

ELBARN

AREA ACTION PLAN MEDITERRANEAN AREA



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Summary of Actions

This Area is made up of the following countries: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Malta and Cyprus, all EU members. The recommended goals, requirements and actions were discussed in an Area Workshop in Legnaro, Italy from 24th to 26th April 2009 with participants from the above-mentioned countries. Those discussions laid the basis for this Area Action plan. A main goal of ELBARN is to build up a functioning network of Ark and Rescue Centres (A&RCs). Those stations will be used in emergencies, such as old age of important breeders or the outbreak of contagious diseases, to prevent the loss of animals from autochthonous livestock breeds. They also have an important function of raise public awareness of rare and autochthonous livestock breeds and traditional farming, and to conserve the breeds through active breeding work.

Agricultural development in the Area is generally hampered by land fragmentation, shallow soils and lack of adequate water supplies for agriculture. This Area is characterized by a high number of local breeds, but the concept of A&RCs is not yet well known. Breeders are generally aware of the role of animal biodiversity, but most of the conservation programmes are managed by single groups of interested people or organizations. For these reasons, the Mediterranean area needs:

- The rapid setting up a of Task Force, with the inclusion of stakeholders on all levels, to promote the idea of A&RCs, raising awareness and making efforts to involve new, younger farmers, to work on contingency plans, and to identify a suitable number of new A&RCs.
- A&RCs need to be financed by local, regional or national administration. Due to limited funds, human resources and cultural reasons, criteria for breed conservation in the Mediterranean countries should include not only the risk status, but also the economical value (actual and potential) of the breed, and its scientific, environmental, social, historical, cultural and aesthetic values.
- For critically endangered breeds, generally kept by old farmers that have difficulties in gaining access to information and EU funds, one or more nucleus herds is needed.
- Completion of breed identification and registration, followed up by continuous monitoring
- A specific 'add-on' label for marketing and promoting the products and services of local livestock breeds should be supported. The promotion of a wide variety of products helps to conserve a wide variety of genes. The products sold under these labels are aimed at the high-earning sector of society as 'quality', 'exclusive', 'fine food', and so on.

The complexity of the Mediterranean area, the large number of breeds, and the diverse ways with which they are approached and managed makes it difficult to reach a general agreement between all participants assessing the needs of the area. There was agreement that the EU subsidies for rare breeds should be given following a new approach, based not only on the risk status of a breed, but also on their scientific, economic, cultural, historical, aesthetic and environmental role. Southern Europe has experience in adding value to products from local breed; this strategy has proven to be efficient in many cases for saving endangered breeds and increasing their competitiveness. Improvements in legislation, information resources, awareness raising, mobilizing funds for emergencies and sharing research findings are all urgently needed.

Elli Broxham, ELBARN Project Manager
SAVE Foundation

January 2010

Περίληψη των δράσεων μας στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος ELBARN

Η περιοχή της δράσης μας στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος ELBARN στην περιοχή της Μεσογείου εκτείνεται στα ακόλουθα κράτη: Ιταλία, Ισπανία, Πορτογαλία, Ελλάδα, Μάλτα και Κύπρο, τα οποία είναι όλα κράτη μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

Οι προϋποθέσεις, οι προβλεπόμενες ενέργειες και οι απώτεροι στόχοι της δράσης μας στην περιοχή αυτή συζητήθηκαν εκτενώς στο Συνέδριο που έλαβε χώρα στην ιταλική πόλη Legnago, στις 2 έως 26 Απριλίου 2009, στο οποίο συμμετείχαν εκπρόσωποι από όλα τα προαναφερθέντα κράτη. Τα συμπεράσματα αυτής της συνάντησης αποτέλεσαν τη βάση για την κατάστρωση ενός Τοπικού Σχεδίου Δράσης.

Πρωταρχικός στόχος του προγράμματος ELBARN είναι να προωθήσει τη δικτύωση σε πανευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο των κατά τόπους καταφυγίων αυτοχθόνων φυλών κατοικίδιων ζώων. Τα καταφύγια αυτά θα μπορούσαν να χρησιμεύσουν ως πυρήνες εκτροφής σε περιπτώσεις έκτακτης ανάγκης, όπως για την περίθαλψη αυτοχθόνων ζώων υπερίκλων ιδιοκτητών μέχρι την ανάθεσή τους σε νέους ιδιοκτήτες και ως χώροι απομόνωσης σε περίπτωση επιδημικών ασθενειών για τον περιορισμό απωλειών του πολύτιμου ζωικού κεφαλαίου των αυτοχθόνων φυλών. Επίσης θα μπορούσαν αυτοί οι πυρήνες εκτροφής να χρησιμεύσουν ως επισκέψιμοι χώροι για την ευαισθητοποίηση του κοινού στο ζήτημα της διάσωσης και διατήρησης των αυτοχθόνων φυλών και της παραδοσιακής κτηνοτροφίας. Εξάλλου αναμένεται να συμβάλλουν καθοριστικά στην αύξηση του πληθυσμού σπάνιων αυτοχθόνων φυλών, μέσω ελεγχόμενων προγραμμάτων αναπαραγωγής τους.

