



SAVE

agrobiodiversity

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SAVE Annual Meeting

Local conservation work in Denmark and exchange between SAVE partners

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Diversity was a top priority at this year's Arca-Deli Award

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SAVE Annual Meeting 2023

This year, the youngest member of the SAVE family, SAVE Denmark, hosted the annual meeting. At the end of September 2023, members of the SAVE Foundation and interested parties met in Fredericia, Denmark, to discuss topics relating to agrobiodiversity. In addition to presentations and discussions, visits were made farms that breed local livestock breeds and to cultural heritage sites.



One of the farms visited breeds Danish Red Cattle, anno 1970 (RDM-1970; Rød Dansk Malke race anno 1970). The origin of the breed dates back to the 1840s. At that time, cattle from the East Danish islands were crossed with red cattle from the southern part of Denmark. Angler cattle, North Schleswig cattle and Ballum cattle were used for the crosses. The resulting cattle formed the basis for the Red Danish Dairy Cattle, RDM. Officially recognised in 1878 and bred with herd book since 1881, it was at its most widespread in the 1950s. From the late 1970s onwards, other breeds such as Swiss Brown and Red Holsteins were crossbred. Some breeders stuck to the original breed and continued to breed it purely. The breed name RDM-1970 is derived from this. The milk has a high fat and protein content. The breed is categorised as endangered by the FAO.



Before Stig and Camilla Benzon invited the meeting's participants to a barbecue at their manor house, the participants were shown an old Danish pig breed. The black and white spotted pigs suffered the same fate as many other pig breeds: the thick rind under the skin was undesirable and so this pig breed was replaced by modern breeds despite its robustness and good health. Even today, the meat from the pigs is classified as the lowest quality meat by the abattoirs due to the thick rind of bacon and the price paid for it is correspondingly low. However, the participants of the SAVE meeting could convince themselves from the quality of the meat: the home-made sausage made from the pigs' meat tasted delicious at the dinner.

An excursion took the participants of the SAVE conference to the Mols Bjerger National Park, which borders the coast. It covers an area of 180 km², 80% of which is privately owned. The landscape developed during and after the last ice age - hills and valleys with large areas of forest, bogs, open areas with grasses and lakes. There are no special regulations for farming in the national park; farmers can cultivate the land as they wish within the framework of current legislation, and the use of pesticides and herbicides is also permitted.



The national park is home to the historic Homlegaarden farm, which is run by Verner Nielsen and his wife. Homlegaarden is home to the black and white Jutland cattle, a local cattle breed whose history dates back to the 16th century. The breed reached its peak in the 18th century. Jutland cattle were bred for their meat and were considered one of the most valuable cattle breeds. At that time, many animals were exported to



other countries, up to 20,000 cattle per year to Germany alone. The low annual milk yield of between 800-1000 kg was almost the breed's undoing: the conversion of agriculture to milk production around 1880/90 had serious consequences for the once large population; by



1955 the population had dwindled to just a few animals. Jutland cattle are frugal and do not require any special supplementary feed.

The Jutland region not only gave its name to the Jutland cattle, but also to a horse breed of heavy calibre: the



Jutland draught horse. A breeder introduced the horses to the participants of the SAVE Meeting. With an average height at the withers of 1.55-1.58 m and a medium weight of around 800 kg, these mostly chestnut-coloured horses are the oldest draught horse breed in Denmark. For almost an entire century, Jutland horses were the dominant horse breed in Danish agriculture. The systematic breeding of these horses began as early as 1887/88, although the breeding animals were not all of the same standard at first. The friendly cold-blooded horses are characterised by their balanced temper, which means that they can be taken out for leisurely rides just one or two years after being broken in. Jutland horses are still used as draught horses, for example by the Carlsberg brewery.

A visit to a cultural heritage site was also on the programme. As the last square farm with a thatched roof, the Hessel Museum is unique in Denmark. The Hesselhof was first mentioned in 1391 and the barn dates back to 1650. A fire destroyed large parts of the buildings in 1702, but they were rebuilt. Today, the Hessel Museum offers an insight into past times and traditions; the rooms are equipped with furniture from the 19th century. An old farm without old breeds and varieties? Unthinkable! And so Jutland cattle enjoy the large pastures of Hessel farm and old varieties ripen in an apple orchard.



Finally, the participants of the annual meeting visited the Engdal farm of Jakob Kortegaard, member of the SAVE Foundation Board of Directors, and his wife. In addition



to Jutland cattle, Ertebølle sheep, which also originate from Jutland, are kept on the farm. The robust breed has existed for more than 100 years. The Ertebølle sheep is genetically different from the two other lines of the Danish landrace, Hulsig and Klitfår.

