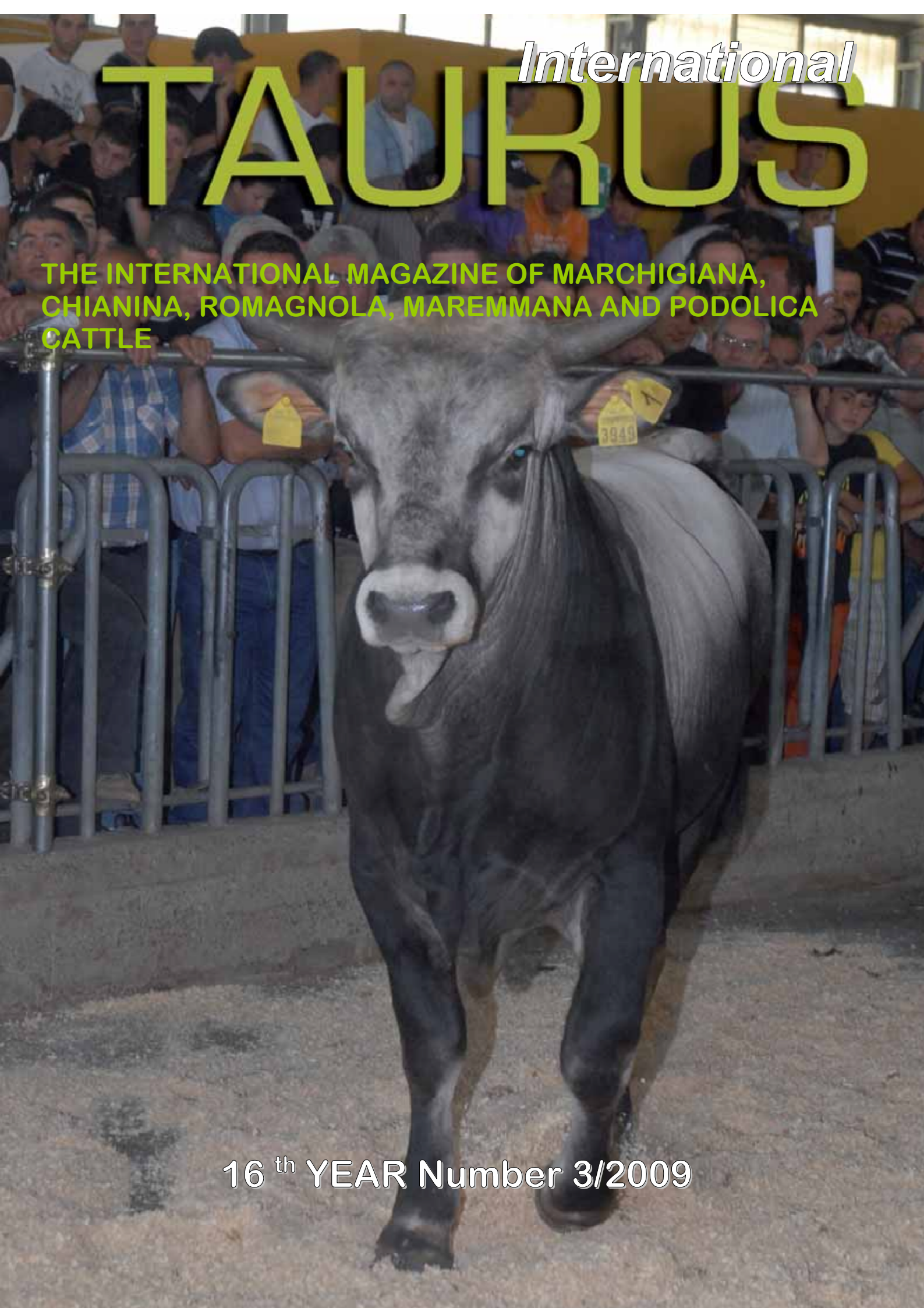


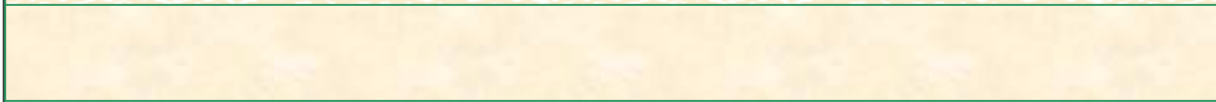
International

TAURUS

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF MARCHIGIANA,
CHIANINA, ROMAGNOLA, MAREMMANA AND PODOLICA
CATTLE



16th YEAR Number 3/2009



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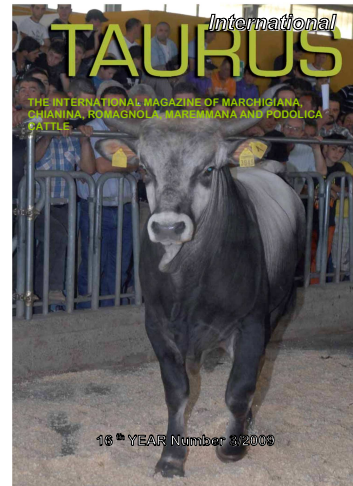
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per allevare
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*La nostra esperienza,
al vostro servizio.*



Events

International Congress “In the Footsteps of the Podolica” traditional event for european grey breeds

by Chiara Berti
Research and Development Office



For some time now, we have noticed a growing interest in finding out more about the situation regarding European grey breeds of Podolica origin similar, given their morphological type and attitudinal direction, to the Italian breeds protected by Anabac. We were also interested in finding out more about the institutions and

research institutes that study them and the strategies aimed at promoting their development. We chose an international event whose aim would be to create an important opportunity for all those interested in knowing about all aspects, including breeding, of these bovine ethnic groups to meet and share and exchange ideas. We also hoped that the real

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Podolic herd of "Masseria Colombo"

protagonists, in the Italian breeds category, would be our so-called "rustic" breeds, such as the Maremmana and in particular, the Podolica; the latter characterised by a lively environment full of expectations that, thanks to this important event, would receive just recognition of its importance.

The Region of Basilicata offered to host the event given that it boasts, in the Provinces of Potenza and Matera, the largest number of heads of Podolica breed cattle with 13,000 registered on the herd book and that Laurenzana, in the Province of Potenza, hosts the Bull Selection Centre, a benchmark for this particular breed. In Basilicata, no congress venue could have been more suitable than Matera, the city of stones that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We could not have chosen a more suitable scenario for hosting an event designed to raise awareness of the origins, history and evolution of European grey livestock, illustrating the current situation and future prospects.

The title that we decided to give the congress - "In the Footsteps of the Podolica" - followed the same lines and not only refers to the ancient migratory itineraries of these breeds, but above all to the course they are taking towards the future. Finally, we hoped that as well as the inevitable figures

and statistics, the scientific presentations by the speakers would illustrate the contribution these breeds represent for biodiversity, as well as their indisputable social role and their role of protecting the territory, also represented by prestigious niche productions. We were aware that the congress would be a unique showcase, not only for our Podolica - origin breeds, but also for the other European grey breeds, laying the foundations for closer and more successful international collaboration between exponents of the institutional, scientific and technical world.