Γενικώς η αγροτική ανάπτυξη στην περιοχή της Νότιας Ευρώπης παρουσιάζει ορισμένα διαρθρωτικά προβλήματα, όπως ο μικρός γεωργικός κλήρος, η μικρά αποδοτικότητα του καλλιεργήσιμου εδάφους και η λειψυδρία. Στη περιοχή αυτή διαβιεί πλήθος αυτοχθόνων φυλών, αλλά η κεντρική ιδέα της

«κιβωτού»-καταφυγίου ως πυρήνα εκτροφής επαπειλούμενων αυτοχθόνων φυλών δεν έχει ακόμη εμπεδωθεί στη συνείδηση των κατοίκων της. Οι κτηνοτρόφοι σε γενικές γραμμές είναι ενήμεροι για τη σημασία και τη σπουδαιότητα της βιοποικιλότητας, αλλά τα περισσότερα προγράμματα διάσωσης και διατήρησης αυτοχθόνων φυλών ζώων εκτελούνται από μικρούς πυρήνες ενδιαφερομένων ιδιωτών ή από οικολογικές οργανώσεις. Για τους λόγους αυτούς η περιοχή της Μεσογείου χρειάζεται:

- Τη ταχύτατη δημιουργία «Ομάδων Δράσης» με τη συμμετοχή εκτροφέων σε όλα τα επίπεδα της οργάνωσής τους, με στόχο τη δημιουργία δικτύων πυρήνων εκτροφής των αυτοχθόνων φυλών αγροτικών ζώων, τη δραστηριοποίηση νέων αγροτών και κτηνοτρόφων στο πεδίο αυτό, την ευαισθητοποίηση του κοινού και τον σχεδιασμό σχεδίων δράσης σε περιπτώσεις έκτακτης ανάγκης.
- Οι εν λόγω πυρήνες εκτροφής για να λειτουργήσουν αποτελεσματικά χρειάζονται τη χρηματοδότηση από τοπικούς, περιφερειακούς και εθνικούς φορείς. Επειδή οι αυτόχθονες φυλές αγροτικών ζώων είναι στενά συνυφασμένες με την τοπική κουλτούρα και τις τοπικές πολιτιστικές αξίες και συνήθειες και αποτελούν πηγή εισοδημάτων για τον τοπικό πληθυσμό της υπαίθρου, στα κριτήρια για την επιλογή των αυτοχθόνων φυλών που θα τεθούν υπό καθεστώς προστασίας και επιτήρησης κατά προτεραιότητα, θα πρέπει να συμπεριληφθούν συμπληρωτικά με το μέγεθος του πληθυσμού τους, η σημερινή και η αναμενόμενη συμβολή τους στην τοπική αγροτική ανάπτυξη και η προστιθέμενη αξία τους στην επιστήμη, στη βιοποικιλότητα των τοπικών οικοσυστημάτων, και η συμβολή τους στην τοπική ιστορία και παράδοση.

- Ειδικά στην περίπτωση των επαπειλούμενων αυτοχθόνων φυλών που εκτρέφονται από ηλικιωμένους κτηνοτρόφους, οι οποίοι δεν έχουν ευχερή πρόσβαση στην ενημέρωση και κατ' επέκταση στα επιδοτούμενα προγράμματα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, ένας ή περισσότεροι πυρήνες εκτροφής θα πρέπει να συγκροτηθούν άμεσα.
- Παράλληλα είναι απαραίτητη η καταγραφή των φαινοτυπικών χαρακτηριστικών και η δημιουργία γενεαλογικού βιβλίου για κάθε μία από τις αυτόχθονες φυλές, καθώς και η συνεχής επιτήρησή τους.
- Επίσης οι δράσεις για την εμπορευματοποίηση και τη διαφήμιση των ζωικών προϊόντων τοπικής προέλευσης που παράγουν οι εν λόγω φυλές θα πρέπει να υποστηριχθούν. Η προώθηση στις αγορές των προϊόντων αυτών ως «ποιοτικών-βιολογικών» και ως «παραδοσιακών προϊόντων με ονομασία προέλευσης» αναμένεται να συμβάλει καθοριστικά στην διατήρηση της βιοποικιλότητας των εκτρεφόμενων αυτοχθόνων φυλών στις τοπικές αγροτικές κοινωνίες, διότι θα αποφέρει συμπληρωτικό εισόδημα σε αυτές και θα αναδείξει τα συγκριτικά πλεονεκτήματα της παραδοσιακής και της βιολογικής κτηνοτροφίας.

Η ανομοιογενής διάρθρωση της αγροτικής οικονομίας στη Μεσόγειο, η πληθώρα των αυτοχθόνων φυλών αγροτικών ζώων, και οι πολιτισμικές διαφορές των εκτροφένων μεταξύ των μεσογειακών κρατών που συμμετέχουν στο πρόγραμμα ELBARN, καθιστά δύσκολη την δημιουργία και την εφαρμογή ενός κοινού προγράμματος δράσης για την διάσωση και τη διατήρηση των αυτοχθόνων φυλών αγροτικών ζώων. Όμως ομοφώνως αποφασίστηκε ότι οι επιδοτήσεις της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για τις φυλές αυτές θα πρέπει να χορηγούνται με κριτήριο, παράλληλα με το μέγεθος του ζωικού κεφαλαίου καθεμίας από αυτές, τη συμβολή τους στην οικονομία, στην ιστορία και στην κουλτούρα των τοπικών αγροτικών κοινωνιών. Επιπλέον ως αποτελεσματικότερη στρατηγική για τη διάσωση των φυλών αυτών και τη διατήρησή τους στο μέλλον, θεωρήθηκε ότι είναι η ανάδειξη της αξίας και της ανταγωνιστικότητας των προϊόντων τους. Η στρατηγική αυτή αναμένεται να επιφέρει τις επιθυμητές βελτιώσεις στην σχετική νομοθεσία, να συμβάλει στην ευαισθητοποίηση του κοινού και να προσελκύσει οικονομικούς πόρους, απαραίτητων για την αντιμετώπιση έκτακτων αναγκών και για την επιδότηση της επιστημονικής έρευνας που στοχεύει στην αξιοποίηση και στην ευζωία των αυτοχθόνων φυλών αγροτικών ζώων.



photo: Riccardo Fortino / RARE

Asino Sardo

Riassunto delle azioni

Gli obiettivi e le attività previste in questo piano d'azione sono il risultato di un incontro svoltosi a Legnaro (PD) dal 24 al 26 aprile 2009 con i rappresentanti delle 6 Nazioni UE (Italia, Spagna, Portogallo, Grecia, Malta e Cipro) che fanno parte dell'area mediterranea. Scopo principale di ELBARN è la realizzazione di un efficace network di "aziende arca" e di "centri di recupero" (A&RCs) di animali appartenenti a razze a rischio di estinzione. Tali strutture saranno utilizzate solo in emergenza, come nel caso di vendita degli ultimi capi superstiti o di diffusione di una malattia contagiosa che potrebbe minacciare la sopravvivenza di una razza. Ma non solo: esse potranno svolgere anche un ruolo di sensibilizzazione al pubblico sull'importanza delle razze autoctone o rare e dei sistemi tradizionali di allevamento, nonché sulle opportunità derivanti dalla loro salvaguardia.

