

Editorial

Dear reader,

Activities that add value to locally adapted breeds also support biodiversity and promote local heritage and tradition. But how to add such value? This 53rd volume of *Animal Genetic Resources* includes a special issue on adding value to livestock breeds. The idea for this special issue was born during the session “Strategies to add value to local breeds” of the 61st Annual Meeting of the European Federation of Animal Science (EAAP), held in August, 2010, in Crete, Greece. This session was jointly organized by the working group of the European Federation of Animal Science for Animal Genetic Resources, the European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources (ERFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Nine papers are presented here, including an introductory paper, which summarizes the different approaches illustrated by the contributing authors. The articles describe various strategies that have been used to add value to local breeds, in various countries and regions, with the aim of increasing the competitiveness of these breeds and promoting their sustainable use in the long term.

The 10 contributions not falling under the topic of the special issue reveal the continuing importance of the characterization of local breeds. It is the first step towards sustainable use and development of genetic resources and also the basis for strategies that seek to add value. Actions related to characterization, inventory and monitoring of trends and associated risks for animal genetic resources represent the first strategic priority area of the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*¹.

The Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources was the response to the findings of the *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*,² which identified significant gaps in capacity

to manage animal genetic resources, particularly in developing countries. At its 14th Regular Session, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture requested FAO to prepare an update of *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. This might eventually lead to a revision of the Global Plan of Action. FAO's Animal Genetic Resources Branch is guiding countries through the reporting process. The web site “Implementing the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources”³ has been newly structured and enriched. There is now a specific page with information about this journal,⁴ which includes links to all previous volumes. Another page is dedicated to the preparation of *The Second Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.⁵

The editors would like to encourage the readership of *Animal Genetic Resources* to contribute with their valuable knowledge to the process of updating *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, in collaboration with their respective National Coordinators for the Management of Animal Genetic Resources.⁶

Ms Beate Scherf, Editor in Chief of the journal for several years, will coordinate the update of *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*. With a heavy heart she had therefore to reduce some of her other activities, including her activities for the journal. The editors would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her constant efforts to improve the quality of the journal. I now have the pleasure of replacing her as Editor in Chief, and hope to continue what Ms Scherf started, together with the members of the Editorial Board and the contributing authors from all over the world.

Yours sincerely,
Roswitha Baumung

¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1404e/a1404e00.htm>

² <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1250e/a1250e00.htm>

³ <http://www.fao.org/Ag/AGAInfo/programmes/en/A5.html>

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/Ag/AGAInfo/programmes/en/genetics/journal.html>

⁵ http://www.fao.org/Ag/AGAInfo/programmes/en/genetics/Second_state.html

⁶ <http://dad.fao.org/cgi-bin/EfabisWeb.cgi?sid=-1,contacts>