"Trulli" a typical traditional constructions of Puglia region

Events

After the curtain call, we can proudly claim that we have achieved the objectives we set ourselves, organizing an event whose success was made possible thanks to the contribution and financial support of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, the Regions of Calabria and Puglia and in particular, the Region of Basilicata, the main sponsor of the event, as well as the contribution of the Provincial Breeders Associations of Matera and Potenza, ARSSA (Regional Agency for Agricultural Development) ARA Calabria (Calabria branch of the Regional Breeders Association), A.PRO.ZOO Cosenza (Cosenza branch of the Cooperative Society of Zootechnical Producers) and CCBI (Consortium of Producers of Superior Beef of Italian Breeds) and under the aegis of the Municipality of Matera, the Region of Emilia Romagna, the Region of Lazio, AIA (Italian Food Agriculture) and conSDABI (Consortium for the Experimentation, Diffusion and Application of Innovative Biotechnology). The congress, entitled “In the Footsteps of the Podolica”, was held over three long and intense days that involved all Anabic staff members and began on 9 July with the arrival of the guests at the congress venue and their participation in the inaugural evening held at Mottola, in the Murgia Tarantina, at Masseria Colombo farm owned by Bettino Siciliani.

Thursday, 9 July 2009

“Masseria Colombo” holiday farm owned by Bettino Siciliani, Mottola – Taranto

Visit to the Podolica breed cattle farm and dinner with traditional dishes of Puglia and typical Podolica products.

The “Masseria Colombo” is a wonderful fauna-game farm in the Murgia Tarantina, along the Mottola-Noci state road. This charming old farmhouse, with traditional white limestone-walled “trulli”, has been completely renovated and hosts a holiday farm and restaurant. Bettino Siciliani bought the farm in 1996 and with his family now cultivates his passion as a breeder of Podolica cattle, Murgia horses and various canine breeds (such as German Shorthaired Pointers, Maremma-Abruzzese Sheepdog and Corsicans). The farm covers 375 hectares, of which 90 hectares destined to cereals and forage and the remainder hedged pastureland and copses. The Podolica herd amounts to a total of 400 heads of cattle in closed-cycle rearing, of which 140 dams, descendents of the herd purchased from San Basile Farm, a historical stronghold for Podolica cattle in Taranto. The cattle on the farm are extremely interesting in terms of their typicality, size and structural correctness. The founder of the herd was the bull Vittorio, a docile sire that enjoyed a long life and registered on the herd book in 2000. Today, various heads of cattle from the farm boast high linear points, as is the case for Baroncella, assessed as excellent with 90 points. Over time, selection has undergone a clear change, both through to use of AI and through the purchase of sires tested at the Bull Selection Centre in Laurenzana. These are the bulls Omega, Orange and Sasso, from the Potenza farms of Francesco Potenza and Natale Gaetana, whose offspring give high hopes for the future of the farm. A part of the herd is also destined to be crossbred with two Romagnola breed bulls. The farm has also used embryo transplant, with specialist breed embryos.

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Another line of business is the fattening of bull calves; 220 heads annually, partly bought on the market and fattened using fodder grown on the farm. The fattened animals are then sold to a local butcher. The cows give birth all year round and are milked during the spring, using mechanical milking equipment, in an outdoor milking parlour with 4 places in a row. The milk is sold to a local holiday farm for processing.

Farm management is particularly careful, as shown by the recent construction of paddocks with covered, self-blocking feeding troughs and with grazing integrated in more difficult times. Mr. Siciliani is a member of the Inter-Regional Committee of the Podolica Breed and on several occasions, his farm has hosted refresher courses and meetings for experts. Along with other farms, it was also the location for shooting the video on the Podolica breed realized for the World Congress in 2005.

The Masseria Colombo warmly welcomed the 150 guests who attended the dinner the evening before the congress and were entertained by a folk music group playing traditional local folk music. The guests also had the opportunity to visit the farm and see its livestock. The delegates present were welcomed by the mayor of Mottola, Giovanni Quero, who underlined the importance of what had been done on the farm to recover the cultural traditions of the Murgia area, of which the Podolica breed is an undisputed protagonist.

Friday, 10 July 2009...

"The longest day"

**Matera, Provincial Media Library -
Palazzo dell'Annunziata**

The next day began at 8.00 am, when the organizing secretariat opened to register

guests. About an hour later, the congress opening ceremony was held and began with a short welcome video with images of our cattle grazing and drawings of the grey breeds of Podolica origin from other countries. At the end of the video, director of Anabic, Roberta Guarcini, formally opened the congress.

Welcoming guests were political representatives that included the mayor of Matera, Emilio Buccico, the President of the Region of Basilicata, Vito De Filippo, the Councillor for Agriculture of the Region of Basilicata, Vincenzo Viti, Senator Maria Antezza, a member of the IX Agriculture and Agricultural and Food Production Commission, and the President of the Province of Matera, Franco Stella. Sector experts included the Director of APA Matera and Potenza (Matera and Potenza branches of the Provincial Breeders Association), Augusto Calbi, the President of APA Matera (Matera branch of the Provincial Breeders Association), Nunzio Di Mauro, the President of APA Potenza (Potenza branch of the Provincial Breeders Association), Palmino Ferramosca and the President of Anabic, Fausto Luchetti. The President of the Region, Vito De Filippo, intervened to thank the Regional Councillor for Agriculture, Vincenzo Viti, for the "commitment and passion shown at the head of the department in difficult times for the general production system and above all, for agriculture".

The President of the Region also underlined "the importance of the zotechnics sector for the development of the territory and regional economic life". "This international congress", added De Filippo "represents an extraordinary opportunity for identifying strategies designed to promote the Podolica in times of economic crisis. In fact, this bovine breed can represent the synthesis

Events

of multifunctional agriculture in a vaster sense. It is an important means of protecting the quality of the environment, landscape and economic development of the entire area. It is the metaphor of Basilicata; resistant and capable of living on a territory that is harsh and difficult.” De Filippo continued by stating that “we

After the welcome speeches by the participating authorities, the director of Anabic, Roberta Guarcini, presented the representatives of the overseas delegations. The delegations from the Ukraine, Turkey, Greece, Hungary and Croatia reached the stage and the authorities behind their national flags for



Authorities and political representatives at the congress opening ceremony

have to continue to invest in zootechnics and protecting the Podolica, using the quality services offered by our region. In this challenge, we have the ideal interlocutors in the Provincial Breeders Association that will allow us to soon reach important goals. The genetic centre in Laurenzana represents another tool for a region that intends to continue to invest in this important production sector”. On his part, the President of the Province of Matera, Franco Stella, expressed his willingness to support, within the framework of his competences, any initiative that could prove useful for promoting and consolidating the agricultural sector and the zootechnics sector in particular.

the official welcome. Then, on behalf of all the overseas delegations, Graziano Prekalj, director of AZZRRRI - the Agency for the Rural Development of Istria - thanked everyone, pointing out just how welcome, eagerly awaited and important this transnational initiative was, given that it focused on themes such as biodiversity, safeguarding local genotypes and the desire of the various countries to regain their autochthonous breeds through national recovery plans. After the institutional introductions, the congress began. It was divided into three sessions, each in turn divided into as many theme areas.

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THE THREE CONGRESS SESSIONS

The first session, called “Podolica breeds today in the countries of origin”, was chaired by Professor Giovanni Bittante of the University of Padua. This session offered a general overview of the origins of the current breeding reality and the selection, recovery and promotion of Podolica cattle in the countries of origin. There were many presentations by both overseas and Italian speakers; in fact, as well as 7 presentations by Italian university and research groups, speeches were made by Professor Andreas Georgoudis of the University of Thessaloniki, Greece, Executive Secretary of the European Regional Focal Point of FAO, Igor Guziev of the Ukraine Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Professor Imrè Bodò of the University of Debrecen, Hungary, Professor Mehemet Ishan Soysal of the University of Tracia, Turkey, Cristina Ligda of the National Foundation of Agricultural Research of Thessaloniki, Greece and Gordan Sûbara of AZRRRI, the Agency for Rural Development of the Region of Istria, Croatia.