The participants took plenty of time to discuss the activities in their countries and this year's key topics: funding and animal welfare. The presentations from the meeting will be posted on the SAVE website. A big thank you goes to the Danish hosts for their commitment and the successful event. The next SAVE annual meeting will take place in Turin in September 2024.

Bettina Müller, Association for the Promotion of the SAVE Foundation Switzerland

Sources:

Breed information Danish Red Cattle, anno 1970: FAO DAD-IS breed data sheet (<https://www.fao.org/dad-is/browse-by-country-and-species/en/>)

Mols Bjerge national park: <https://de.nationalparkmolsbjerge.dk/>

Jutland cattle: Verner Nielsen, personal communication
Jutland horse: <https://www.denjydskehest.dk/>; FAO DAD-IS breed data sheet (<https://www.fao.org/dad-is/browse-by-country-and-species/en/>)

Hessel museum: Holger Jessen, personal communication and <https://herregaardenhessel.dk/english/>

Ertebølle sheep: <https://qgg.au.dk/en/research/projects/completed-projects/preservation-and-development-of-the-erteboelle-sheep>

Raise our forks!

Petition from our partner Arche Noah on the new EU Seed Regulation



After a long period of preparation, a draft of the new EU seed legislation was presented this year. Negotiations and discussions on the draft are ongoing in Brussels. The draft is being hotly debated and adjustments need to be made in order to preserve diversity and accessibility to seeds. „From the perspective of seed organizations and diversity agriculture, the proposed legislation is clearly not good enough!“ says Magdalena Prieler from Arche Noah. Several European organizations committed to preserving seed diversity have launched the petition „Raise our forks for diversity“. Further information and the link to the petition are available at: <https://mitmachen.arche-noah.at/en/raise-our-forks>

Arca-Deli Award - the awardees 2023



Arca-Deli Award

The Arca-Deli Award is a prestigious award for specialities and innovative services from owners and breeders of local breeds and varieties. Since 2011, the Arca-Deli Award has been given annually by the SAVE Foundation to selected products and services. The Arca-Deli Award label can be used for marketing purposes and is intended to emphasise the special character and value of the products and services.

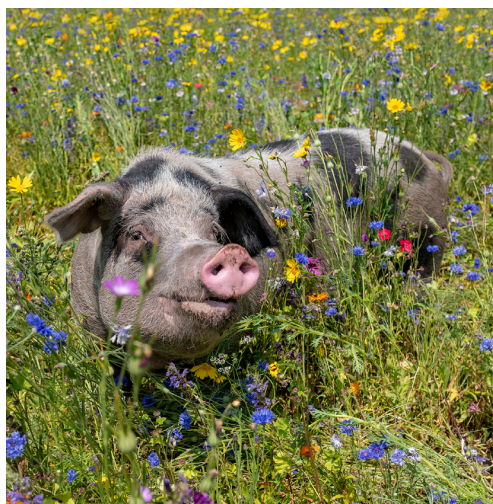
Bierbeißer

The Bierbeißer (German for “beer biter”) is a hard cured sausage made from the meat of the Bentheim pig. These are hard cured sausages which can be eaten without barbeque and represent a perfect snack. The Bierbeißer was developed in collaboration between Nordhorn Zoo and a local butcher. **Nordhorn Zoo** is located in the county of Bentheim, Germany, the region from which the Bunte Bentheimer pig originates. In addition to exotic animals, the focus is on local, mostly endangered livestock breeds that live on the Vechtehof. The Vechtehof is a historic farm that has been rebuilt in the animal park. Right next to the Vechtehof is the old village butcher’s shop, where regional products such as the Bierbeißer are sold, but you can also discover interesting facts about the Bentheim pigs. <https://www.tierpark-nordhorn.de/>



(c) Tierpark Nordhorn

(c) Franz Frieling



(c) Franz Frieling

Bentheim pig

The Bunte Bentheimer Schwein (German for “Spotted Bentheim pig”) is an old breed which originated from the historical shire of Bentheim, a region in Lower Saxony, Germany. The Bentheimpig is a robust pig which is perfectly adapted for living outside and the sows are good mothers caring for their piglets. The meat has a high fat content. From the 1950’s onwards, there was a preference for breeds with fast growth and reproduction and the Bentheim pig was displaced. In the 1970s, the Bentheim pig had almost disappeared until there was only one farmer left with around 100 animals. This farmer engaged himself for the maintenance of the breed and in 2003, an association for the conservation of the Bunten Bentheimer Schweine was founded in the Tierpark Nordhorn. Today, there is a huge demand for meat products from the Bentheim pig which is also valued by gourmets.