L'area mediterranea è caratterizzata da un'agricoltura che, a differenza di altri Paesi europei, soffre di una elevata frammentazione fondiaria; in molti ambienti, inoltre, suoli poco profondi e frequenti carenze idriche rendono poco remunerative l'attività agricola. Anche se il numero di razze autoctone è molto elevato, il concetto di "azienda arca" e di "centro di recupero" (A&RCs) non è molto diffuso. Gli allevatori sono sovente consapevoli dell'importanza della biodiversità, ma i progetti di conservazione sono in genere gestiti da gruppi di interesse o da organizzazioni pubbliche o private.

Per questi motivi, in quest'area si ritiene necessario:

- istituire rapidamente un gruppo di lavoro ad ampia base partecipativa per promuovere l'idea di A&RCs, aumentare la consapevolezza presso gli allevatori – soprattutto giovani – dell'importanza del loro ruolo e, al tempo stesso, identificare un numero adeguato di A&RCs
- sollecitare l'erogazione di finanziamenti locali, regionali o nazionali per la realizzazione di nuovi A&RCs. Fondi limitati e vincoli di vario tipo impongono che i futuri criteri di conservazione comprendano non solo la consistenza numerica di una razza, ma anche il suo ruolo economico (attuale o futuro) e il valore scientifico, ambientale, storico, culturale ed estetico
- creare nuclei in purezza degli animali appartenenti alle razze maggiormente minacciate di estinzione, spesso conservate da anziani allevatori con difficoltà ad accedere a informazioni e a finanziamenti UE
- completare l'identificazione e la registrazione delle razze autoctone, e monitorarne nel tempo la consistenza
- incentivare l'etichettatura di prodotti e servizi offerti dalle razze autoctone con un apposito marchio, grazie al quale sarà anche possibile conservare la biodiversità animale. Tali prodotti dovranno contraddistinguersi per specifiche caratteristiche di qualità, tipicità, etc.

La complessità dell'area mediterranea, l'elevato numero di razze presenti e i differenti sistemi di allevamento adottati rendono difficile dettare linee guida generiche e strategie di conservazioni univoche. E' tuttavia condivisa da tutti l'idea che i finanziamenti UE in futuro dovranno tenere conto non solo dello stato di rischio di una razza, ma anche dei suoi molteplici ruoli e valori. L'Europa del Sud ha già sperimentato con successo la commercializzazione di prodotti di razze locali come strumento di conservazione delle razze autoctone; tale strategia va mantenuta e ampliata, accompagnandola al miglioramento di alcune leggi, a una maggiore informazione e ricerca nel settore, e alla messa a disposizione di adeguate risorse finanziarie.



photo: Riccardo Fortino / RARE

Avelignese

Resumo das ações

Esta área está formada pelos seguintes países: Itália, Espanha, Portugal, Grécia, Malta e Chipre, todos membros da União Europeia. Os objetivos, os requerimentos e as ações recomendadas foram discutidos na mesa de trabalho da área em Legnaro, Itália, de 24 a 26 de abril de 2009, com participantes dos países supracitados. Aquelas discussões deram base para o plano de ação da área. O objetivo principal de ELBARN é construir uma rede de trabalho funcional de estações Arca e de Rescate. Estas estações serão usadas em emergências, por exemplo, na idade avançada de animais descartados ou em surtos de enfermidades contagiosas, para prevenir a perda de animais de raça nativa de gado. Elas também têm papel importante na sensibilização do público sobre o papel das raças raras e nativas de pecuária tradicional e, assim, conservá-las através da criação de postos de trabalho ativo.

O desenvolvimento agrícola nesta área está, geralmente, caracterizado por fragmentação da terra, solos rasos e falta de aporte de água adequado. Esta área também se caracteriza pela existência de um grande número de raça local, entretanto os conceitos de "Centro Arca" e "Estação de resgate" não são ainda tão bem conhecidos. Os criadores geralmente não se preocupam com a conservação da biodiversidade, ao passo que a maioria dos programas de conservação está gerida por grupos simples de pessoas interessadas ou por organizações. Por isso a área mediterrânea necessita

- De uma rápida implementação de uma "força de trabalho", com a inclusão de doadores sobre todos os níveis, para promover a ideia da A&RCs, alcançando a sensibilização e esforços de fato, no intuito de envolver novos/jovens criadores para trabalhar em planos de contingência e para identificar um número válido de novos A&RCs;
- Os A&RCs necessitam ser financiados por administradores locais, regionais e nacionais. Devido à limitação dos fundos, aos recursos humanos e às razões culturais, os critérios para a conservação de raça nos países mediterrâneos deverão incluir não só o estado de risco mas também o valor econômico (presente e futuro) da raça, bem como seus valores científicos, ambientais, sociais, históricos, culturais e estéticos;
- Para raças criticamente ameaçadas, geralmente mantidas por criadores velhos, que têm dificuldades em conseguir acesso à informação sobre fundos europeus, um ou mais rebanhos núcleo são necessários;
- Conclusão da identificação racial e de seu registro, seguido por uma contínua monitoração;
- E uma marca específica para o comércio e a promoção de produtos e serviços de raças nativas de bovino será apoiada. A promoção de uma ampla variedade de produtos ajudará a conservar uma grande variedade de gene. Os produtos vendidos sob estas marcas tentam alcançar o mais amplo setor da sociedade, com „qualidade“, sendo „exclusivos“, „alimentos finos“ etc.