The speakers discussed the support activities carried out in their own countries for the various breeds, which on the whole have been noticeably reduced compared to original amounts. Over recent years in particular, Hungary has rebuilt its population of the grey Hungarian breed, with an increase from just a few hundred heads of cattle to the current number of around 4,000. A similar process has begun in Croatia for the Istrian bull, which now amounts to 400 heads, but for which a project to protect it has been implemented, in collaboration with Italian partners like Anabic and the University of Padua. In 2005, a Croatian delegation took part in the International Congress of Italian Breeds in Gubbio. In 2006, Slovenia, which has almost totally lost the Slavonian Podolica stock and is interested in recreating a herd of Podolica cattle, imported embryos of Italian Podolica, the first case of exports of germplasm of this breed overseas. In Italy itself, regions that in the past could count on a considerable presence of these cattle, such as Friuli Venezia Giulia, have expressed their interest in reintroducing Podolica cattle and visited

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the farms in Basilicata and Calabria for this reason.

During this session, the director of Anabic, Roberta Guarcini, gave a presentation on the activities and aims of the association, focusing on the evolution of the number of heads of cattle registered on the herd book for the five breeds and the constant increase over the last ten years thanks to the alarm caused by BSE and the effect of awarding of PGI recognition to “White Bulls of the Central Apennines” for Marchigiana, Chianina and Romagnola breeds. Her speech also touched on the evolution of breeding systems towards increasingly extensive forms and the resulting adjustments to selection programmes that, alongside the search for accentuated muscular development and strong growth, now selected following performance tests on bulls, aim to produce long-living, functional cows with a clear maternal capacity.

Some time was dedicated to the herd book, which consists in sections for the five breeds, the programmes it uses and the IT services available for breeders. No less important was reference to the DNA bank for Italian breeds, which was set up in 2007 at Anabic head office to guarantee maximum transparency and total traceability. With regards to the genetic centre for specialist breeds in S. Martino in Colle, the recent important renovation work that increased capacity and consolidated health protection for subjects being tested was illustrated. Also illustrated were the activities carried out at the Bull Selection Centres in Alberese and Laurenzana, which have been working for over ten years in the selection of the male line of Maremmana and Podolica breeds with good results. The positive indexes, growth and muscular

conformation trends of the breeders tested are proof of the efficiency of the selection scheme implemented for all five breeds.

The next part of the presentation concerned the genetic assessment of breeders and the mechanisms that determine the elaboration of BSI and CSI selection indexes, for bulls and cows respectively. With regards to BSI, reference was made to the morphological component of this index, the linear morphological assessment currently used and the activity carried out by breed expert. With regards to the research and development sector, as well as underlining the close relationship with the top Italian universities, the director of Anabic mentioned the SELMOL project, financed by the Ministry of Agricultural and Forestry Policies and aimed at identifying the genes that influence production characteristics. With regards to the strategies for the future, Roberta Guarcini listed the expansion of the DNA bank, which will be important considering also the increasing importance of genomic selection and preventive treatment for genetic anomalies.

With regards to its Genetic Centre, Anabic intends to increase the number of subjects subjected to performance tests and the impact of young bulls on the population. At the same time, the selection objectives will also be adjusted in function of the quality parameters of the meats, in order to meet the requests of consumers in a more appropriate manner. At the end of the first work session, a working lunch was held at the congress venue. The coffee break was organized by the team of the Regional Union of Chefs of Lucania. They prepared an elegant buffet on the picturesque terrace that offered a selection of dishes

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made using Podolica meat and typical local cheeses.

Work began again at 2.30 pm with the second session, entitled "The Origins of the Podolica: in the footsteps of migrations and evolution" and dedicated to the search of common genetic "traces" in Podolica breeds. In fact, the 6 presentations of this session examined the genetic characterization of Podolica breeds. Attention focused on the analysis of genetic variability and average blood relationships on genetic distances between the populations in order to speculate on their evolutionary history and identify the peculiar genetic characteristics that would make it possible, using special tests, to identify the breed of origin thanks to a biological sample. This interesting session was chaired by Professor Francesco Panella, from the University of Perugia.

This interesting series of presentations was immediately followed by the third work session. The 7 reports in this

concluding session, entitled "Genetics, Management and Quality", examined various aspects of the breeding of Podolica

cattle in relation to the factors that can influence both productivity and the quality of the product, such as the breeding system, fodder and the study of particular selection genotypes for the production of meat. The session was chaired by Professor Sergio Gigli of the Experimental Institute of Zootechnology of Tor Mancina, Rome.

**Friday, 10 July, 8.30 pm: "Torre Spagnola" Holiday Farm
AZIENDA AGRICOLA EREDI DIMAURO
DI DIMAURO NUNZIO & C.
Gala dinner with traditional Lucania
dishes and congress conclusions.**

Surrounded by the harsh yet charming landscape of the Murgia, on the border between Puglia and Basilicata stands "Torre Spagnola", one of the most



Presentation of overseas delegations

representative farms in this area. Attended by around 300 guests, this was where the gala dinner was held at the end of the day.

The farm owes its name ("Spanish Tower") to the imposing embattled tower built when this area was controlled by the Spanish Royal Family, under Viceroy

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Gusman. It was of strategic importance as it controlled communication routes from the Matera area to Puglia. The tower was presumably built between 1560 and 1600 and was commissioned by Captain Giuseppe Trullos, who had moved to Matera in 1560. In 1603, he bought the rights to collect taxes and turned the tower into a tax collection post. The Trullos family married into the Ulmo family from Matera, whose last descendent left the property to the Dominican friars. Under the Dominicans, who kept it until the end of the 18th century, "Torre Spagnola" became a farm estate following the construction of new buildings for its cereal-growing and zootechnical direction. The Dominicans were expropriated by the Napoleonic laws in 1806 and were succeeded in the early 19th century by the Marquises Ferrante di Ruffano and then in 1840 by Duke Malvezzi. It was the latter owner that created the working farm, dedicated to cereal-growing and training horses that were sold to the Bourbon army. The incursions of bandits forced the owners to fortify the farm. In 1938 it was sold to Michele Paradiso from Matera and then in 1968 to the Dimauro family of Santeramo in Colle, who still own it.

The farm now has a cereal-growing zootechnical direction, with a total surface area of around 300 hectares, of which 100 hectares for pasture and 200 for sowing and used to grow durum wheat and forage in rotation. The milk farm has around 250 high-genealogy Italian Friesians that produce an average of 9,000 kg of milk a year, partly destined for consumption and partly processed in the cheese cooperative just a few hundred metres from the stable. With regards to agriculture production, the durum wheat is sold to mills and pasta factories, whilst

the production of forage meets internal needs. In fact, the cattle are fed on forage and concentrates prepared exclusively on the farm. Anabic sincerely thanked Nunzio Dimauro, President of APA Matera, for the warm welcome offered to the 300 guests present at the wonderful gala dinner that brought the intense day to a close. Amongst the many authorities that intervened, also present were the Councillor for Agriculture of the Region of Basilicata, Vincenzo Viti and Senator Maria Antezza, member of the IX Agriculture Commission, who attended the awards ceremony for the numerous representatives of the overseas delegations, as well as the various bodies involved in the organization of the congress, including the various branches of Provincial Breeders Association and Anabic.

