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GLOBALDIV NEWSLETTER

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Editorial - The FAO Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources

Sustainable management of the world's animal genetic resources is of vital importance to agriculture, food production, rural development and the environment. The first International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR) was held in Interlaken, Switzerland, from 3 to 7 September 2007 to raise awareness among stakeholders and promote improved policy development and cooperation at all levels. Delegates from 109 countries participated in the event, along with representatives from various international organizations associated with the management of AnGR. The Conference welcomed *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*¹ and formally adopted the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*² through the *Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources*.

The *Global Plan of Action* is the first ever international framework for the promotion of the wise management of AnGR, endorsed by an intergovernmental meeting, to support and increase the overall effectiveness of national, regional and global efforts for the sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources, and to facilitate mobilization of resources, including adequate financial resources, development of institutions, human resources and cooperative frameworks. The 23 *Strategic Priorities for Action* within the *Global Plan of Action* cover four strategic priority areas of

1. characterization, inventory and monitoring of trends and associated risks;
2. sustainable use and development;

¹<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1250e/a1250e00.htm>

²<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/a1404e/a1404e00.pdf>

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3. conservation; and
4. policies, institutions and capacity-building.

The *Global Plan of Action* was adopted through the *Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources*, by which countries confirmed their common and individual responsibilities for the conservation, sustainable use and development of AnGR; for world food security; for improving human nutritional status; and for rural development. They committed themselves to facilitating access to AnGR, and ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from their use.

Although each individual country is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, its success will depend upon the contribution of many actors, including national governments, INGOs, NGOs, livestock keepers, scientists, and the private sector. Several Strategic Priorities aim to address the current low level of capacity in all fields of AnGR management, through partnerships and cooperation for enhanced educational and training opportunities, technical cooperation, technology transfer and exchange of experience. The scientific and donor communities have important roles to play in this regard. Although research on AnGR management has increased in the past few years, linkages between groups, collaborative networks of researchers and stakeholders, and standardization of approaches – all prerequisites for better global knowledge – need further improvement.

There is also an urgent need to strengthen research and development of methods for characterization, and breed evaluation, valuation and comparison, as well as *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation methods and technologies, including those for conservation breeding. Technical standards, guidelines and protocols for phenotypic and molecular characterization, particularly for the assessment of comparative breed performance in different production environments and for *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, should be developed.

The importance given to research as a basis for policy development and for decision-making in the field of AnGR conservation implies an important role for the scientific community. Collaborative research projects that generate and disseminate new knowledge are crucial in this regard. The GLOBALDIV project has an opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the GPA, through critical evaluation of the current state-of-the-art for appraisal and conservation of AnGR, assessment of AnGR diversity on a global scale and capacity building through training and the development and distribution of guidelines.

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NEWS

GLOBALDIV SUMMER SCHOOL – Application Open!

GLOBALDIV Summer Schools are training activities, comprising theoretical and practical lectures, organized by the project on 2008 and 2009, to train PhD students and junior researchers on specific topics related to the use of the new technologies and approaches to characterize and conserve genetic diversity in farm animal species.

The 2008 School is dedicated to train students in technologies, statistics and methods for the investigation of animal genomes and the characterization of their diversity.

The 2009 School will be devoted to socio-economic aspects of conservation, to breed prioritization and conservation strategies, integrating genetics, socio-economic, environmental data and geography.

For more information [http://www.globaldiv.eu/Summer School/Home.html](http://www.globaldiv.eu/Summer%20School/Home.html)

The breed of the month: Ankole cattle

There are about 3.2 million Ankole cattle in five countries of East and Central Africa. The Ankole are drought-resistant and beloved by their keepers also for their uncommon gentleness, beauty, rich milk and tasty meat (believed also to be low in cholesterol). Rapidly expanding human populations, infrastructures and markets, however, are forcing more and more farmers to replace their indigenous African Ankole cattle with exotic breeds such as the black-and-white Holstein-Friesians dairy cows, which produce much more milk. At their current rates of decline, these hardy, graceful animals will disappear within the next 50 years.



EVENTS CALENDAR

Many events concerning different issues related to GLOBALDIV project will take place in the coming months. Here is a selection of conferences and other events sorted by date:

- Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9)
Bonn, Germany
19 - 30 May 2008
www.cbd.int/cop9



- XXIII World's Poultry Congress
Brisbane, Australia
30 June - 4 July 2008
www.wpc2008.com
- 29th World Veterinary Congress
Vancouver, B.C. (Canada)
27 - 31 July 2008
www.worldveterinarycongress2008.com
- 10th World Conference on Animal Production
Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa
23 - 28 November 2008
www.wcap2008.co.za
- 59th Annual Meeting of the European Association for Animal Production
Vilnius, Lithuania
24 - 27 August 2008
www.eaap2008.org
- International Society for Animal Genetics (ISAG)
20 - 24 July 2008
Amsterdam, Netherlands
www.isag2008.nl

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