

EU sanitary rules – case studies NGOs (conservation of rare breeds)

Sheep

Steunpunt Levend Erfgoed, Belgium

Case of exchange of animals for conservation breeding UK - Belgium

The “Steunpunt Levend Erfgoed”, the Belgian national NGO for the conservation of rare breeds gave the following statement:

- We have not had cases where EU regulation did **stop** exchange of breeding animals, but regulation in any case heavily complicated the exchange of breeding animals.

Case Castlemilk Moorit sheep, Belgium:

A Belgian breeding organization of Castlemilk Moorit sheep – member of SLE - wanted to buy a number of breeding females in the UK in order to avoid inbreeding. It took them more than **3 years** to get this done because of EU regulation.

- First there were no ARR/ARR animals available. As a consequence the UK breeders had to go on a 3-year program to get the status of “low risk” flock for scrapie, meaning that they had to “isolate their flock” for 3 years, have an annual veterinary inspection, animals that died had to be examined for the presence of scrapie,
- An ITAHC (Intra-EU Trade Animal Health Certificate) was needed. See https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live_animals/ovine_caprine_en
- Brucella Ovis certificate needed,
- Sheep had to be transported by a commercial transport company, entitled to engage in international animal transport,

At the end it was possible to bring about 15 breeding ewes Castlemilk Moorit from the UK to Belgian, but it took 3.5 years and it caused a lot of expenses.

We wonder how this will work out after Brexit ?

Cattle

Danish Red Cattle: Association of Old Danish Livestock Breeds (Hans Nebel):

Latest I was here, it was in the last autumn on mission together with my team searching for: gene resources – cattle gene resources, sperm resources of our old Red Danish Milk-Cow 70. It was our forth expedition looking for these unique gene resources, preserved or alive. The previous locations were: Southern Poland uphill's the Carpathian's; next middle Poland, Cracow area; then Latvia, Lithuania and the north of Poland – all places amazingly what we saw and found. We knew beforehand, that our Danish Red cow was exported to more countries, popular as it was, especially for decades in the late 18 hundreds and in the beginning of the 19 hundreds up to the 1960-ties.

In Estonia we found sperms from 31 bulls of old Danish Red, preserved during decades of the Animal Breeders Association of Estonia, by Mr. Tanel Bulitko and Mr. Tonu Polluaar's and colleagues.

Now, 10 months later, we are still struggling for to have all this sperm recognized by veterinarians and other scientific people and transferred to Denmark – not due to difficulties with our nice colleges here in Estonia: They have all the way through been easy to work with and patient. Due, to what then? Both our countries are members of EU, as you know, with Estonia having the chairmanship at the moment.

Actually, we know about the rules and regulations of the EU. We even know about there is a before and an after 1992 regulations on the matter in EU. Though there are ways to handle even this phenomenon, we know too. We are not going to discuss security of gene resources. The matter is and should be: How do we handle such matters in our community of EU for the benefit of saving of our common heritage of old livestock breeds in Europe?

All of us in EU, we should be making it possible to scientists, breeders and breeders organizations to have aims and wishes running cross borders.

GEH, Germany: Cattle coordinator of Bavaria, Statement:

The Bavarian gene reserve for cattle was created from 1975. A few years ago there was a discussion about destroying all semen that had been stored before 1985, that means before the testing for BHV1 (Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis) was introduced. Meanwhile one tries to test the old portions and to keep them after they are negative. In endangered breeds, these semen portions, which are not tested, should no longer be spent.

Sperm collection on farm

Sperm collection of individual bulls is sometimes necessary. But such sperm is not marketable and may only be used on the own farm. This is the case at least in Germany. I've heard, in the Netherlands and Italy, it is handled differently: sperm from such a kind of sperm collection technique is freely tradable within the country, but may not go abroad.

Some years ago we thought about introducing sperm from a polled yellow cattle bull to Germany to expand genetics. Since in all countries where such sperm is available, all the bulls did not comply with the EU hygiene standards and therefore we could not do anything.

The same problem arose when we wanted to reintroduce yellow cattle semen which was exported to North America in the 1970s. Again, the EU rules have impeded this.

I do not mean to say that these regulations are always bad, because one always have to look at the health risk for the herd. These examples show cases where the regulations lead to restrictions.

Balkans / Macedonia: Farmers association of Busha cattle - Skopje

Until now we do not have any experiences on the state level, in exchanging the breeding material (like semen, blood or fibers), first because the collected material of our gene-bank is a property of our Ministry of agriculture, and 2. because of the “animal health requirements - concerning to veterinarian comments”.

But from the other side, our farmers with local (autochthonous) breeds of cattle, they are exchanging the males with the farmers from the neighbouring countries, to avoid inbreeding depression in their herds, according to our small populations and limited number of superior bulls.

Note SAVE: Within the Balkan countries a lot of officially illegal exchanges take place. Often the breeders (and it seems also the veterinarians) are not aware of the official rules. Probably it should be necessary to initiate a training on the sanitary rules in that region. The same case is in Eastern Europe and within the EU borders (Romania – Ukraine, Moldavia etc.).