A complexidade da área do Mediterrâneo, o elevado número de raça e as diferenças na forma como são tratadas e geridas fazem com que seja difícil conseguir um acordo geral entre todos os participantes para atender as necessidades da área.

Houve concordância de que os subsídios da UE para raças minoritárias deveriam ser dados seguindo-se novas normas, não só baseadas no estado de risco mas também sobre seu papel científico, econômico, cultural, estético e ambiental.

Europa do Sul tem experiência em agregar valor aos produtos das raças locais; esta estratégia mostrou-se eficiente em muitos casos, para salvar raças ameaçadas e aumentar a sua competitividade. São necessárias melhorias na legislação urgentemente, nas informações disponíveis, na sensibilização, nos fundos mobilizáveis para emergências e consecução dos resultados da pesquisa.



photo: Riccardo Fortino / RARE

Brigasca

Resumen de acciones

Este área está formada por los siguientes países: Italia, España, Portugal, Grecia, Malta y Chipre, todos miembros de la UE. Los objetivos, requerimientos y acciones recomendadas fueron discutidos en la mesa de trabajo del área en Legnaro (Italia) del 24 al 26 de abril de 2009 con participantes de los países mencionado arriba. Aquellas discusiones dieron la base para el plan de acción del área. El objetivo fundamental de ELBARN es construir una red de trabajo funcional de estaciones Arca y de Rescate. Aquellas estaciones serán usadas en emergencias, tales como la avanzada edad de criadores destacados o brotes de enfermedades contagiosas, para prevenir la pérdida de animales de razas autóctonas de Ganado. Ellas también proveen una función importante para alcanzar la sensibilización pública por las razas raras y autóctonas de Ganado y la ganadería tradicional y así conservar las razas a través de trabajos activos de cría.

El desarrollo agrícola en esta área está generalmente caracterizada por fragmentación de la tierra, suelos someros y falta de aporte de agua adecuado. Este área se caracteriza también por un alto número de razas locales, pero los conceptos de "centro Arca" y "Estación de Rescate" no son aun bien conocidos. Los ganaderos son generalmente ajenos del papel de conservadores de la biodiversidad, aunque la mayoría de los programas de conservación están gestionados por grupos simples de gente interesada o por organizaciones. Por estas razones, el Área Mediterránea necesita:

- La rápida puesta en marcha de una "fuerza de trabajo", con la inclusión de donantes sobre todos los niveles, para promover la idea de A&RCs alcanzando sensibilización y esfuerzos de facto para involucrar nuevos, jóvenes granjeros para trabajar en planes de contingencia, y para identificar un número válido de nuevos A&RCs.
- A&RCs necesitan ser financiados por administraciones locales, regionales y nacionales. Debido al limitado de los fondos, los recursos humanos y las razones culturales, los criterios para la conservación de razas en los países Mediterráneos deberán incluir no solo el estatus de riesgo, sino también el valor económico (presente y futuro) de la raza, y sus valores científicos, ambientales, sociales, históricos, culturales y estéticos.
- Para razas críticamente amenazadas, generalmente mantenidas por viejos criadores que tienen dificultades en conseguir acceso a información sobre fondos europeos, uno o más "rebaños núcleo" son necesarios.
- Conclusión de la identificación racial y su registro, seguido por un continuo monitoreo.
- Una específica marca para el comercio y la promoción de productos y servicios de razas locales de Ganado serán apoyados. La promoción de una amplia variedad de productos ayuda a conservar una amplia variedad de genes. Los productos vendidos dentro de estas marcas intentan en un más amplio sector de la sociedad como "calidad", "exclusivo", "alimentos finos" y así.

La complejidad del área Mediterránea, el alto número de razas, y las diferencias de cómo ellas son tratadas y gestionadas hace difícil alcanzar un acuerdo general entre todos los participantes para enfrentar las necesidades del área. Había acuerdos que los subsidios de la UE para razas minoritarias deberían ser dados siguiendo unas nuevas normas no sólo basadas en el estatus de riesgo de una raza, sino también sobre su papel científico, económico, cultural, histórico, estético y ambiental.

La Europa del Sur tiene experiencia en añadir valor a los productos de las razas locales; esta estrategia ha probado ser eficiente en muchos casos para salvar razas amenazadas e incrementar su competitividad. Se necesitan urgentemente mejoras en la legislación, en la información disponible, sensibilización, fondos mobilizables para emergencias y consecución de hallazgos de la investigación.



photo: Ricardo Fortino / RARE

Burlina

ELBARN Area Action Plan for the ELBARN Mediterranean Area

Introduction to ELBARN

People concerned with in-situ or live conservation of rare breeds are often faced with the danger of losing important stock in cases of, for example, increased age or changed priorities of keepers or, even, epidemics. ELBARN, the European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net, is a pan-European project which focuses on solving some of the problems facing livestock keepers within a network of so-called 'Ark and Rescue Centres' (A&RCs).

The ELBARN Network will be spread throughout Europe to share knowledge and encourage collaboration between organizations and institutes wishing to conserve European animal genetic resources for food and agriculture (AnGRFA). Additionally, the promotion of the products of these livestock breeds, whether this as a food product or as a service such as grazing for environmental management, is a central theme of the project.

The project documents, in the form of an online database, all sites that already exist and can be used as A&RCs, and will also encourage the founding of new A&RCs.

These Centres will:

- Keep core breeding groups.
- Offer breeding help for livestock keepers.
- Offer a place for the public to see the AnGRFA of Europe.
- Offer emergency places for endangered genetically important livestock.

ELBARN was not intended as a project that buys property or animals. Nor does it have any finances available for helping in the upkeep of A&RCs. However, through Work Groups, ELBARN is able to make concrete suggestions on how A&RCs can maximize the marketing potential of the rare livestock breeds in their care, thus rendering them profitable. It is also hoped that, through the existence of an international network sponsored by the EU, smaller projects related to fulfilling the wider goals of ELBARN will find funding to achieve their goals.

