will enjoy your summer holidays and see you soon in Vilnius!

Andreas Georgoudis

ERFP-Secretary

Workshop on AnGR in the Caucasus region, 10-11 July 2008, Tbilisi, Georgia

In the frame of the general strategy of ERFP to enhance the role of NCs within their countries, a Workshop on the Monitoring for Future Effective Management of Animal Genetic Resources in the Caucasus Region and Kazakhstan will be held in 10-11 July in Tbilisi, Georgia. The Workshop is organized in the frame of the decision took during the 13th ERFP Annual Workshop to support the Caucasus region network. All countries of the Caucasus region participate in this Workshop. The Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia, Agrarian University and the Institute of Animal breeding will participate in the meeting. A press conference of the ERFP SC is scheduled, with the opportunity of the Workshop in order to present the aims, objectives and promote the work of the ERFP. During the ERFP Annual Workshop in Vilnius, the outcomes of the Caucasus Workshop will be presented.

14th ERFP Annual Workshop, 22 - 23 August, Vilnius

This year the 14th ERFP Annual Workshop, will be held in Vilnius, Lithuania. The Workshop will be hosted in "Le Meridien Vilion Resort", 18 km from the centre of the city. Bus transportation will be arranged for those that are not accommodated in the Conference hotel, from the official hotels of the EAAP conference. You can find these information in www.eaap2008.org.

On Friday 22 afternoon, during the projects coordination session, reports on the ongoing results of the ERFP projects will be presented. Furthermore the topics of the Next Call for Action 2008-2009 will be discussed.

The ERFP Annual meeting

is on Saturday 23. Among the other issues the process of implementation of the GPA in the European countries will be discussed, as one year passed from the International Conference in Interlaken.

Together with the invitation letter sent by ERFP secretariat, the agenda of the meeting is circulated.

All interested persons can download the agenda from the ERFP website (www.rfp-europe.org).

Furthermore, during the 59th EAAP Annual meeting, from 24-27 August, a special session for AnGR is organised on Sunday 24. The programme is on www.eaap2008.org

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Special points of interest:

- AnGR, Workshop, Tbilisi, Georgia, 10-11 July 2008
- 14th Workshop of the NCs, Vilnius, 22-23 August 2008
- Training Course for the NCs, Vilnius, 21-22 August 2008
- 59th EAAP Annual Meeting, 24-27 August 2008, Vilnius
- GLOBALDIV SUMMER SCHOOL – Deadline for application 10th July

The German Animal Breeding Act

The breeding of horses, cattle, pigs, sheep and goats in Germany is ruled by the "Animal Breeding Act" and its rules of application. In order to comply with European legislation, Germany undertook a thorough revision of the Breeding Act which dated back to 1989. In 2006, the *Bundesrat* (Upper Chamber of German Parliament) agreed to the amendment and the new Breeding Act came into force at the beginning of 2007. Since animal breeding is governed by the legislation of the *Laender*, the latter are now revising the corresponding rules of application incl. the financing of the corresponding measures.

As one achievement in the course of the revision, the Breeding Act now rules the conservation of genetic diversity as one major objective. It includes directions for the establishment of monitoring, subsequent *in situ* conservation programmes and cryoconservation measures and thus reflects the major objectives of the "National Programme for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Animal Genetic Resource". The National Programme was developed due to Germany's commitment to the conservation of its genetic resources. It was agreed accordingly between all stakeholders involved and approved by the German Conference of Agricultural Ministers in 2003.

Since the focus on conservation of animal genetic resources lies on indigenous breeds, the new Animal Breeding Act now holds a definition: a breed is defined as „indigenous“ if the original herd-book was established and has been maintained in Germany ever since. If the original herd-book was not established in Germany, a breed can be acknowledged as „indigenous“ by the responsible authorities if the

only herd-book for the breed is maintained and a breeding programme is carried out in Germany or a herd-book has been maintained since 1949 and a separate breeding programme is carried out in Germany.

One of the main objectives of the National Programme and now anchored in the Animal Breeding Act is the routine monitoring of breeds. The Breeding Act rules that the relevant data is transferred to the Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food (BLE). Here, the Information and Coordination Centre for Biological Diversity (IBV) has already been collecting the data for annual statistics for all registered herd-book animals since 1997. It is published in the so-called "Central Documentation on Animal Genetic Resources in Germany" (TGRDEU). This all-encompassing register of organised animal breeding in Germany and central database for statistics and characterisation of breeds and breeding animals of the most important farm animal species in Germany. It allows for an approximate monitoring of all breeding animals registered with German breeding associations and the identification of endangered farm animal breeds. Whereas in the past, the monitoring was based on the numbers of herd-book animals to calculate the "effective population size" (Ne) according to Falconer, a new approach to future monitoring is now being made, taking into account all population data available including the ancestry of the monitored breeds, and thus increasing the informative value of the monitoring. The BLE concluded co-operation contracts with the Umbrella Associations of German animal breeding to initiate monitoring of farm animals in close co-operation with their affiliated breeding associations.

