



An Information System for the assessment of the threats to the Heritage Sheep Breeds

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The **HERITAGESHEEP** project aims to establish a European-wide conservation programme of HSB genetic resources for the diversification of production in livestock agriculture and for their central importance in the long-term sustainability of medium to low input farming systems.

The outcomes are expected to have positive impact:

- (1) to the environment, reducing the negative impact of intensive agricultural practices;
- (2) to the regional communities by using natural resources in a sustainable way to manufacture products;
- (3) to the rural economies developing strategies to enhance the profitability of local breeds.

The information system

The Database developed combined all the information for the assessment of the threats to the Heritage Sheep breeds, the values of the breeds according to the Breeders Societies, the current situation on in situ and ex situ conservation activities and the future trends of the breeds.

The Database was divided into the following sections: 1. General Description, 2. Numbers and Trends, 3. Succession/Political/ Climatic Factors, 5. Environmental impacts / diseases, 6. Values, 7. Current Situation and Future Trends.

The main factors according to the breeders that reduce sheep numbers were: the decrease in public funding, the lack of political will to support rural communities, policies and legislation, diseases, predators, urbanisation, poor return on product, ageing of farmers, lack of marketing support, inbreeding and loss of skills.



Partners: United Kingdom: University of York / the Sheep Trust, France: Institut de l'Elevage, the Netherlands: Centre for Genetic Resources, Greece: Aristotle University / National Agricultural Research Foundation, Slovenia: University of Ljubljana

The portal consists of two parts. In the static part of the website there is information about the description and the objectives of the program, work-packages, sheep breeds, partners, reports of the meetings etc.

The dynamic part of the web page uses ASP technology and is developed with Microsoft Visual Web Developer and Microsoft Visual studio. The user is able to select the country and then the breed and the related information of its section are presented in the web site. Currently the geographical representation of the results is under development, where the feasibility of an early warning system to predict which breeds are likely to become threatened, or change their current status is investigated.

All parts of the website and the database are freely available to the visitors of the site. Different stakeholders can have access to the website and database, to find information on the implementation of conservation strategies of HSB genetic resources in national initiatives.

www.heritagesheep.eu

BREED NAME	Improved the diversity of wildlife	Improved the diversity of plants	Improved the access for the public	Reduce waste
Basso Sarraoise	1	1	2	3
Breze	3	4	4	4
Causses du Lot	2	2	1	2
Crénel	1	1	1	3
Crivelle	2	2	2	3
Livronnaise	3	3	5	1
Marche Tête Noire	1	1	2	3
Marche Tête Rousse	1	1	2	3
Normandes	5	3	3	3
Pays	4	4	4	4

BREED NAME	Breed special schemes	Comment	Region special schemes	Comment	Grant aid to help marketing	Comment	Advisory services marketing	Comment
Blackstock Hill Cheviot	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is sold through the LEO stores that sell the most lamb	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	MCC, Pubs, Cig, Cymru Meat, promotion Wales
Cheviot	<input type="checkbox"/>	too expensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	to difficult to arrange	<input type="checkbox"/>	Too difficult	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clun Forest	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dalesbred	<input type="checkbox"/>	(NO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	(NO) Several efforts to get schemes of lamb meat off the ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	(YES) when and if they occur	<input type="checkbox"/>	(YES)
Derbyshire Grisons	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Have not used any

The website aims to raise the public awareness on the issue of the conservation of FAnGR and to provide information to the policy makers and the relevant authorities at national and EU level on the significance of the genetic resources of the Heritage Sheep Breeds and the urgent need for action to conserve these resources.