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THE CONGRESS AND THEREABOUTS...

THE EXHIBITION AREA

Inside the Provincial Media Library of Matera, where the day dedicated to the congress was held, several areas were dedicated to the stands of ANABIC, APA, AIA, the Regions of Basilicata, Puglia and Calabria, the Murgia Materana Park Authority, ARSIA (Regional Agency for Development and Innovation in the Agroforest Sector) and Gallipoli Cognato Park Authority. In another room, an installation was



created in honour of Podolica breeds with photos and drawings and the history and origins of each breed. Another area was reserved for the poster session and displayed about a dozen pieces of work presented in this format.

THE QUALITY OF TYPICAL LOCAL PRODUCTION

The event also dedicated some time to an in-depth study of Italian culture and traditions. In fact, as well as being the leading region for the breeding of Podolica with over 13,000 heads of cattle bred, Basilicata also boasts strong cultural roots that are still extremely important and tangible thanks also to the activities of local administrations to recover and promote traditions, typical local produce and food and wine routes. Guests were therefore also able to savour the excellence of the typical foods and culinary traditions of the Lucania area during the second evening of the congress, spent in a splendid sixteenth century farm called "Torre Spagnola" where two areas were set up in the internal courtyard to represent the "arts and crafts" of yesteryear; a cheese-maker turning milk into small, steaming balls of mozzarella and an area where homemade *orecchiette* and *fusilli* were made using traditional techniques.

MATERA, THE CITY OF STONES

After a long day dedicated to the congress, accompanied by guides our guests were able to enjoy a splendid walk through the narrow streets leading down from Sasso Caveoso that, facing south, is arranged like a Roman amphitheatre with the houses-caves that descend in tiers from the "civita" quarter, with its noble palaces and imposing churches. Matera is the city of caves, entrenched villages, farmhouses carved into the rock and frescoed rocky churches and, despite the strong influence of the past, it is still thriving.

A PORTAL DEDICATED TO THE CONGRESS

The ideas of a group of enthusiasts have led to the website www.sulletracedellepodoliche.eu run by Andrea Quaglia. It is a constantly changing container dedicated to all Podolica-origin breeds, their history and the research carried out on these ancient breeds. The website is not only limited to scientific aspects, there also drawings, images, curiosities, publications and cultural information linked to the world of breeding and the research bodies that deal with it, as well as links of particular interest. For all the news contained in the website we would especially like to thank another enthusiast of our Podolica breed, Andrea Gaddini, for his patient and meticulous research that have allowed him to find all the information regarding the breeds, also highlighting his skills as a translator of Latin of some excerpts of Julius Caesar's the "*De Bello Gallico*".

CONGRESS PROCEEDINGS

All the presentations of the congress have been collected in the congress proceedings. Anyone interested in consulting conference proceedings will find them online on our website: www.anabic.it.

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The post-congress tour

The programme of the international congress also included visits to the Bull Selection Centre in Laurenzana and the Heifer Centre in Molarotta during end-of-test auctions.

selection centre, which is a national centre in which bull calves from other breeding regions are also sent, has become a fundamental benchmark for breeders who intend to purchase sires that are certified from a health, genealogical, morphological and



A convivial moment with our guests throughout Sila tour

Saturday, 11 July

Laurenzana, Potenza: Visit to the Bull Selection Centre and auction of Podolica sires.

Many congress participants went to the municipality of Laurenzana (Potenza) to the Podolica Bull Selection Centre, which was founded in 1996 and is run by Anabic, in collaboration with the local APA branches. Over the years the

production point of view.

This is where the auction of 19 subjects was held in a climate of general enthusiasm. For the entire duration of the auction, the ring was surrounded by hundreds of spectators. It was a huge success for the centre in Laurenzana thanks to the numerous animals auctioned, the number of participants and the prices the subjects went for - with a top price of over 5,000 euro - shown in

Events

the comprehensive report on the following pages of the magazine.

The delegations from the Ukraine, Turkey, Greece and Croatia were very impressed by the morphological level of the subjects being judged and the appreciation of their purchasers, which confirm that breeders full share the breed model and selection objectives. After the bull calves auction, participants from Italy, Ukraine, Istria, Turkey and Greece were taken by coach to Camigliatello Silano (Cosenza) in Calabria, where the following day they were to take part in the end-of-test auction for heifers leaving the experimental centre in Molarotta.

The day ended with dinner during which typical local products were served and that focused on the official meeting of the delegations with the top experts of ARA Calabria and officials of the Region of Calabria. Here too, the international guests were presented and awarded prizes, before expressing their thanks for the warm welcome and support received. In particular, our friends from the Istrian delegation, represented by Graziano Prekalj, director of AZZRI and Aldo Stifanic, President of the Istrian Cattle Breeders' Association (SUIG) gave the director of Anabic, Roberta Guarcini, a miniature model of an Istrian bull.



Sunday, 12 July

Tour of the Sila and visit to farms in transhumance

One of the final stages planned for congress participants was a visit to the farm owned by Francesco Martino and



Visit of Martino – Aragona farm in Sila mountain

Silvio Aragona in Caccuri, one of the oldest herds in Crotona that, in recent years, has been particularly active in initiatives involving the Podolica breed. As the most attentive will recall, last autumn this farm, which has around 60 cattle, hosted the practical refresher event for experts and at the same time, selection of the candidates for sending to the Genetic Centre. Two of the bull calves chosen, Ursus and Uadi, then entered the centre in Laurenzana, becoming part of the 2008 test cycle that has just ended and ending tests with extraordinary ADG results (respectively 1,680 and 1,557 grams), competitive with those of specialist breeds. It also won them the first two places in the exit ranking during the auction, adjudicated at 3,700 and 3,300 euro respectively.

During the morning of 12 July, the Martino-Aragona herd was grazing in transhumance in Camigliatello on the Sila Grande, just a short distance from the Heifer Centre in Molarotta. In this enchanting scenario, the livestock

Events

immediately caught the attention of the visitors, including many of the overseas guests that took part in the international congress. In fact, the delegations of the Ukraine, Greece, Turkey and Croatia were present and their representatives were able to see the herd at first hand along with Anabic experts, who were able to explain the morphology of the animals and their adaptation peculiarities. Guests were struck by the quality of the subjects. The strong characterization of the breed, the general correctness of the livestock, the excellent quality of the bone structure and the noteworthy conformation of the udders of the numerous cows with suckling calves were unanimously appreciated. The herd included Argentina and Quaglia, two beautiful cows, both daughters of Muntagnolo and mothers of the above-mentioned Ursus and Uadi.

Subsequently, the group moved to a nearby farm where the Pugliese brothers, breeders from Cosenza who were also in transhumance with their herd of Podolica, offered a cheese-making demonstration and organized a tasty brunch using farm produce. The next phase of the morning ended at the store of the cheese cooperative "Valle Fiore", where participants were able to taste and buy typical local cheeses.

A special thanks for the organization of this delightful tour of the Sila goes to Piero Maffei, director of ARA Calabria and APA Cosenza, and Francesco Colucci, director of APA Crotona, who lived up to proverbial Calabrese hospitality.