Breeding organisations are crucial for on-farm conservation since they establish and carry out preservation breeding programmes. Animal Breeding falls under Federal Law and as a rule each *Bundesland* can acknowledge a breeding organisation for one and the same breed. In case of small, endangered breeds, keeping separate herd-books with different breedings associations usually poses an additional threat to the breed. The Breeding Act now clearly grants the local authorities the right to refuse acknowledgement if one (or more) breeding association(s) already exist(s) for an indigenous breed and the sustainability of the breeding programme would thus be compromised. Also, co-operation between already approved breeding organisations for the same endangered breed is encouraged and their role regarding its overall responsibility for carrying out a preservation programme is strengthened, too.

With regard to cryoconservation, the Breeding Act rules that Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV), with agreement of the Federal Governments, can develop basic guidelines for a

National Cryobank that specify the conditions under which material is regarded as part of the National Cryobank as well as the conditions that apply for using material thereof. In preparation of the establishment of such a National Cryobank, BMELV is carrying out a detailed survey in order to take inventory of the size and status of existing cryoreserves in Germany which might be integrated into a National Cryobank.

further reading:

Animal Genetic Resources in Germany – The National Programme (up-dated)

Central documentation on animal genetic resources in Germany (TGRDEU, in German only)

www.genres.de/tgrdeu

Animal Breeding Act (Tierzuchtgesetz 2006, in German only)

http://www.bmelv.de/cln_045/nn_753014/SharedDocs/downloads/GesetzeVerordnungen/Tierzuchtgesetz,templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/Tierzuchtgesetz.pdf

By Babette Balzer, Information and Coordination Centre for Biological Diversity, Germany

ERFP ICCI - project, 2 April, Bonn

In the frame of the ERFP-project Improvement of the existing ERFP communication and co-ordination infrastructure (ICCI), a meeting was held in 2 April in Bonn, with main issue the further development of the ERFP website as a communication tool for European NCs. Before starting the discussion on the development of the website, Frank Begemann gave an introduction to the Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food, the Information and Coordination Centre

for Biological Diversity,

In the frame of the project, 2 questionnaires were sent to the NCs in order to have a feed back on the evaluation of the website. The main points based on the responses received, concern the remote content management, the re-structure of the news area with a special emphasis of the Newsletter, the log-in for NCs for internal documents, the simplification and consolidation of the content, and an easier document management, structure and access.

ELBARN Workshop, 8-10 February, Kutna Hora, Czech Republic

SAVE, working together with the lead partner Euronatur and the further project partners GEH, SLE and R.A.R.E, has been awarded a grant from the EU for the project "European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net" (ELBARN) under the Work Programme of the Regulation EC 870/2004. Up to this point there has been no pan-European concept for in-situ conservation of animal genetic resources. Without a clear concept and network it is very difficult, in acute cases, to find suitable alternatives to prevent live populations from being slaughtered. Although there

are "Ark Farms" (e.g. the RBST's Approved Farm Parks or GEH's Arche Höfe) already in existence, which undertake important work in conservation and publicity, there is still an element missing in the system, an element that has long been identified by SAVE. This element is the Rescue Station. ELBARN aims to change the status quo by creating a network of existing Ark Farms, by encouraging the development of new ones so that every European country has at least one 'Ark and Rescue Centre' and also by enhancing the system with the

missing element: capacity to rescue animals that are both Rare Breeds and face slaughter or other immediate danger.

The launching Workshop of the ELBARN Project took place in Kutna Hora, CZ February 8th-10th 2008. The Workshop had 35 participants, representing 15 countries, from a range of European institutions and organisations – governmental, NGOs and universities. The participants brought with them expertise in the four major ELBARN themes: Rescue and Quarantine, Characteristics of the potential Ark and Rescue Centres, in situ Breeding and, Marketing of Products and Services. After an initial welcoming session and an introduction to the ideas behind ELBARN the participants split up into four Work Groups in order to work on guidelines and policy for the four ELBARN themes mentioned above. Some of the liveliest discussions happened on this second day as participants strived to find definitions to discuss the problems they

were faced with. There were also many interesting presentations of the experience of the participants and important in-puts into the project. Although the Workshop was a success, there is still much work to do. Each theme needs to be consolidated into to a clear set of guidelines that can be used to establish the network. There are a number of issues that need to be resolved in order to complete this task – from the clarification of legal issues through to the tightening up of definitions.