ELBARN was launched with a 'Central Workshop' in February 2008, where working groups discussed rescue and quarantine, the characterization of A&RCs, breeding programmes and the marketing of rare breed products. The results of these discussions were published as ELBARN Guidelines in 2009 and can be downloaded from the ELBARN website www.elbarn.net.

In early 2009, four 'Area Workshops' were held in Ghent, Belgium, in Roznov, Czech Republic, in Legnaro, Italy and in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. Each workshop was a meeting of a wide range of stakeholders from the area, each of whom has a special interest and expertise in the field of in situ conservation of agrobiodiversity. For each area an 'Area Action Plan' has been developed and tailored to perceived local needs. The Action Plans have been developed together with local partners and, therefore, can be seen as a representation of the views of current participants in the ELBARN project.

Introduction to the ELBARN Mediterranean Area

The ELBARN Mediterranean Area (MED) is made up of the following countries: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Malta and Cyprus, all EU members.

In some parts of these countries, agricultural development is generally hampered by land fragmentation (that is, plots of land that are too small or too irregularly configured to be farmed efficiently), shallow soils and lack of adequate water supplies for agriculture. However, there are still large pastures (Dehesa in Spain, Mediterranean dryland of Southern Italy and Greece) mainly used for grazing by local sheep, goat and pig breeds. Farms that utilize these grazing resources can be very large in terms of land and herd size. A few factors can partially explain this phenomenon. Firstly, the number of farms has decreased dramatically over past decades, and the pasture land is used now by the remaining farms (generally, more than 75% of farm land is rented). Also, agro-environmental policies and direct economic support to farmers by regional authorities are playing an important role. Finally, the subsidies established by the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU have contributed to increased herd size in some European Mediterranean countries.

In many cases the profitability of farms is not limiting agriculture and livestock activities in the area, but the increasingly older labour force could jeopardize the continuity of farming systems in the medium to long term, or turn many traditional farmers and breeders to a part-time, hobby basis.

Animal livestock of the Southern part of the MED countries (except mountain regions of Northern and Central Italy and Northern Spain) may suffer from difficult climatic conditions, characterized by moist winters and hot dry summers. Crop resources often do not suffice for the nutritional needs of modern breeds, thus affecting milk yield or daily weight gain of modern breeds. By contrast, local breeds are generally well adapted to local conditions.

For these reasons, the participants of the Area workshop agreed that a more precise characterization and census of local breeds (still inadequate in some countries) is needed to provide programmes for animal and land conservation. Also monitoring and continuous updates of herdbooks of rare breeds is needed in some countries.

The following table gives an overview of the breeds in the countries of the Mediterranean area. Data on breeds, distribution and average number of animals/flock or herd from some Mediterranean countries are not available at present. One of the goals of the ELBARN project is to update all these information needed to establish an adequate number and location of A&T&RCs in each country.

Country	Breeds known	Diversity of breeds	Degree of centralization	Size of populations	Need for A&RCs
Cyprus	30	Low	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Greece	64	Medium	High	Unknown	High
Italy	287	High	High	Small-medium	High
Malta	7	Low	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Portugal	47	Medium	Unknown	Small-medium	Medium
Spain	211	High	High	Small-medium	High

- Breeds known: Reported data on the number of known breeds are from FAO DAD-IS (2008). For some countries, dog and pigeon breeds are included. Data may not be updated for some countries. Websites, books and other publications report other data on domestic breeds of each country.
- Diversity of breeds/size of population: The diversity of breeds depends on the number of breeds in each country; for conservation projects, this value must be related to the population size of each breed. The management of few endangered breeds is often more difficult than the management of many breeds not at risk, and the need of A&RCs is higher in such cases.
- Degree of centralization. This is an estimated value of the distribution of populations within a breed. An high degree of centralization means a low number of herds or flocks/breed, and a need for A&RCs.
- Need for A&RCs: This summarizes the previous parameters; the number and the location of new A&RCs in each country is one of the goals of the MED Area Action Plan.

MED vision for ELBARN

The ELBARN project requires that A&RCs are identified, documented and networked via the project website as part of a database that holds easily accessible information about rare livestock breeds, their uses and locations. This is to help ensure that A&RCs will be established all over Europe. As in all other ELBARN Areas, the goals of identifying national, cross-border or area contact persons to co-ordinate rescue actions as well as developing marketing strategies to promote use of rare livestock breeds have been set. Enhancing biogeographical-regional breed co-ordination is also of great importance to promote joined up strategies for cross-border breed conservation.

Alongside these general goals, which are shared with the other ELBARN Areas, the MED Area has some specific goals, which address its special needs. Moreover, the problems outlined above show a need to focus on strategies for animal conservation that are specific for the MED area.

The concepts of 'Ark Farm' and 'Rescue Centre' are not yet well known in all the countries of the Mediterranean area. Farmers and breeders are generally aware

of the role of animal biodiversity, but it is only in Spain and, partially, in Portugal and Greece, that on-farm conservation of local or endangered breeds has involved all stakeholders: farmers, national and local organizations, government agencies and universities. In other countries, most of the conservation programmes are managed by single groups of interested people or organizations. All these programmes seem to be designed for scientific or economic purposes; very few of them consider the environmental, cultural or educational role of breed conservation.

An action plan for the Mediterranean area should take into account all the environmental and cultural constraints. Possibly more than in other European regions, the Mediterranean area needs to rapidly set up a 'Task Force', with the inclusion of stakeholders on all levels, to co-ordinate the rescue actions, to work on contingency plans, and also to identify a suitable number of A&RCs. As in other European countries, the work of the Task Force will also be to lobby on a national level, to exchange knowledge between countries and stakeholder levels, and to exchange information with representatives from other Areas.

Plan of action for MED area:

The following steps are a prerequisite to achieving the vision of a functioning ELBARN in the Mediterranean Area.

