



EUROPEAN LIVESTOCK BREEDS ARK AND RESCUE NET

Guidelines for Rescue

Principles

Rescue is a temporary act

This means that action takes place in cases of emergency. Rehabilitation of a breed includes a long term breeding programme, informative advertising, promotion of products and services.

Professional accomplishment

Rescuing should act in a most professional way. Therefore a net of experts and stakeholders is needed for identification of the needs, knowledge of the breeds and varieties taken into consideration, planning and implementation.

Set up emergency funds

Emergency funds are necessary during a monitoring process in a country or region, but also in countries where the conservation structure is doing well. Here also cases of emergency can take place, e.g. when a breeder gives up breeding and keeping, in case of natural disasters or diseases. Here money currently available for culling animals in cases of outbreaks of diseases could be used for emergency measures.

Verification of the rescued breed

The breed needs to be verified. In some cases there might not be time for verification. An expert should make a kind of first identification. An exact verification should take place as soon after the rescue action as possible.

Ex situ conservation (in gene banks)

Ex-situ conservation (storage, collection and cryopreservation of semen, ova, embryos etc.) are required in all circumstances as last resort and insurance.

Needs for successful rescue of a rare breed

Preventive action

It is important to act before a rescue action is necessary: Breeds should be defined and monitored per country and/or per region as soon as possible. A decentralized system for identification of local breeds and varieties is necessary. For characterisation morphologic, genetic, functional and cultural aspects need to be taken into consideration.

National Committee

Identification of the breeds and varieties should be done by a *National Committee* for AnGR. The composition of this committee needs to be multidisciplinary, including the officially appointed National Coordinator for the Management of AnGR by each country, NGO stakeholders, stakeholders of nature conservation and cultural heritage organisations. This committee should be in interaction with ELBARN.



Reference point

A National (or regional) reference point or contact person is needed, with all available information of breeds and varieties of a country. This point should be communicated also to veterinarian / sanitary services and the public. This reference point should be in close interaction with ELBARN.

Training of veterinarians

Veterinarians should be educated in terms of rare breeds to be able to identify such breeds and to give some information to the public.

Conservation Value

The conservation value of the farm animal sometimes cannot be verified immediately. Therefore a verification of the conservation value is necessary as soon as possible after the rescue action.

Threshold for a rescue action

The lowest threshold for an action needs to be defined. This cannot be done within a general definition. Different factors have an influence in the threshold for a need of action. In case of rare breeds, extinction takes place before the last remnants are dead. For the lowest threshold also factors like situation of the herd and their keepers, numbers of males and females in reproduction, natural, historical and cultural factors are playing a role. Therefore the above mentioned National committee and or the National reference point are important decision maker units.

Rescue Centres – requirements

As it was defined before, a Rescue Centre is any centre / station with free space for hosting rare breeds (for a certain number of animals of a certain species) in a short time period for emergency reasons. This places need to be identified to re-place a breed, a herd or a group of rare farm animals.

Requirements are:

- Free space (stable, pasture, paddock)
- Flexibility in term of sanitary status, possibilities for isolation
- Readiness for collaboration - agreement
- Registration as a rescue centre

A rescue centre should have the character of e.g. an ark farm with free facilities. Officially running farms like state farms, university farms etc. often have space for hosting. This information needs to be stored in the ELBARN database in the net of responders. There is a need for a written agreement with the rescue centre. This agreement should include requirement to inform about any changes in status, availability of places and so forth. A sample agreement could be worked out by ELBARN (within the area actions).

The official sanitary status of the rescue place as a whole could be endangered in case of hosting animals with an unknown sanitary status. This is important in several cases of diseases like Maedi Visna, CAE, Brucellosis, Tuberculosis etc. The related authorities for sanitary rules and –management must be included in the process. Also the related authorities for the starting of the rehabilitation process should be identified (breeder association, governmental authorities)

After the rescue operation, the re-integration process of the breed into e.g. a breeding programme should start immediately after valuation.



Process of rescue

The process of rescue depends on the needs and facts discussed above. An ideal scenario looks like this:

Somebody finds a herd of special exterior.

This person calls e.g. a veterinarian.

The veterinarian calls the national contact point and uses the ELBARN database for more information and a first verification, if this is an endangered breed.

The situation will be made more clear.

If a Rescue action is needed, the best Ark- and Rescue Centre nearby will be identified and an agreement with the farmer will be made.

The herd can be re-placed.

Afterwards, a precise valuation follows and a permanent place needs to be found.

A herdbook will be established and the re-integration process can start. Possibilities for herdbook keeping and data collection should be available.