Visit to the ESAC selection centre of the female line in Molarotta and auction of Podolica heifers

This was the last stage of the congress tour. In fact, the selection centre for Podolica heifers and run by ESAC and APA Cosenza in collaboration with Anabic, is in Molarotta, a town in the Sila near Camigliatello. During this edition, the centre hosted the third test cycle that saw a group of 10 wonderful heifers leaving the centre. They were in excellent condition and had been artificially inseminated with the semen of the young bulls tested at the centre in Laurenzana. The delegates presented to the large audience by the director of Anabic were presented with awards by the participating authorities at the end of the work session. A comprehensive report of the sold-out auction, a fitting conclusion to the entire congress event, is given on the following pages of the magazine.

Did you know about them?

by Matteo Ridolfi
Morphological Evaluations Office

On the following pages, we present the main Podolica-origin breeds that were the subject of the reports presented at the international congress in Matera. This study begins with the Uro, the *Bos Primigenius* that once populated Europe and is considered its most likely progenitor.

URO



According to most researchers, modern cattle (*Bos Taurus*) descend from a single ancestor, the Uro (*Bos Primigenius*), wild cattle that were once present all over Europe, Africa and Asia. The oldest remains of this bovine, which date from 600,000 - 800,000 years ago, were found in Italy, in Venosa in the Province of Potenza, whereas it became extinct, due to excessive hunting, in Poland in 1627. The Uro was first represented in drawings during the Palaeolithic period, as the paintings in caves in Lascaux (France) and Altamira (Spain) demonstrate. It is mentioned in the Bible and by Greek

writers, such as the philosopher Aristotle and Herodotus. Julius Caesar mentioned it in *De Bello Gallico* and the historian Tacitus mentions its presence in Friesland.

More recently, the Uro is described as present in Italy, between Trieste and Gorizia, by the Austrian Baron Sigmund Von Hrberstein (1486-1556), ambassador of the Emperor of Austria to the Tzar of Russia. It seems to have been domesticated around 8,000 years ago. On the basis of pre-historic drawings and the remains of bones found, it is presumed that the Uro was a considerably large animal, characterised by clear sexual dimorphism (the females were much smaller than the males). Its size, considered by our forefathers as considerably larger than domestic cattle (up to 2 metres at the withers in bulls, with a weight of between 600 and 1,000 kg), decreased following the Ice Age, changing due to the changing environment too.

The front quarters were larger than the rear and the dewlap was also big, whilst the length of the limbs varied depending on the environment that characterized the vast area it was distributed over. The Uro had large horns, which often spanned over a metre and were larger in bulls than cows. It had a dark coat that was almost black on the front quarters of bulls, with reddish brown tones on the ribs and a characteristic light line on the back from the withers to the loins. The muzzle was

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edged in white and there was a tuft of light hair on the forehead too, at the base of the horns. In females, the coat tended to be reddish in colour, whilst it seems that calves had a wheat-coloured coat. Little is known of their habits, but it is presumed that they lived in rather small groups, guided by a dominant individual. Mating presumably took place in autumn, with calving taking place the following spring after a gestation period of about 9 months.

GREY UKRAINIAN breed **(*Seraya ukrainskaya*)**



In the **Ukraine**, traditionally considered the area of origin of the Podolica stock, we find the *Grey Ukrainian (Seraya ukrainskaya)* whose herd book was founded in 1935. In 1989, Wezyk gave the number of this breed at 650 head of cattle and claimed numbers were at serious risk of extinction, whilst FAO figures in 1990 suggested numbers amounted to 1,500, with 684 cows (73% full blood) and 13 bulls. Furthermore, in 1990 two experimental centres, one in the region of Dnipropetrovs'k and one in the nature reserve of Askania-Nova in the region of Kherson, had frozen semen. The Ukrainian grey includes several local varieties and Bodó *et al* mention fourteen. The breed is also threatened by cross-breeding, in this particular case with the Steppe Red, Simmenthal and Swiss

Brown. The average weight is 780 kg for bulls and 580-600 kg for cows, with an average height at the withers of 137 cm for bulls and 129 cm for cows. Milk production is between 2,900 and 3,145 kg, with a percentage of fat of between 4.45% and 4.52%.

There should be some Ukrainian Greys in **Russia** too, representing a remainder of the vast assortment of Russian Podolica breeds. It is however difficult to obtain updated figures from former-Soviet countries on both the numbers and the breeding areas. Nevertheless it is possible to see that the Ukrainian Grey, along with other local breeds, is being studied by research institutes and in particular that work is being published regarding the comparison between Podolica breeds and other local and cosmopolitan breeds.

GREY HUNGARIAN breed **(*Magyar szürke*)**



Hungary is the country of origin of one of the most famous Podolica breeds, the *Grey Hungarian (Magyar szürke)*, which is closely linked to the environment of the *puszta*, the central Hungarian steppe. The breed was extremely popular in the past and also spread to several

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neighbouring countries, so much so that in the past some zootechnicians called the entire Podolica stock “Hungarian”. As early as the 14th century, herds of cattle of this breed were driven to markets in Venice and Nuremberg along animal tracks. The archives of the German city of Augsburg indicate a ban on selling any meat at market that was not of the Hungarian breed, considering its quality absolutely superior and not affected by transhumance from its plains of origin.

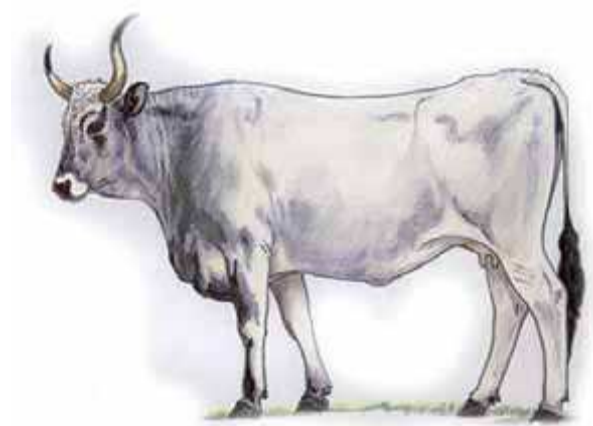
The Hungarian Grey was also extremely popular as a work animal as it was resistant, frugal, and adaptable to difficult climates and poor terrain and with a great maternal instinct and ease in calving. This breed has extraordinary similarities with the Maremmana breed due also to repeat cross-breeding. For example, in the eighteenth century the Lorena family, grand dukes of Tuscany, sent some Maremmana bulls for breeding with the livestock on their family estate in the *puszta*.

In 1934, the Itinerant Chair of Agriculture of Padua purchased Hungarian breeders to improve the Pugliese livestock of the Veneto Region and state-run zootechnical farms in Hungary (Hönsch, 1971a) purchased Maremmana sires from the farm of the Experimental Institute of Zootechnology in Tor Mancina, near Rome. Other purchases followed until 1944 when they were interrupted by the war. Hungarian farms purchased more Maremmana bulls in 1971. In the 20th century, Hungarian Greys experienced a drastic fall in numbers, above all with the arrival in Hungary of Simmenthal livestock. In 1870, the Hungarian Grey constituted 99% of Hungarian bovine stock, whereas in 1967 this figure was only 0.005% and

the general opinion was that it would soon be extinct.

