



Ad hoc "Merino network"
Merino and Merino-derived breeds in Europe
State of art – In situ valorisation.

**"When the Merino flocks grazed in our mountains:
 focus on the Italian Merino Derived Breeds"**

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Monday 15th February 2021 13.50 (CET) - First session: the Merino and Merino-derived breeds in Europe: history, demography, and genetics



History

Sopravissana



In 1700 Cardinal Ruffo began the process of "merinization" of the sheep of the Papal States by importing Spanish rams.

The Andalusian Jesuit Gonzalo Adorno Hinojosa in particular acquires "some mountains with pasture" in Visso, where he brings the animals and at his death the local families (Montebovi, Rosi, Piscini) carry on his work crossing them with the local sheep «Vissane» and also with rams of the Bergerie Nationale of Rambouillet.

Gentile di Puglia



1° Theory: The breed originated in the Daunia (Capitanata), from the crossing of sheep and rams of Merinos Spanish breed with the local ovine Apennine populations locally called Garfagna, by Alfonso I of Aragon in the XV century in order to improve the quality and fineness of the wool.

2° Theory: in Southern Italy there was a sheep who presented fine wool even before the import of the Merinos from Spain, which was raided by Hannibal first and by the Barbary pirates then; it arrived in Africa, where, bred by the tribe of Beni-Merines would give rise to the progenitor of the Spanish Merinos, which came to Spain with the invasions of the Moors, would then return to its homeland in the form of Merinos rams to improve the local populations.

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History

Merinizzata italiana

After the loss of the economic value of the wool, in the 1960s breeders began to cross the Italian "merinizzate" breeds Gentile di Puglia and Sopravissana with 60 different genetic types....with the aim to improve them in the production of meat and milk.

At the end of the 1980s ASSONAPA established a working group (Prof. P. Pollidori, Prof. F. Panella, Dr. S. Dell'Aquila) that in 1997 defined and approved the Standard of the breed taking as «ideal type» the Merinolandschaf.

Merinolandschaf



Merinizzata Italiana



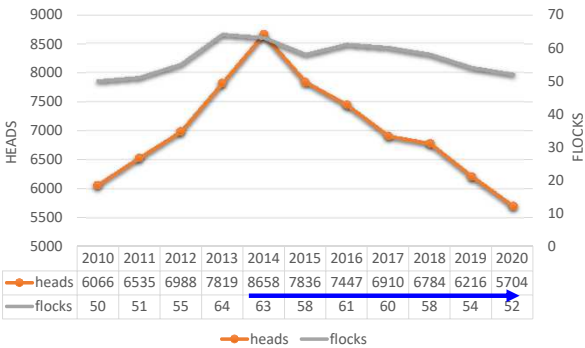
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Current situation

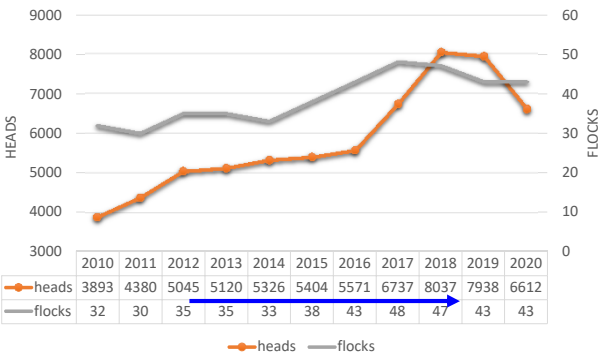
Demographic data to describe the current population size of these 3 Merino derived breeds.