Cherry wine Sur Lie

The cherry wine Sur Lie is made from the Danish Stevns cherry. The French term 'sur lie' means that wine is left to rest on its sediment, or residual yeast particles, for an extended period. It produces a richer and deeper tasting wine. Sur Lie is aged in French oak barrels and is the result of an amalgamation of 2-3 different vintages. When the bottle is open, the wine can easily last for 4-6 weeks, if it is kept in a cool place. The Stevns cherry, which is the foundation for the wine, comes exclusively from Frederiksdal's own. The history of **Frederiksdal** Estate dates back centuries. The splendid main building was erected in 1756. Frederiksdal with its' five plantations is situated on the very Southwestern tip of the island of Lolland in the Southern part of Denmark overlooking the Langelandsbæltet. Frederiksdal is so far the only one in the world that produces wine from cherries according to the same principles that have been used in centuries of production of grape wine. www.frederiksdal.com



Stevns cherry the grape of the north



The Stevns cherry is the most common sour-cherry in Denmark. Even though the cherry has grown in Denmark for generations, the berry only got its' name in the middle of the 1970s. In the 1960s all the different, local varieties were sampled and on the basis of extensive analysis the conclusion was, that the various local berries were almost identical and thus could get a common name. Since then, most of the local variations have disappeared, but on Skrædderbanken in Frederiksdal work has begun trying to differentiate between the different varieties again and rediscover some of the local variations. Who knows, there might still be an interesting difference to detect.

Tildes Beste

Tildes Beste (Tilde's Best) is a soap made from milk from the Thuringian forest goat. The soap is a natural product, developed from the idea of avoiding chapped or cracked hands and to be dermatologically well tolerated. For the production of the soap only use organic goat's milk, shea butter, coconut oil, rapeseed oil, castor oil and olive oil are used. **Ziegenhof Woosmer-Archebetrieb** (Goat Farm Woosmer - arc farm) got its name from the village of Woosmer, a village with 750 years of history in the state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in North-Eastern Germany. The farm is located in the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve and only 1.5 km apart from the river. The listed building of Ziegenhof Woosmer has a 170-year history. In addition to Thuringian forest goats the farm keeps runner ducks, geese and chickens. The farm is certified organic (DE-ÖKO-009). www.elbeauszeit.com



Thuringian forest goat

The Thuringian forest goat has been bred purely since 1935. The mostly chocolate-brown goats with the typical white face mask reach a height of around 70 to 85 cm. The Thuringian Forest Goat is a robust dual-purpose breed (milk, meat) that is well suited for landscape conservation. The average annual milk yield is 700 to 800 kg with a fat content of 3.5% and a protein content of 3%. (Source: <https://www.g-e-h.de/rassebeschreibungen/47-ziegen/80-thueringer-wald-ziege>)



Leather bag from Glanrind



The small bags are fitted with a snap hook. This allows you to attach them to your trousers and take them with you. The bags are available in different colours and colour combinations. They are made from small pieces of leather that are too small for larger bags. The leather comes from Glan cattle, which are slaughtered directly on the farm. A tannery in Germany produces leather from the hide of the cattle. Traditional methods as well as vegetable-based tanning agents and colours are used. The bags are designed by Lisa Anschütz from the ark farm Windeck and handmade in a small factory in Burkhardtsdorf near Dresden, Germany. The **ark farm Windeck** is located in the Bergisches Land region in the centre of Germany. The farm has been run by the family for around 100 years and maintains farming traditions. The farm is situated on a ridge at an altitude of around 320 metres. Due to the stony soil and the high annual rainfall, only extensive grazing is possible. A herd of suckler cows with 17 Glan cattle is kept on 20 hectares. Krüper chickens, another rare breed of farm animal, also feel at home on the farm.

Glan cattle

The yellow Glan cattle can be traced back to the cross-breeding of grey-brown Bernese mountain cattle and Simmental cattle with the red, partly backless Palatinate cattle from 1762 onwards. In 1820, Napoleon declared the three-purpose cattle to be the standard cattle breed in the provinces on the left bank of the Rhine. The population of Glan cattle peaked at 400,000 animals presumably around 1958/59. In 1983, conservation breeding was established with only around 25 animals. The milk yield is 4500-5000 kg with 4% fat. The meat is fine-fibred and has a low cooking loss. Glan cattle are long-lived and suitable for extensive rearing. Source: <https://g-e-h.de/rassebeschreibungen/34-rassekurzbeschreibungen-rinder/165-glanrind>



