



**International Congress on Sheep and Goats-
Farmers and Scientists create Future –**
15-16 October 2020, Bonn, Germany



The Krainer Steinschaf in Austria – a multilateral approach to *in situ* conservation of an endangered breed

Beate Berger¹, Barbara Soritz²

¹ AREC Raumberg-Gumpenstein, Thalheim, Austria

² Arche Austria, Austria

Contact: Beate Berger, AREC Raumberg-Gumpenstein, Institute of Organic Farming and Biodiversity of Farm Animals, Austrasse 10, 4601 Thalheim, Austria, beate.berger@raumberg-gumpenstein.at

Abstract:

The Austrian Conservation Breeding Program supports 29 breeds of Farm Animals. The example of the Krainer Steinschaf shows the network and different approaches necessary to analyze, rebuild and use a highly endangered breed. The Krainer Steinschaf is a small framed, non-seasonally fertile dairy sheep. The breed belongs to the cluster of rough wool breeds stemming from the Medieval Zaupelschaf and is well separated from the other endangered Austrian sheep breeds. The herd book population increased from 160 animals (1997) to 4071 animals (2020). Due to a strictly controlled mating plan based on pedigree analysis, the inbreeding rate in the active breeding population was stable between 2007 and 2020. The breeding organization is responsible for the breeding goals and registration of breeding animals on a genetic basis as broad as possible. A farmer driven marketing organization production systems and quality marketing schemes. Pasturing without concentrates is the main production system. On pasture milk yield drops about two months after lambing. Twinning rate is not an issue as the ewes can lamb twice a year. For eight years, a quality program of a big food retailer brought up to 1000 lambs per year to market. Unfortunately, the program ceased because of reasons not within the realms of the breeders. Now on farm marketing is the main distribution channel. Breeding goals and marketing issues to improve conservation of the breed are discussed.