"Survival of Busha Cattle in Serbia"
short abstract

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Busha cattle are indigenous breed of Balkan Peninsula. These shorthorn cattle used to be typical cattle breed for marginalized rural areas of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece till the 50s and 60s of the XX century, and it’s still vital breed in some mountainous parts of Balkan. Today risk status of this breed in Serbia is “endangered – maintained”. There are several locations of Busha cattle breed in Serbia. On –farm in situ conservation of busha cattle is managed in area of Crna Trava (Chemernik Mountain), Kursumlija (Kopaonik Mountain), Mionica, Kovin (Vojvodina Province), Peshter Region, and Dimitrovgrad (Stara Planina Mountain). There are breeders in other parts of Serbia (usually marginalized and remote rural areas) like Trgovishte area and Bujanovac, Preshevo, and Medvedja area, where isolated animals of Busha cattle could be seen, but those farmers are not participating in Governmental conservation program (they have less than 5 adult animals, or they are not registered and therefore not eligible to receive Governmental payments).

Busha cattle in Serbia occur in black, red, yellow, grey and so called “tiger” color. The weight of adult males is between 250 and 300kg, females 150 – 250kg. Their average wither height is 105cm (could be even higher). Their relatively short horns are thin with upward and forward directions (with curve). It’s very robust and resistant, with very modest demands. This cattle was used for creation of Kolubara Cattle (working cattle, result of crossing between Busha and Podolian Cattle / Hungarian Grey) in the first half of XIX century (Kolubara Cattle has disappeared). Simental Breed, which Serbia started to import from 1879 is the most spread cattle breed in Serbia today.

The number of farmers (including part – time / hobby farmers) willing to breed Busha cattle in Serbia is increasing. This is result of payments delivered through the Animal Genetic Resources Conservation Program of the Serbian ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWM), but there are also entrepreneurs in agro eco tourism willing to include Busha cattle in their tourism offer as attraction.

Serbia Transitional Agriculture Reform Project, implemented by the MAFWM (financed by World Bank and GEF), plans to support farmers breeding Busha Cattle and other indigenous breeds in the region of Stara Planina through matching grants for herd/flock increasing; reconstruction of agricultural buildings; establishment of cooperatives and machine rings; food processing activities and agro eco tourism (where local breeds are part of tourist program).

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