Hipporehabilitation programmes with Hucul ponies

Since 1999, the association SRAZ provides therapy programmes with Hucul ponies. Patients are especially young children (0-7 years in age) with challenging diagnoses, the most common being genetic syndromes and cerebral palsy, manifestations related to complicated childbirth. Another area where the Hucul pony becomes a teacher, friend and partner is the area of hipporehabilitation in pedagogical and social practice for children from 11 years old and adults. The weekly programme at SRAZ includes more than 50 hipporehabilitation lessons, and more than 1800 lessons are conducted per year. The **association SRAZ** (Spolec'íné za radosti a zdravim), founded in 1996, promotes and practices the use of farm animals in therapy, education and awareness. It is located in the Ecological centre Toulc'uv dv'ur in Prague, Czech Republic. Since 2003 SRAZ has been involved in the National Programme for the Conservation of Genetic Resources of the Czech Republic and the national breed associations of individual breeds of livestock and horses. The association SRAZ keeps and breeds Czech cow (éervinka), Czech goats, Wallachian sheep, Pfestice pigs, Golden hens, Czech geese, 3 original breeds of rabbits, bees and a herd of Hucul ponies. In 2012, SRAZ was awarded the status of „Recommended Hipporehabilitation Centre“ by the Czech Hipporehabilitation Society (CHS). www.toulcuvdvur.cz/stranka/farma



Hucul pony

The history of this breed is a thousand years long. It was originally found in the Carpathians as a driving force in agriculture. The name of the breed, named after local breeders, also comes from the Carpathians. Thanks to this, it was perfectly adapted to the local mountain conditions, where it often functioned as the only means of transport. In the period of Austria-Hungary, the systematic breeding of this breed began, mainly for the purposes of the army, it served as a donkey. Around 1970, it was threatened with extinction.

In 1979, the Hucul horse was included in the protected gene pool of original and primitive livestock breeds of the FAO, and in 1993 it was declared a gene reserve of the Czech Republic. Currently, around 390 mares and 17 stallions are registered in the stud book. A typical representative of the Hucul horse should be above all long-lived with a hard constitution given the conditions in which it was bred. This corresponds to a solid body structure with a withers height of around 135 cm. The hooves stand out for their durability and hard horn. Longevity is also associated with later physical maturation up to around 5-6 years. The most common coloration is fawn or brown of all shades. There is a distinct eel stripe on the back, sometimes also ribbing on the lower legs and forearms as a sign of primitive breeds. He is unusually strong for his size, stands out with a sure step and dexterity in the field. Due to his character traits, calm temperament, endurance and good health, he is suitable both for riding and for other uses.



Liver Sausage

This traditional sausage speciality is cooked from the high-quality meat from the spotted Bentheimer pigs in demeter quality. The addition of onions and spices gives the sausage a particularly delicious taste especially when eaten on hearty wholemeal bread. The liver sausage is sold in 200 g cans in the farm shop.

Ready meal Roulade

The second product from Hof Luna to be honoured was the ready-made roulade, which is prepared with meat from Angler cattle (old breed). The particularly fine-fibred meat is combined with onions, gherkins and bacon from Bentheim pigs and seasoned with mustard, pepper and salt to make an aromatic and spicy beef roulade in a velvety sauce. The roulade is sold in 400 g cans in the farm shop. The Angler cattle are bred on Hof Luna in a conservation program. **Hof Luna** is a versatile Demeter and ark farm in Leinebergland (southern Lower Saxony, Germany). The farm is operated biodynamically since 1987. The main focus is on the interaction between animal husbandry, landscaping and nature conservation to create a stable overall ecosystem. Livestock breeds threatened by extinction - such as the Angler Rind from the old breed, the Bentheim pig and the Hungarian Zackelschaf - are kept and bred at Hof Luna. www.hof-luna.de



Angler cattle (old breed)

The old breed of Angler cattle is considered extremely endangered. Due to crossbreeding with other breeds (such as Red Holstein), the proportion of purebred animals had fallen to around 325 cattle in Germany. This is despite the very special breed qualities in terms of milk, meat, feed conversion, health and adaptability. The red Angler cattle is smaller and lighter than most cattle breeds. It produces very high-fat milk (around 5%) with good cheesemaking properties and tender, short-fibred meat. Furthermore, they are very adaptable to changing environmental conditions due to their wide genetic range. The SlowFood organisation has included the breed in its „Ark of Flavour“ project

