

Marketing Products from Austrian Rare Breeds

A Selection of Activities

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Introduction

Gene conservation programs for rare and endangered breeds of farm animals exist in Austria since the early eighties of last century. The goal of stabilizing and even rebuilding endangered populations has been reached satisfactorily in most of the 30 rare breeds in the program (Table 1). A core task in conservation of Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR) is the "sustainable use" of the resource. Four successful examples of marketing products of rare breeds are presented here.

Table 1 Number of breeding animals 1997 and 2008

| Breed | Number of breeding animals | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| | 1997 | 2008 |
| Tyrolean Grey Cattle | 3910 | 4770 |
| Murboden Cattle | 299 | 3409 |
| Forest Sheep | 160 | 1032 |
| Sulmtal Chicken | ? | ca. 5000 |

„Die edle Tirolerin“

Chocolate from the cream of Tyrolean Grey Cattle

In the Tyrolean Grey 70% of the cows are still dairy cows.

The Tyrolean Grey cattle takes part in an initiative to market the rich milk of this breed that has got it the nickname "Jersey of the Alps".

„Die edle Tirolerin“ is a handcrafted chocolate from 100% Varhona Grand Cru „Maniari“ with 64% cocoa, fresh cream from Tyrolean Grey Cattle and caramelised cocoa beans.

The analysis of milk fat from cows grazing on the best mountain pastures shows a higher amount of Omega-3-fatty acids with positive effects on the human organism.

www.dieedletirolerin.at

„Murbodner Qualitätsochse“

Quality beef from Murboden steers

Project started in March 2008

Cooperation between SPAR Austria, TANN (Butcher company supplying meat and meat products to SPAR), the Styrian Cattle Growers' Association and the Murboden cattle breeders association.

Breeders are mostly small farmers not able to raise steers to slaughter weight. The Styrian Growers' Association buys young Murboden steers paying 18% premium and conveys them to contracted fatteners. Only pedigreed cattle from recorded breeding herds are eligible for the project. Marketing of premium beef planned for 2009.

www.murbodner.at

„Sulmtaler Hendl“

The imperial chicken

A very old breed documented in the region in the 14th, 17th and 18th century. At the end of the 19th century famous at European courts for meat quality.

In the 1980ies only a few hundred birds were left in fancy breeders' herds. The breed is slow maturing needing 24 to 28 weeks till slaughter weight. Only purebred free range birds are eligible for the project. Grain feeding is compulsory, no concentrates allowed. Cocks weigh up to 4 kg, hens 2 to 3 kg LW. Capons (3,5 to 4 kg) as highly estimated international speciality. The meat is finely textured, very succulent with distinctive typical taste. Successful product in international top gastronomy - it competes with French Bresse capons. An international speciality with regional character helping small scale farmers to survive and conserve the typical landscape of southern Styria.

www.sulmtaler.at

„Waldschaf tweed“

Networks for nature, animals and humans

Forest sheep are small, hardy, fertile and well adapted to dry meagre pastures. In nature reserves they keep the vegetation low to enable the *Bohemian Gentian* to survive.

Developed in the harsh climate of the Granite and Gneiss plateaus they carry a very fine mixed wool. The wool is used for a high quality tweed manufactured completely in the region. The processing of the wool provides work for up to nine handicapped people in a economically disadvantaged region.

The local gastronomy markets the very lean and tasty lamb meat as a speciality.

Linking conservation of a rare breed, habitat management, employment of handicapped persons and developing and marketing high quality products is a good example for the importance and efficiency of networks.

www.waldschaf.at

Summary

Linking product breed and region

- raises awareness in farmers and the public
- helps to conserve and rebuild populations of traditional farm animal breeds
- can make small scale farming more profitable
- creates jobs in economically disadvantaged regions
- builds regional networks.