Fortunately, the Hungarian government identified this breed as part of its zootechnical heritage that had to be protected and implemented a programme to save it in autumn 1961. It forced each of the two main state-run farms to straight breed the 100 best cows in special farms situated in the breed’s typical habitat. Since the 1970s, the number of cattle has grown steadily and in 2004 there were 4,965 cows and 300 bulls, with 200 registered with the breeders association (Bodó *et al.*, 2004). The reproductive career of these cows is extremely long, with a record of 27 calves in 32 years.

ISTRIAN BOVINE (*Istarsko govedo*)



In **Croatia** there are two breeds of Podolica origin, the main one of which is the **Istrian (*Istarsko govedo*)**, with 300 cows, 20 bulls, 66 bull calves and 100 heifers registered, and the **Slavonian Podolian** (*Slavonski Podolac* or *Slavonian Sarmian Podolian cattle*), whose current numbers stand at around a hundred or so.

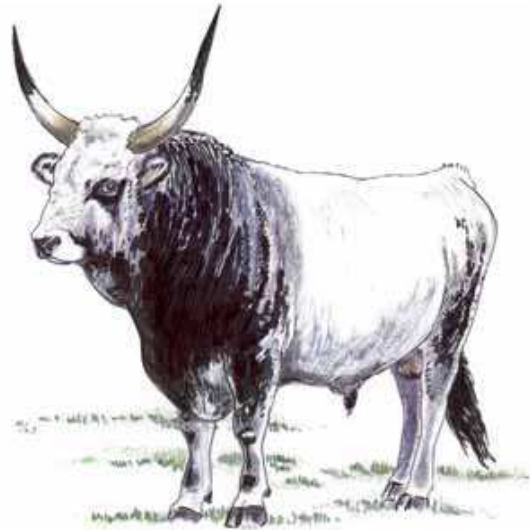
According to some, the Istrian breed derives from Podolica livestock of Ukrainian origin, taken to Istria in the 5th century BC by the Huns under Attila.

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According to Dejana Brajkovic it is an autochthonous breed, which originated in Istria from the *Bos Primigenius*. Originally with a triple aptitude, the breed was particularly popular as a working animal. From the start of the 19th century, it was crossed with Italian bovine of Podolica origin (Pugliese from the Veneto and Romagnola) and from 1905 onwards other crosses were made with Romagnola bulls and to a lesser extent, Maremmana bulls. This practice continued until 1931 when, during the Zootechnical Congress in Padua, it was decided to suspend cross-breeding and select the animals that most closely matched the primitive Istrian type. The subsequent introduction of overseas breeds and the introduction of agricultural mechanization drastically reduced the breed stock from over 60,000 in the 1960s to just a few hundred in the 1980s. Only the passion and far-sightedness of some breeders saved it from extinction, thanks also to the setting up in 1988 of the herd book and the subsequent foundation of the Association of Istrian Breeders (SUIG) in Visnjan. Its rebirth focuses on meat production from steers slaughtered at the age of 18-20 months, extremely popular thanks to its marbling and taste. The genetic lines are currently being recovered both through AI and embryo transplant. Support for saving the breed is given by the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Zagreb and the Agency for the Agricultural Development of Istria (AZZRI).

SLAVONIAN PODOLICA breed (*Slavonski Podolac - Slavonian Syrmian Podolian*)

Smaller than the Istrian in terms of numbers, another Croatian breed of Podolica origin is the Slavonian Podolica (*Slavonian Syrmian Podolian - Slavonski Podolac*) found in Slavonia, in the valley of the River Sava and the north of Bosnia.



The height at the withers in the cows is around 125 cm. Latest figures available indicate 37 cows, 3 bulls, 19 bull calves and 39 heifers, all bred at the state centre in Križevački Lemeš (Konjačić, 2007 and Ramljak, 2007).

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YUGOSLAV PODOLICA (PODOLSKO GOVECE) breed



In **Serbia** the *Yugoslav Podolica* can currently be found in the region of Vojvodina, with three breeders owning a total of 236 cattle, including 105 cows and 12 bulls. A protection programme has been set up in the nature reserve of the dunes of Deliblato, not far from Belgrade (Plavsić, 2004 and 2007).

KATERINI and SYKIA breeds



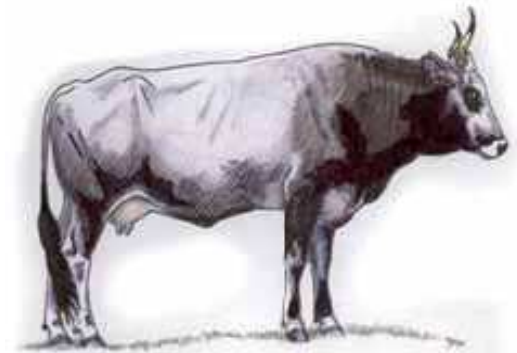
Katerini breed

Two Podolica breeds are described in **Greece**, the *Katerini* and the *Sykia*, both found in the eastern part of the country. The Katerini takes its name from the

village of the same name in Pieria, at the foot of Mount Olympus and there are about 200 cattle, adults and young, in two villages in Tessaglia. Sykia is originally from the village of the same name on the peninsula of Khalkidiki, in north-east Greece that once provided working bulls and cows to the entire peninsula, including Mount Athos.

The breed fell dramatically from 13,000 cattle in 1923, until it disappeared,

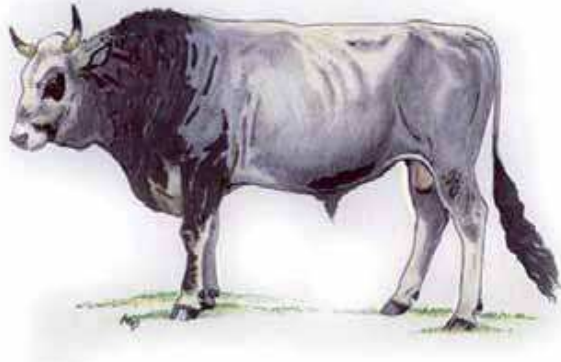
Sykia breed



probably due to cross-breeding initially with the Swiss Brown and then Simmenthal, Charolaise and Limousine, despite maintaining its lyre-shaped horns and grey coat. There may currently be some cross-bred cattle; until two or three years ago two hundred heads of cattle kept by two elderly breeders were still registered. On the death of the two breeders, the livestock was lost, but perhaps a couple of dozen cattle exist in Sykia and Stavros in Khalkidiki (Papaioannou, 2007)

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TURKISH GREY breed (*Boz Irk, Boz Step, Trace*)



In the European part of **Turkey** is the Turkish Grey (also known as the Boz Irk, Boz Step or Trace), found on the border with Bulgaria and Greece, therefore very close to the areas where Sykia and Iskur are popular. Information on them is largely gathered from Soysal and Ozder (2004) and Soysal and Kok, (2006). In fact, the Turkish Grey probably derives from Iskur cattle introduced into Turkey 100 or 150 years ago and for this reason is also called *Pleven* or *Plevne*, another name for the Bulgarian breed.

The Turkish government has begun action to save the breed, which was at serious risk of extinction and has allocated grants to Turkish Grey breeders. Furthermore, the Ministry of Agriculture has carried out a preliminary survey for setting up a herd book that

shows the existence of 5,301 head of cattle, including cross breeds. Many farms are quite small, but there are others with bigger numbers run by relatively young breeders whose average age is 46. In medium and large farms, the Turkish Grey is bred for its meat and grazes on pastureland all year round, using only temporary shelters, making use of holm-oak leaves amongst others, and receiving small integrations during the most difficult periods of the year. Small breeders on the other hand, that often only have 1 or 2 cattle, keep livestock in stables during winter and for the rest of the year group their animals together in a single herd that is taken every morning to collectively-owned land and tended by a single cowhand.