1. Preventive measures

- Continuous monitoring of populations and geographical distribution of local and endangered breeds in all countries of the Mediterranean area.
- Identification, census and database of existing Ark Farms and/or Rescue Centres.
- Identification and database of a suitable number of new Ark Farms and/or Rescue Centres.
- Identification of quarantine centres to protect rare breeds in the case of diseases outbreaks.
- Identification of sanitary problems and European and National regulations and laws for animal transportation and health.
- Rare breeds should be approved for special treatment (also sanitary) within legislation. Lobbying work at national level.

2. Ark Institutions

- Few Ark Institutions exist at present in Spain, Portugal and Greece; in other countries rare breeds are kept mainly in private farms, sometimes open to public for educational purposes (e.g. Italy). Generally they do not meet the criteria for an ELBARN Centre.
- The connection with breeding associations (if existing) is necessary to maintain breed standards.
- Public or state-owned Ark Institutions should be located within easy reach of major population centres.
- Ark Farms have a representative number (undefined, dependent on breed situation) of endangered or local breeds.



photo: Riccardo Fortino / RARE

The Modicana cattle breed is bred mainly in the Ragusa province, Sicily.

3. Types of Ark and possible Ark Institutions:

	Purposes	Requirements	Type of facilities
Type 1: Educational A&tRCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public awareness, special information programmes for schools, organizations of farmers, scientists, hobby breeders, consumer groups - Safeguarding knowledge of breeding rare breeds, including traditional and cultural aspects of animal breeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have a representative sample of endangered, typical, local farm animals. - Provide guide-facilities, documentation, well-equipped meeting rooms - Able to offer 'learning by doing' programmes such as working with products of traditional farming (e.g. baking, cheese making, weaving) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - farm parks, model farms - school farms, university - research farms - city farms - zoological gardens and wildlife parks - open air museums - information centres at: national parks, in-situ conservation parks, biosphere reserves
Type 2: Farm A&tRCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breeding of endangered farm animals, keeping of breeding males - Production and sale of (labelled) local breeds products - Sustainable farming with local breeds - Farming in combination with nature conservation - Farm tourism (bed and breakfast) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professionally run farms ('working farms') - Farms should be economically sustainable - Majority of animals present on the farms should belong to local endangered breeds - Highest animal welfare standards to be applied on the farm - Open to the public and provide guided tours on request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ark farms, organic farms, state farms, prison farms - grazing projects or other nature conservation projects - community care farms connected with therapy or sheltered workshops - farms with bed and breakfast facilities
Type 3: Rescue centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To save herds of endangered farm animals from slaughtering in case last remaining breeder(s) (have to) stop breeding activity - To save animals in case of political unrest, military conflicts, flooding, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilities that are knowledgeable about caring for animals and have room, time and personnel available to welcome additional animals - Ease of transportation regulation to and from rescue centres - Suitable sanitary status and contingency plans to take unknown animals at short notice and also, if necessary, to provide for isolation of incoming animals and can take care of farm animals over a certain period of time <i>at short notice</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all type of facilities that are equipped
Type 4: Quarantine centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary isolation to save endangered breeds of farm animals in case of outbreak of contagious diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contract with ELBARN and also relevant governmental body (e.g. veterinary authorities) to perform this role. <i>see Guidelines for Rescue in Case of Disease for more details</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - any registered establishment, willing to take on the role, that fulfils criteria for quarantine

4. Rescue Centres

An organized rescue centres network seem difficult to realize in a short time period because breeders involved need:

- 1) Free space – As mentioned above, the number of farms has decreased over past decades, and the subsidies established by the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU have contributed to increasing the size of flocks or herds, but not the number of breeds/flock or breeds/herd. Breeders prefer to keep many animals of a single breed; thus, it is difficult to find free spaces for new animals of different breeds.
- 2) Readiness for collaboration – Agreement. The group of the MED workshop in Legnaro (PD) agreed that, compared to farmers of Northern Europe, breeders of Southern Europe are less ready for such an engagement, with the possible exception of some parts of Spain and Portugal. The breeding of a small number of different breeds (of different species) in the Italian 'agriturismi' or 'fattorie didattiche' for tourist or educational purposes cannot be considered as rescue centres because the populations are too small. A collaborative programme among farmers for creating a rescue centres network should be preceded by a campaign of information at national level.
- 3) Type – A farm can be considered a rescue centre (for example, the proposed 'allevatori custodi' in Italy), but there are no written protocols of what to do in case of emergency situations. National organizations for animal conservation shall be included into a process of protocol development and support for their implementation.
- 4) Financing – As stated above, voluntary collaboration of most Southern European farmers cannot be assumed. Financial support for rescue centres is necessary.
- 5) Health – It is necessary to identify vets willing to take part and create a network of vets working in emergency situations as a special service. Sanitary issues can be a problem when asking for collaboration from farmers: farmers do not like to bring in animals from outside. To solve this problem, the Mediterranean Group at Legnaro agreed on the necessity of establishing a national network of Rescue Centres officially controlled by vets.
- 6) A Rescue Centre should be able to take animals for a short (not more than 6 months) period. Actual costs of labour and fodder have to be refunded.

5. Proposed solutions

National organizations or a multi-level Task Force should contact breeders (directly or through breeders' association) to ask for collaboration.

Breeders should declare how many animals they can keep and for how long.

Breeders specialize in meat or milk production from large or small ruminants, or in meat production from pigs. Farms (even the smallest) are almost always built and equipped for single purposes. Ideally, rescue centres should be specialized for keeping the same category of animals (large or small ruminants, or pigs) with the same production (milk or meat) bred on the farm.

Many 'specialized' rescue centres for single species are better than few 'flexible' rescue centres for different species.

A rescue centre, or a national rescue centre network, must be financed by local, regional or national administration, and then registered as an Official Rescue Centre. At present, there are few possibilities for private initiatives aligned to the ELBARN guidelines.

Pooling of knowledge and experience – The centres of Spain (and Portugal and Greece, in some cases) can be used as examples for other countries concerning the management of rescue and sanitary problems.

