





International Association for the Conservation of Animal  
Breeds in the Danubian Region

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# **Organic sheep farming - a conservation method yet to be implemented**

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***„Everyone has a fundamental right to pleasure and consequently the responsibility to protect the heritage of food, tradition and culture that make this pleasure possible.“***



# Numbers

- around 600.000 sheep in Croatia
- around 55% - indigenous breeds
- 9 indigenous sheep breeds
  - 2 endangered
- 60% of sheep bred in karst areas
- 0,27% organic farms of total number of farms (2007.)



# Tradition of sheep breeding in Croatia

- extensive sheep breeding
- free grazing, additional food in winter
- animals adapted to rough climate
- long tradition in karst areas: cultural, sociological and ecological impact



# Conservation methods



- *ex-situ conservation*
- *in-situ conservation* – preserving the animals in their original natural habitat
  - preservation of indigenous breeds & organic farming

# Why *organic* sheep breeding?

- fastest growing market sector, steady growth
- easy transition from traditional to organic farming
- karst areas as “virgin” soils
- low input production – ecologically acceptable
- system of supervision and monitoring
- cooperative farmers
- added value of products



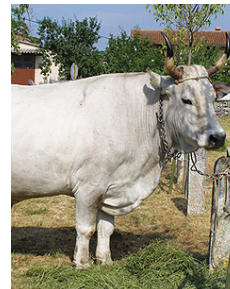
# Protection by commercialisation

- self-sustainability of the breed
- new economic and management practice
- programs and projects
- products' branding and popularisation



# How? Value added

- organic label
- “designation of origin” label
- tourist offer
  - rural tourism
  - gastro tourism
  - high class restaurants & hotels
  - souvenirs





# Benefits



- breed biodiversity conservation
- habitat biodiversity conservation
- preserving culture and tradition
- revitalization of war damaged areas
- reduction of fire hazard
- return of the young people to rural areas

# What is missing?



- National (organic) sheep (and goat) breeding strategy
- marketing experts in collaboration with producers
- constant and reliable production
- consumer education
- governmental support

# Where to start from?

- meeting of all the parties involved, setting the goals
- farmer cooperatives
- institutional support
- EU projects



THANK YOU!