The next step of ELBARN will be the regional workshops to discuss issues of regional importance, these will take place in 2009. In order to identify possible Ark and Rescue Centres and to identify regional issues, a survey will be made. Anyone interested in taking part in this survey or who has questions about how they can be involved in the ELBARN should contact Elli Broxham at office@save-foundation.net.



ELBARN Workshop, from the plenary session

14th ERFP Workshop- Training Workshop for the NCs, 21-22 August, Vilnius

This year the ERFP Training Workshop co-organised with the EAAP WG_AnGR, is organised in 2 separate sessions. The session on Thursday afternoon, chaired by S. Hiemstra, is referred to the Current status of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action in Europe. The programme aims to give an overview of the overall implementation of the GPA for in the European countries and the next steps towards ITWG and CGRFA. NCs are

asked to contribute in the session by providing information on the status of implementation of the GPA in their country. Furthermore, representatives from NGOs are invited to present their views in the global framework of the conservation of FAnGR.

The 2nd session, on Friday morning, chaired by G. Gandini, is devoted to the reports of FABISnet and their use in the management of FAnGR.

In this session, the tools available will be presented.

The discussion is expected to focus on the experience of the NCs during the process of updating and completing the database and also on the further possibilities to use the reports and outputs for the management of FAnGR.

The detailed agenda can be downloaded from www.rfp-europe.org

For any further details, you can contact S.Hiemstra (sipkejoost.hiemstra@wur.nl) or G. Gandini (gustavo.gandini@unimi.it)

Please send your registration for the Workshop, to erfp-secretariat@agro.auth.gr before the end of July, in order to facilitate the work of the local organisers.

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The ERFP website is updated regularly.

www.rfp-europe.org

News on ongoing AGRI GENRES projects

During the 14th ERFP Annual Workshop, in Vilnius, presentations are planned on the going AGRI GENRES projects.



The project aims at assisting conservation, development and sustainable use of autochthonous, local or regional cattle breeds. These breeds are recognized as important elements of agro biodiversity, agro ecosystems and cultural heritage in Europe. The most secure conservation strategy for these breeds is to promote measures, which contribute to self sustainability of the breeds.

Further information on:
www.regionalcattlebreeds.eu



The annual meeting of the Heritage Sheep project was held in Amsterdam, on 20 May 2008.

The overall progress of the project was discussed with detailed presentations on the status of each WP. The milestones and deliverables of the next period were outlined.

For further information on the project, you can visit the website:
www.heritagesheep.eu

Results of the ERFP Call for Action

During the ERFP SC meeting in Bonn 2 April, the following proposals have been selected for funding under the total amount of 55000 euros:

1. Saving a nearly forgotten breed, the Murinsulaner, by T. Szobolevski
2. Establishment of an ERFP Working Group to support AnGR Cryopreservation Initiatives (CRYO-WG), by S. Hiemstra
3. Study of origin and conservation strategy of the Pramenka sheep breeds as regional trans-boundary breeds, by A. Ivancovic

The proposal submitted from G.

Saghirashvili, NC of Georgia, with the title "Monitoring for Future Effective Management of Animal Genetic Resources in the Caucasus Region and Kazakhstan", was approved.

After this 6th Call for Action, the ERFP has given a financial support to a total of 18 projects.

In Vilnius on 22 August during the projects coordination meeting, reports on the ongoing results of the ERFP projects will be presented. Furthermore the topics of the Next Call for Action 2008-2009 will be discussed.

Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction TP - Society meeting

The FABRE TP Society meeting took place on May 16, in Brussels, Belgium. This successful meeting was attended by 55 participants and followed by 35 by the internet. Andrea Rosati, chaired the meeting.

Anne-Marie Neeteson presented the Strategic Research Agenda and practical applications. The presentations covered the 4 sessions: social responsibility, global responsibility and competitiveness, diversity and distinctiveness,

knowledge base, biotechnology, genetics and reproduction. All presentations can be downloaded from

<http://www.fabretp.org/content/view/92/75/>

FABRE TP is an EU recognised European Technology Platform. The (108) supporting organisations wish to continue as a cooperation between existing organisations, linking activities to existing meetings, in a practical yet fair way. More information: Anne-Marie.Neeteson@effab.info

GLOBALDIV ACTION SUMMER SCHOOL

The First Globaldiv Summer School, will be held in Piacenza-Italy on September 8-12, 2008. GLOBALDIV 2008 Summer School offers theoretical and practical lectures within an interactive educational program designed to enhance researcher abilities in technologies, statistics and methods for the investigation of animal genomes and the characterization of their genetic diversity.

Participation to the school is free of charge, the travel and accommodation is at the expense of the participants.

The registration form and all information on participation and courses are available at www.globaldiv.eu. **Deadline for application is July 10th, 2008.**

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