On this type of farm, livestock is also milked morning and evening. Cows calve for the first time at an average age of 30-36 months and produce on average 1,100 litres of milk with 3.9% fat, for a lactation period of 220 days. The average live weight is 375 kg for cows and 470 kg for bulls and the height at the withers is 120 cm on average. Average daily growth is 1,062 grams, but the quality of meat is not appreciated locally given its dark colour and poor marbling and for this reason, the Turkish Grey has been cross-bred with Swiss Brown bulls.

Auctions

Podolica: dazzling auctions and record sales!

by Antonio Vagniluca
Genetic Centres Office

The Podolica honored the auctions of the International Congress with astonishing participation by breeders, selling out and boasting record-breaking top prices for bull calves and heifers.

The program of the International Congress included tours of the Laurenzana Bull Calf Selection Center and the Molarotta Heifer Center for the auctions at the end of the trials. The positive wave of emotion generated by the congress and the warmth shown by the breeders made us hopeful that both auctions would be successful, particularly the one for bull calves. We knew that we could count on the collaboration of the Provincial Breeders' Associations, which went to great lengths to raise the awareness of breeders, encouraging them to buy. We also hoped that the positive trend of the past three years would continue, as there had been a progressive increase in the number of lots sold as well as their average sale price. The results of both auctions, which were far better than expected, go beyond commercial considerations and inspire more in-depth reflections. The determination and growing involvement of breeders point to a stimulating future for



Unico, Top price of Laurenzana Auction

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the Podolica, rewarding the work that has been done so far and giving us the feeling that the breed is finally acquiring a sense of “self-awareness”.

THE BULL CALF AUCTION

Laurenzana Bull Calf Selection Center, 11 July 2009

The post-congress tour's stop in the Potenza area couldn't have offered a finer spectacle, with the beautiful setup of the Bull Calf Selection Center, music and dancing to welcome the delegates and an incredible crowd. There had never been so many sires on auction before, as demonstrated by the 19 outgoing bull calves. Would they all find a buyer? We were confident that they would, because we knew we could count on uniform and typical subjects with an exquisite build, representative of the entire breeding area. The lots came from 11 herds in the provinces of Taranto, Matera, Potenza, Cosenza and Crotona. The breeder with the largest number of subjects being auctioned was Canio Perrone from Potenza, who presented five sons of Medi, a champion that is well known to Podolica breeders. Furthermore, the high number of breeders contributing their subjects had a positive influence on the variability of the bull calves' pedigree, making them appealing to a broader pool of buyers, who started to flock to the Laurenzana Center early in the morning and carefully observed the display of lots up for auction. The list proposed eight bulls whose morphology was assessed with a score of at least 85 points, and for four of them ADG in testing exceeded 1400 grams, with a record of 1680 grams for lot no. 29. There were 11 bull calves with sires tested at the center and two of them also had maternal grandfathers that

had been tested. There were also 11 bull-dams with scores of over 84 points, one of the most notable being Armonia, mother of lot no. 1, with 92 points and an excellent second generation on the maternal side. Furthermore, the presented subjects were in excellent form, boasting perfect tone, for which we can thank Antonio Pino, the ANABIC technician at the Laurenzana Center. The auction, which was run by ANABIC director Roberta Guarini, opened with a greeting from the Regional Councilman for Agriculture of Basilicata, Mr. Vincenzo Viti, who congratulated the breeders, ANABIC and the representatives of the various breeders' associations for the selection results that have been achieved. Viti emphasized the importance of cattle breeding for regional agriculture and underscored the spirit of service that, in his mind, politics must offer breeders



A folk dance cheered the visit of Laurenzana Genetic Centre

and their activities.

This concept was taken up by Palmino Ferramosca, president of the Potenza Breeders' Association, who emphasized the great social value of breeding activities for safeguarding the territory and maintaining its integrity. The words of Nunzio Dimauro, president of the Matera Breeders' Association, were more far-reaching. In addition to emphasizing the success of the Matera congress, which showcased the Podolica breed, he also

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stressed the need to maintain the biodiversity of livestock species, appropriately qualifying their production and guaranteeing a future to the many young people who still believe in the agricultural sector for the future of their own business. The floor then went to the auctioneer and the parade of bulls commenced at a fast pace in the ring. The astonishing top price – 5400 euros – went to a subject from Cosenza, Unico, sired by Quintino, with a pedigree going back to Saracino; Unico was bred by Rosario Coppola and presented by Vincenzo Avolio. The young breeder from Cosenza is the same one who bred Thurii, which garnered the top price in the 2008 auction, and he thus confirmed his capability with another brilliant outcome. Unico is a large subject with powerful breed traits and muscle development, which earned it a morphological evaluation of 87 points. Unico's pedigree boasts a notable maternal line, with a mother and grandmother evaluated as "excellent". Amidst great applause, after a dramatic crescendo of bids the Samadogi ranch of Bari won Unico. However, this was not the only highlight of the morning. The second-best price – 3700 euros – was garnered by Ursus of Crotone. The expressive and harmonious son of Muntagnolo, bred by Francesco Martino, arrived at the auction with an incredible ADG of 1680 grams, which says a great deal about the growth potential of the Podolica breed. If we also consider that Ursus had a BSI of 141.6 and 86 points for morphology, the high winning bid seems logical for this subject, purchased by the Montesano ranch of Potenza. Uadi, another Crotone subject presented by Silvio Aragona and also the son of Muntagnolo, was sold for the respectable price of 3300 euros. This bull calf, which stood out for its distinction and structural

correctness, boasted an ADG of just under 1600 grams and 85 points per type, which merited a BSI of 135.4. Uadi was bought by the Antonio Di Giglio ranch of Matera. The prices for the remaining subjects averaged 2600 euros, with a rewarding and unexpected sellout that is a tribute to the uniformity of the entire group of bull calves presented at the auction. The welcome international guests who came to the Laurenzana Center, where Roberta Guarcini presented them to the large crowd attending the auction, also grasped this. The delegations from Ukraine, Turkey, Greece and Croatia were favorably impressed by the morphology of the bull calves and the appreciation of their buyers, confirming that breeders fully embrace the indicated model and the selection objectives. The hammer had barely been put down – and enthusiasm was still running high – when the Podolica "circus" moved on to Camigliatello Silano, in Calabria, for the last stage in the tour de force of this congress, the heifer auction at the ESAC Center of Molarotta.