OLD MERINO DERIVED BREEDS

Sopravissana

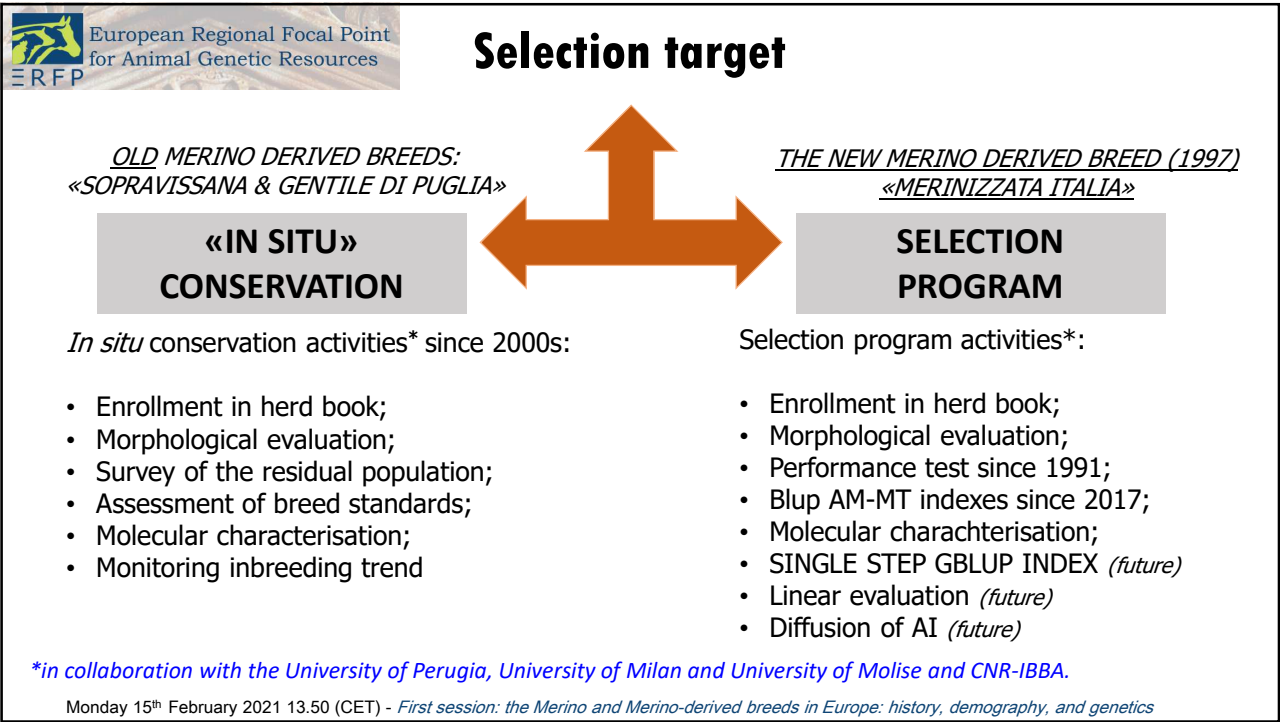
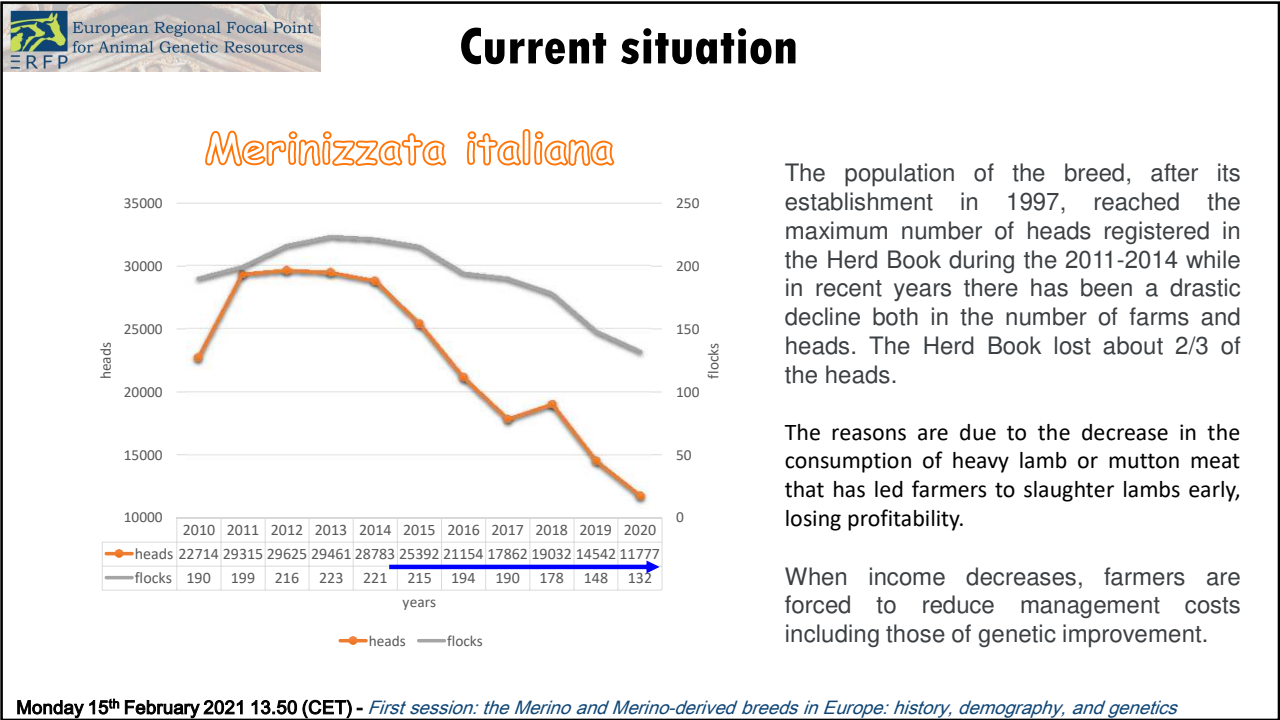


Gentile di Puglia



Flocks and Heads enrolled to Assonapa Herdbook

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Food and non-food products and services

Sopravvissana

- Wool (14.36-30.00 μm)*
- «Pecorino Romano DOP» cheese
- «Abbacchio Romano IGP» (lamb raised on mother's milk and slaughtered at 40-60 days of age)
- «I.G.P. Agnello del Centro Italia»



*Merino wool 16-24 μm

Gentile di Puglia

- Wool (13.50-27.07 μm)*
- «Canestrato» cheese
- Lamb named: «Pasqualino» (Easter), «Natalino» (Christmas) or «Mulacchio» (slaughtered after they were brought back home from transhumance on a mule)

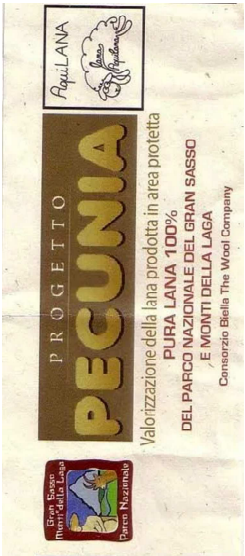


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Food and non-food products and services

Merinizzata Italiana

- Light and heavy lamb (slaughtered at 60/100 days)
- «Canestrato» cheese
- Wool (20.38- 40.03 μm)*



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Food and non-food products and services

Assessing the total economic value...

- I. Production → Superior quality food
- I. Landscape → Improved maintenance of rural landscape
- II. Culture → Improved maintenance of rural culture
- III. Existence → Certainty of continued existence
- IV. Option → Optional resource for future generations



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