Sanitary problems – No general agreement or solutions were proposed for the Mediterranean area due to the difficulties in dealing with this matter (different national laws, diseases, etc.). More information is needed at European and National level. Exchange of information with other Areas is needed.

Legislation – Most Mediterranean countries have national legislation on biodiversity conservation, but their application can differ among states or single regions within a state. National legislation should be studied and confronted to see if any changes are necessary.

Breeding management – Some countries have closed herdbooks; often animals are not registered into herdbooks because registration is expensive (e.g. Italy) or the benefits of registration of small populations into herdbooks are insufficient or limited. The quality of the herdbooks and the breed associations should be continuously checked.

The subsidies established by the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU have contributed to the increase in number of registered animals of endangered breeds (DAD-IS category), but not always of critically endangered breeds. These breeds are often kept by old breeders and farmers, who often have difficulties filling in forms and gaining information on subsidies. They need more representation from breed associations, and other non-governmental or civil society organizations.

For critically endangered breeds, each country should urgently build up one or more nucleus herds inside or outside the area of origin of the breed. Universities and research institutes can provide valuable help. Initially there are no restrictions about the conformity of somatic characteristics of animals; selection for the breed standard is done with the help of experts (genetists and vets) when a sufficient number of animals has been reached. Semen or embryo storage is recommended.

Today the public is more aware of the breeds that found in their country thanks to the promotion of local products through the media. In many Mediterranean countries the use of flagship products (mainly from pig: meat and fat) has helped to save endangered breeds. This is a successful and not very expensive strategy used by some national or international associations (e.g. Slow Food) and it is suggested for Ark farms.

However, this strategy does not work well for non-specialized or for multi-purpose breeds (most of them are now critically endangered); for these breeds, the build up of nucleus herds and their use for social purposes (land management, companionship etc.) is needed.

6. Recommendations

Steps required to improve situation:

- a) Promote the idea of A&TRCs to raise awareness, and make efforts to involve new, younger farmers; not only professional farmers but everyone who has free space (In case of sanitary problem, it is ideal to use farms that have not kept the species of concern before).
- b) Register existing A&TRCs and rescuers.
- c) Network of stakeholders. A Task Force for ELBARN in the area should be set up. It should include willing people who represent different stakeholder levels and understand the goals of the project.

Number of Rescue Centres per country and per species – Due to the high number of breeds in the area and the difference with which they are approached and managed, there should be, ideally, one rescue centre per two breeds. This would be satisfactory, at least for the beginning of a programme, considering that, at present, there are no centres in Cyprus and Portugal, and gaps are present in the other countries too. In fact, in the whole area real rescue centres (that follow the definition presented in the ELBARN Guidelines) are absent; this is also due to cultural reasons. This issue should be addressed via raising public awareness of the need.

How many breeds must be saved? Ideally all endangered breeds, but due to limited funds, human resources and cultural reasons, criteria for breed conservation in the Mediterranean countries should change and include:

- The risk status (number of males and females, population trend, etc.).
- The economical value (actual and potential) of the breed.
- The environmental, social, historical, cultural and aesthetic values of the breed.
- The scientific importance.
- Other parameters (to be defined by a multi-level panel of experts).

The current strategy of risk adopted by EU and European countries give the same subsidies for critically endangered, endangered and at risk breeds. This strategy works well in many cases (especially for endangered or at risk breeds), but does not work well for critically endangered breeds, generally kept by old farmers that have difficulties in gaining access to information. This situation is common in many parts of Italy, Spain and Greece.

Considering the above mentioned parameters and criteria, when a cost/benefit calculation as part of an impact assessment can prove that an autochthonous breed is more beneficial than an exotic breed, pressure has to be used to avoid substitution or cross-breeding with a new breed.

A specific 'add-on' label for marketing and promoting the products and services of local livestock breeds should be supported. This label will fit the following criteria:

- The livestock must belong to an autochthonous breed (or breed traditional to that region).
- Livestock must be kept in a free range, extensive environment.
- The production must be local, extensive and small scale.
- Livestock must be a valuable part of the cultural heritage.
- Specifications for animal welfare must be respected.
- Participating farms should run a herdbook or should be a member of a breeding organisation which runs a herdbook.

And, also:

- Quality should be guaranteed (seasonal fluctuations are accepted for natural products).
- Traditional, artisan processing should be used.
- The distribution should respect rules of fair trade.
- Manufacturing should regard EU Organic regulations as a minimum.

This will bring many advantages in the form of:

- Shortened production and supply chain.
- Product traceability.
- Environmental protection.
- Reducing distribution costs.
- Promotion of healthy eating, traditional taste, cultural values, environmental respect and respect for animal welfare.

The promotion of a wide variety of products helps to conserve a wide variety of genes. The products sold under these labels are aimed at the high-earning sector of society as 'quality', 'exclusive', 'fine food' and so on.



photo: Riccardo Fortino / RARE

The Ragusano PDO cheese from Modicana milk.

Summary of goals

- Financial support for the project in place.
- Breed inventories and holding lists recorded for all breeds of interest.
- Determination of suitable frequency of monitoring and review (quality control).
- Establishment of a network of A&tRCs that fit the goals of the ELBARN project.
- Establishment of nucleus herds .
- Assessment of animal disease regulations and their impact on AnGRFA in place.
- Identification of different uses and purposes (not only economic or scientific) of local breeds and communication of this information to stimulate demand for AnGRFA products or conservation of multi-purpose endangered breeds (i.e: ongoing activities to encourage the use of AnGRFA).
- Improved communication of information on AnGRFA and animal products from local breeds.
- Establishment of National Task Forces that send representatives to an Area Task Force.



photo: Riccardo Fortino / RARE

The pig population of Sardinia has been now recognized as autochthonous breed.

