



Transhumance and local breeds

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Transhumance is an evolution of nomadic livestock farming that flourished particularly over the Ottoman Empire, as free movement of flocks within the huge empire for more than twice a year. It is reported that flocks / herds from Eastern Macedonia and Thrace were moving to the coast of Smyrna to "overflow".

Following its dissolution and the definition of national borders, the movements were limited within the national borders of each territory twice a year between summer and winter pastures.

The basis of the economic function of transhumant sheep and goat farming system was the "tseligato" (cooperative flock).

This movement was always accompanied by the families of the farmers (cell of social life).

Until 1960, the population of sheep and goats which was moving represented about 30% of the total population.

The situation in Greece

- Transhumance remains an economical way of feeding, but also it represents the strong emotional bond of many livestock farmers with their mountain villages of origin.
- The main winter livelihoods are found in Thessaly and Central Greece, as in these two regions it overwhelms 50% of transhumant herds and more than 50% of transhumant sheep and goats. The main summer residence of moving herds are found in Western Greece (Western Macedonia and Ipeiros and less in Fokida, Evritania and Arcadia).
- The distance between winter - summer pastures ranges from 20 to 350 kilometers.
- The movement of the herds until the 1970s was on foot, in spring (usually early May) and in the fall (late October - early November) time.
- Today most flocks are moving with specially designed trucks, but a notable number of flocks are still on foot (on foot) especially when the distances are short.



Transhumance in Greece

SHEEP AND GOAT TRANSHUMANCE

- 3700 transhumant farms throughout the country
- 1,1 mil. small ruminants (7,5% of the national flock)
- Move from few km to over 300km
- Mostly for milk or lamb purpose (milk/meat)
- Traditional activity/Integrated in landscapes

BOVINE TRANSHUMANCE

- 607 farms rearing more than 45000 bovine
- Only for meat
- Mostly move a few km (within the same geographical area)
- New activity – Tends to replace sheep and goat in some areas
- High economic support from EU measures

Resilience and vulnerability

- Historically high resilience to harsh conditions – Survived political, historical, social and economic changes - Threatened by land use changes
- Low vulnerability to external shocks – Relatively low dependence on price policies

- Moderate resilience – Doubtful whether the system would return to its original situation after an external shock
- High vulnerability to CAP reforms – Economic performance depends on income support

Local breeds in transhumance, Greece



Local sheep breeds in transhumance

- Hardy breeds, adapted to mountainous areas >1300m
- Small size, Low feeding requirements
- Appreciated for the quality of lambs
- Kalarritiki breed
 - 31 flocks (17 in Thessalia – 9 in Ipeiros – 5 in Western Macedonia) with 7680 breeding females
- Katsika (Karamaniko) breed
 - 4 flocks in Ipeiros with 1800 breeding females
- Oreino Ipeirou (Boutsiko) breed
 - 9 flocks in Ipeiros with 1800 breeding females
- Sarakatsaniki breed
 - 34 flocks (8 in Thessalia, 1 in Ipeiros, 2 in Western Macedonia, 23 in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace) with around 10000 breeding females
- Several crossbreds of local breeds



Vrachykeratiki cattle breed

- Adapted to mountainous regions with poor vegetation
- Hardy breed, low food requirements

Uses: Meat

Meat products originating from animals of this breed are of special palatability and dietary value.

Colour : uni coloured: mainly black, grey, brown, white and blonde

Horn shape, size : thin and short horns



Genetic management actions - RDP

- Action 10.1.09. "Conservation of Endangered Indigenous breeds of farm animals"
 - Financial support for owners of indigenous breeds of farm animals in order to maintain or increase the number of these animals.
- Action 10.2.1: Genetic Resources in Livestock
 - Collection – Recording of pedigree data
 - Performance recording (quantity and quality)



Genetic management actions – some remarks

- Direct involvement of breeders' associations and farmers' organizations ensures the implementation of the program
 - Increase the technical support and services to the farmers
 - Need to extend the data collected to information on reproduction traits, economic indexes, health and functional traits,
- Improve collaboration among different actors
- Develop a national strategy and build the organizational structure to monitor the progress



Summer milk from transhumant sheep and goat farms

- Most industries mix this milk with milk of other farms for conventional products
- There are no transhumance-specific dairy products
- Consumers remain unaware of the multiple contributions of transhumance and, inversely, the system is cut off the market.

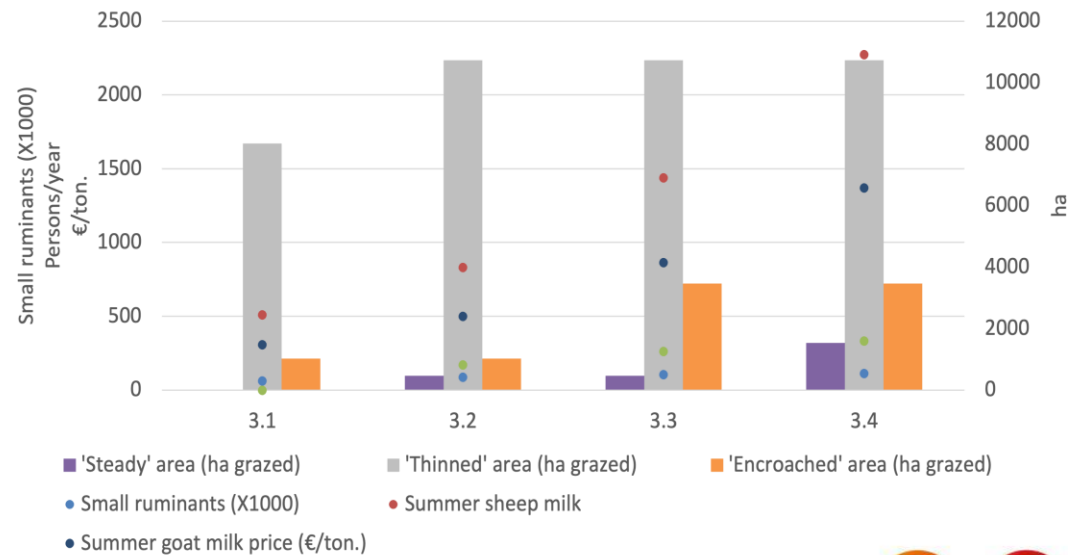
What are the consequences?

- Transhumant farmers are paid disproportionately to their quality
- Reduced economic performance (low prices and high production costs)
- The potential production of a transhumance-specific cheese constitutes an innovation for Greece
 - They are expected to have high market impact, due to their premium quality
 - This way, producers will profit from prices



The policy framework

- A favorable and well-adapted policy framework is necessary
- The existing provides generalized solutions and does not focus on transhumance/pastoralism



- Farm to Fork Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy of the EU for 2030
- European Green Deal
- FAO Sustainable Development Goals
- EU Circular Economy Action Plan

Transhumance in Greece - Several initiatives

- Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)
- Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO
- Common Agricultural Policy
- European Green Deal



ECO-TransH



Upgrading Strategies

- Support the rangeland/pastoral production systems
- Improve the infrastructures in the mountainous areas
- Technical support to the farmers
- Market oriented policy

- Increase the adding value of the products
 - On farm processing of milk
 - Labeled meat products
- Productivity, organisation of the management
 - Support collective action, professional organisations, cooperation between actors
- Reach an accordance between the objectives of the production sector and the objectives of the environment



Acknowledgments to all farmers that through their everyday practices ensure the sustainability of livelihoods in rural areas, the future of local breeds and their production systems

Thank you for your attention

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