

Editorial

Dear reader,

While writing these lines the Animal Genetic Resources Branch of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)¹ is busy with the preparation of the Eighth Session of the *Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* which will take place in Rome in November 2014. The Working Group was established in 1997 by the *Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*² to support its work in the animal genetic resources sector.

This year the Working Group will discuss topics such as

- The second report on *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*
- Implementation and update of the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*
- Ecosystem services provided by livestock species and breeds
- Access and benefit-sharing for animal genetic resources
- Genetic diversity and climate change

Draft documents for the Session will be made available at the Working Group webpage³ and you are warmly invited to have a look at them. The draft document on *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* might be of special interest to you. This report is a comprehensive global assessment of livestock biodiversity and its management. Such assessments are necessary to coordinate international efforts to improve the management of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture has established a series of global "State of the World" assessments⁴. The first report on animal genetic resources was published in 2007⁵. In 2013, the Commission requested FAO to prepare the second report

on *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, as an update of the first report, for publication in 2015. Amongst others, the update is based on reports received from 129 countries and 15 international organizations.

On the Working Group webpage you will also find information on the Global Databank for Animal Genetic Resources DAD-IS⁶ which currently contains data from 182 countries and 38 species. Based on DAD-IS data, trends in genetic erosion of breeds since the publication of the first report on *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* are presented. Since the year 2006, the proportion of breeds classified 'as at risk of extinction' increased from 15 to 17 percent, the breeds classified as 'not at risk' decreased from 21 to 18 percent and the percentage of breeds reported to be extinct remained stable at seven percent. The number of breeds where no risk status can be calculated due to either complete lack of information on population sizes or lack of updating of population data for a period of more than ten years is high with almost 60 percent.

The editors would like to encourage the readership of *Animal Genetic Resources* to have a look at the content of the Global Databank for Animal Genetic Resources and contribute, in collaboration with the respective National Coordinators for the Management of Animal Genetic Resources⁷, to its improvement. In case you do have any comments to the draft version of the second report on *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* please send them to SoWAnGR2@fao.org

Yours sincerely,
Roswitha Baumung

¹ <http://www.fao.org/AG/AGAInfo/themes/en/AnGR.html>

² <http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/en/>

³ <http://www.fao.org/AG/AGAInfo/programmes/en/genetics/angrvent.html>

⁴ http://www.fao.org/AG/AGAInfo/programmes/en/genetics/global_assessments.html

⁵ http://www.fao.org/AG/AGAInfo/programmes/en/genetics/First_state.html

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/dad-is>

⁷ <http://dad.fao.org/cgi-bin/EfabisWeb.cgi?sid=-1,contacts>