Milestones and deliverables for measuring progress in implementation of Area Action Plan

- Establishment of Task Forces.
- A funding structure.
- Updated list of breeds, census and holdings in MED Area.
- Establishment of nucleus herds.
- Strategy for marketing services and products.
- Rescue protocols.



photo: Riccardo Fortino / RARE

The Ciuta is a breed of small sheep from the Valtellina, Central Italian Alps.

Conclusion

The work groups at the MED workshop agreed on the complexity of the Mediterranean area. The high number of breeds and the difference with which they are approached and managed makes difficult to reach a general agreement between all participants assessing the needs of the area.

There was an agreement on the fact that the EU subsidies for rare breeds should be given following a new approach based not only on the risk status of a breed, but also on their scientific, economic, cultural, historical, aesthetic and environmental role. More information about the benefits of locally adapted breeds is needed.

For many years, Southern Europe has experienced the valorization of products from local breeds,

thanks to the work of some private associations (e.g. Slow Food). This strategy has proven to be efficient in many cases for saving endangered breeds and increase their competitiveness and should be implemented through certified products (European label for typical products from local breeds).

In the Mediterranean area breed organizations are crucial as they manage the most of the breeding programmes, but in some countries they are not yet well organized. Ex-situ conservation is not well utilized and the presence of ark centres and educational farms is not yet widespread.

Improvements in legislation, information resources, awareness raising, mobilizing funds for emergencies and sharing research findings are all necessary.



photo: Riccardo Fortino / RARE

Capra Bionda dell' Adamello



photo: Riccardo Fortino / RARE

Pony di Esperia

Publication Details:

Published within the framework of the ELBARN Project

Project Coordinator:

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SOUTH EAST EUROPE

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Elli Broxham, SAVE Foundation

With thanks to the contributors from the Areas.

Photos:

cover: Riccardo Fortina / RARE
Transhumance of Biellese and Tacola sheep.
Novara province, Po plain.

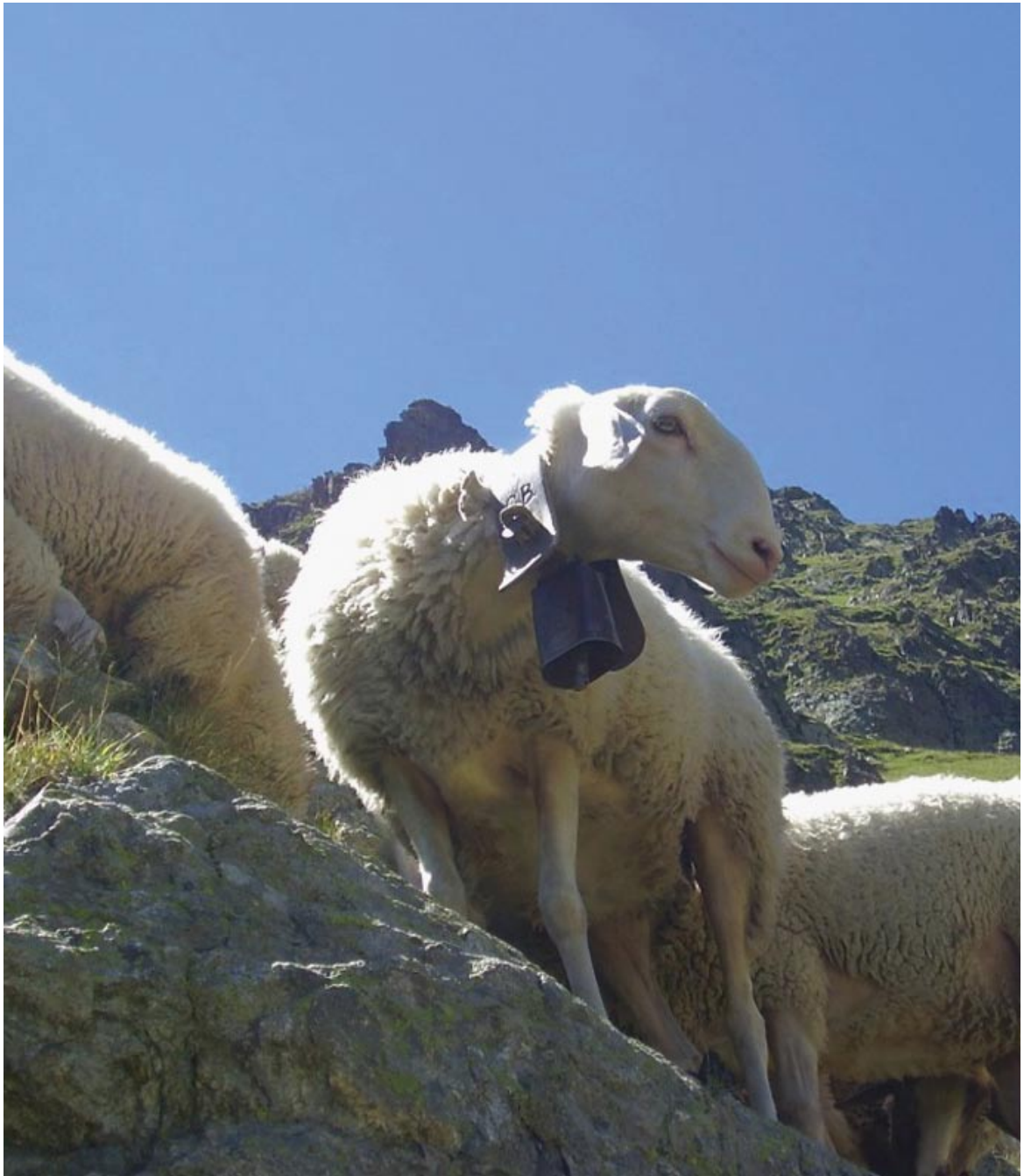
back side: Riccardo Fortina / RARE
Sambucana stura.

Published by: EuroNatur

Art Direction: Kerstin Sauer, EuroNatur Service GmbH

Printed by: Druckerei Fischer, 100% recycled paper





www.elbarn.net