Honey brandy from the Dark Bee

The Arca-Deli Award was also presented to a product made with ingredients from the smallest farm animal: the bee. Around 1,000,000 hard-working little animals from 27 colonies of the dark bee collect nectar and pollen in the Alps at 1300 m above sea level. The honey brandy is made from the cover wax, propolis, pollen or perga and the best blossom and forest honey. The composition of flowers visited by bees varies from year to year, with dandelion, maple, blueberry and blackberry dominating the long-term average. In some years, many alpine roses also bloom. These ingredients give the honey brandy a taste that reflects the regional mountain area. The **Sattelbauer mountain farm** has been run as arc farm since March 2020. All products from the farm are processed, refined and offered for consumption on the farm. The farm keeps and breeds various local livestock breeds such as the original Pinzgau cattle, Alpine Steinschaf, Tauernschecken goats, baroque donkeys and the dark bee. www.sattelbauer.at



Dark Bee

The dark bee is characterized by its dark carapace colouring and narrow felt bands as well as its very high adaptability to its environmental conditions. The Dark Bee also flies at lower temperatures. While the dark bee used to be widespread in Europe, the import of other subspecies led to a sharp decline in the dark bee around 150 years ago. The dark bee is considered endangered. In Austria, dark bees made up only 1% of the total population in 2010. (Source: <https://mellifera.ch/apis-mellifera-mellifera/>; <http://www.dunkle-biene.at/>)

Black Alpine pigs - useful weed eaters

Formerly thought to be extinct, the black Alpine pigs populated the higher areas. Thanks to a project by the Pro Patrimonio Montano network, the last remaining individuals have been brought together in breeding groups.

Bella rushes outside, grunts contentedly, lowers her head into the grass and plucks out grasses with and without roots. It sounds like a cow grazing. But Bella is not a cow, she is a black Alpine pig. She is living proof of the impressive comeback of a livestock breed that was thought to be lost. For centuries, Black Alpine pigs accompanied farming families to the alpine pastures, where they lived off what nature had to offer. The animals did not need any feed supplements. On the contrary: they don't shy away from stinging nettles and - according to the literature - brambles. Bella has only been here for a fortnight with her offspring and her boar

Bobby. It's her summer holidays. Bella is originally Italian, but her ancestors more or less populated the entire Alpine region. Her dark colour protects her from the intense summer sun in the mountains. Unlike the pink-coloured domestic pig, they don't get sunburnt. They are also significantly smaller and lighter, and have high legs - they are mountain pigs. Due to their physique and weight, today's domestic pigs are no longer suitable for grazing in the Alps. In addition, they do not tolerate much sun because of their pigmentation. Towards the end of the 19th century, the black and spotted Alpine pigs, which are summarised under the name black Alpi-

ne pigs, became extinct in most Alpine regions. On the one hand, they were replaced by foreign high-performance breeds, and on the other, more easy-care goats and sheep were kept. Hape Grünenfelder, founder of the SAVE Foundation, came across evidence over 15 years ago that there were still isolated black pigs in the southern Alps. He recalls numerous trips to remote side valleys in 2013 and 2014: „It was detective work that paid off.“ He and his colleagues found the last remaining pigs in Valtellina, Samolaco near Chiavenna and in Val d’Ultimo in South Tyrol, bought them up with the help of the alpine network Pro Patrimonio Montana and formed breeding groups.



Frugal omnivores

The three lines of descent, which all correspond to the old mountain ecotype, form a gene pool. The Samolaco line brings the piebald coat into the breeds. How much similarity there is with the historically described Alpine pig remains to be seen. What is certain is that other breeds were crossbred, but that the earlier Black Alpine pigs were also heterogeneous and varied somewhat from valley to valley. „The important thing is that the appearance is close to the original and that the characteristics are similar,“ explains Hape Grünenfelder. The black Alpine pigs graze on the pastures that are worthless for cows. These are areas around a barn that have been over-fertilised by cattle and therefore only harbour a reduced plant community, which is also not eaten by the cows. This additional benefit is offset by significantly lower husbandry costs. The animals display

the behaviour of the former Black Alpine pigs described in the literature. They use steep areas and look for places to wallow. Piglets in particular charge across the terrain and jump over tree trunks as if they wanted to compete with the chamois in the nearby forest. Their special diet and the loosened soil caused by burrowing counteracts weed growth. This is ecologically valuable when you consider that weedkillers are often used to combat couch grass in the Alps. This means that the first water pollution can already be prevented in the source area. In addition, no fattening feed has to be transported to the alp. The first Alpine pigs have already landed on the plates of top chefs. Demand is increasing.

Martin Arnold, Association for the promotion of the SAVE Foundation Switzerland



Christmas is just around the corner and the old year is drawing to a close. The SAVE Foundation wishes you a Merry Christmas and a good start to 2024, may the Black Alpine Pig bring you good luck for the New Year.

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We appreciate your support and thank you very much.



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