HEIFER AUCTION

**Experimental Zootechnical Center of
Molarotta, Camigliatello Silano,
12 July 2009**

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The splendid setting of the Sila served as the backdrop for the last event in the extensive congress program. Molarotta, near Camigliatello, where the last National Podolica Show was held in



One of the heifers sold at the Auction

2006, is the site of the Selection Center for Podolica heifers; it is managed by ESAC and the Cosenza Breeders' Association in collaboration with ANABIC. The center hosted the third test cycle this year, with a group of ten heifers artificially inseminated with semen from the young bulls tested at the Laurenzana Center. The group of females being auctioned made a wonderful first impression, showing off excellent form. The first heifers inseminated with the semen of Thurii, one of the most interesting young sires of the 2007 cycle, were pregnant. The heifers, all of which qualified as bull-dams, were the daughters of Poseidone, Petrone, Nicola and Otello, and they came from the Potenza ranch of Gaetana Natale and the Cosenza herds of Luigi Fortino and Cataldo Fortino. Their morphological evaluation averaged 84 points and three of them exceeded 85

points, demonstrating the validity of this type. As has become customary for all Podolica events, the breeders showed their appreciation for the quality of the subjects being auctioned. To promote purchases, CCBI, the Italian Beef Consortium, offered a contribution of 200 euros/head, which proved to be an effective strategy as all the heifers found a buyer. Although the gavel of the experienced auctioneer Roberta Guarcini warmed up more slowly than it had the previous day at Laurenzana, it ultimately set the perfect pace. Top price went to Teresa, bred by Luigi Fortino and purchased by Gaetana Natale of Potenza for 3000 euros. This lovely daughter of Poseidone, boasting an outcross pedigree with a significant female line, came to the auction with a score of 88 points, making her the star of the day. Her pregnancy by Thurii thus makes her offspring a potentially interesting candidate for the Laurenzana Center. The same consideration holds true for the rest of the heifers, who share a health status that makes them ideal for any ranch. Among the buyers, in addition to Gaetano Scarilli there were also other breeders who are well known in Podolica circles, such as Luigi Forciniti, Giuseppe Diotaiuti and Saverio Perrone; the latter bought three subjects. One of the new entries is the Ciangia ranch from Terranova del Pollino (Cosenza). The auction was honored by the presence of several international delegations that had attended the congress in Matera and, after being introduced by the director of ANABIC, they received citations from the authorities at the end of the event. The delightful buffet set up at the facilities represented yet another opportunity to socialize, closing the outstanding congress program.

Auctions

Salvatore Nigro passes away



Salvatore Nigro, national expert of the Podolica breed and controller for the Potenza Breeders' Association, passed away on 22 August after a brief illness. Salvatore was born in Pietrapertosa, Potenza, in 1943. Married to Silvana and the father of three, he was one of the most experienced experts on Podolica cattle, of which he was also a passionate breeder until the end. His herd, which he managed with his brother Aniello, has produced numerous subjects that have successfully undergone performance tests at the Laurenzana Center and generated Foggiano, one of the first Podolica sires to be used for artificial insemination. After working as a middle-school teacher, Salvatore joined the Potenza Breeders' Association in 1981 as a zootechnical inspector. He became an expert collaborator on the Podolica breed in 1985 and then rose to become a national expert. Indeed, Salvatore was considered the "doyen" of breed experts, respected by his colleagues for his knowledge of cattle – backed by a true passion – and his equanimity. Several years ago his ranch hosted the annual hands-on update for experts, and in 2003 ANABIC acknowledged his professionalism with a special lifetime achievement award. When the auction of Podolica bull calves was held at the Laurenzana Center this past 11 July as part of the 1st International Congress on Podolica Breeds, Salvatore – visibly moved – was given an award by Augusto Calbi, director of the Potenza and Matera Breeders' Association, who thanked him publicly and affectionately for the dedication and spirit of sacrifice evident in everything he did. Present at all the meeting of experts, Salvatore was a highly respected and beloved figure among the "newbies" as well, as he represented an important point of reference for them. ANABIC and the Body of Experts would like to convey their sympathy and deepest condolences for Salvatore's family. Salvatore – with his gentle smile and perennial cigarette – will be with us whenever we are amidst a herd of cattle or standing at the ring of a show.

Events

Marchigiana breed provincial show San Giorgio La Molara, Benevento, Italy, 5 - 6 september 2009

by Chiara Matteucci
Shows Office



Once again the breed was at its best at the show in San Giorgio La Molara that was held last 5 and 6 September and attended, as well as by the local tourist office, by ARA Campania (Regional Breeders Association) and Anabic. Representing the association were its President, Fausto Luchetti, and experts, Antonio Chiavini and Romano Palazzo, respectively show judge and ring assistant, as well as Chiara Matteucci, Fiorella Sbarra and Matteo Ridolfi. The intensive two-day show in Benevento, also sponsored by the

Benevento branch of SIRC Agricoltura, the Municipality, the Province and the Chamber of Commerce of Benevento, offered a catalogue of 214 subjects, representing a total of 49 exhibitors from the provinces of Benevento and Avellino. Precise logistics and a well-ordered catalogue ensured the event ran smoothly and the judging maintained a steady pace. The animals that made it through to the four finals, expressed all the consistency and coherence of the judges' work that at times was decidedly demanding.

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In the final of the Junior Males, no. 5, the son of Erode owned by Giuseppe Gagliardi, appeared to be a clear winner from the start despite being the youngest finalist. The style, length, diameter and strength of the limbs meant he easily prevailed over an experienced group of contenders that included the son of Susino and a son of Cirano owned by Giovanni Belperio, as well as a son of Serino, owned by Giuseppe Gagliardi. On the other hand, the final of the Senior Males was won by bull no. 66, a muscular and correct son of Nomade, presented by the Paradiso Farm, that thanks to its superior muscular development and structural integrity prevailed over no. 59, a son of Palio presented by Giorgio Vicario, and no. 62, a son of Quarzo bred by Giovanni Belperio.

The 6 Junior Females gave life to a wonderful final, worthy of the best stages and included no. 6, offspring of Elios owned by Luigi D'Aloia, no. 98, a daughter of Lupo owned by Giuseppe Gagliardi, no. 118, a daughter of Cirano owned by Giovanni Belperio, no. 145, a daughter of Serino owned by Giorgio Laudonio, no. 159 and no. 183, respectively the daughters of Erode and Cirano, presented by Marcello Belperio. The winner, thanks to its femininity, bone quality, uniformity of muscle cover and the general correctness and elegance with which it won over the ring, was no. 98 owned by Giuseppe Gagliardi. The same farm also won in the cow final with no. 189, a daughter of Lupo competitive despite the state of lactation, beating no. 212, daughter of Falco from the Paradiso Farm, thanks to her superior typicality, size and trunk length.

With regards to the competition reserved for breeding groups, the 6 groups in competition were those belonging to Antonio Paradiso, Giovanni Belperio,

Marcello Belperio, Giuseppe Gagliardi, Maria Belperio and Giorgio Laudonio. The winner was the group belonging to Giovanni Belperio that beat the three-man teams headed by Giuseppe Gagliardi and Marcello Belperio respectively, thanks to superior uniformity. At the end of this competition, the competition for junior and senior handlers took place. The winner of the under-25 handlers, who were all decidedly "savvy", was Daniele Laudonio, who preceded Nicola Iadanza and Mario Gagliardi. In the category for young female handlers, who were all particularly good, Angela Gagliardi preceded Catia Barbato. In the over-25 category, Fabrizio Gagliardi preceded Daniele Mazzacano, Giorgio Laudonio and Luigi D'Aloia.

The skill of the handlers, in particular the numerous young ones in the ring, was without doubt one of the high notes of the show and was characterised by extreme sportsmanship and correctness. The neat ring, with all the handlers strictly "in uniform", gave the event a touch of professionalism we would like to see in our shows at all times. As well as the competition animating the ring, a conference entitled "The Integrated Chain Project; opportunities for zootechnics for meat from the Sannio region", was organized on Saturday evening. The moderator of the event was Aniello Troiano of CRAA (Consortium for Applied Research in Agriculture) and it opened with a welcome speech by Luigi Antonio Vella, mayor of San Giorgio La Molara, who warmly congratulated the breeders in particular for the event they had organized.

Anna Caroscio, President of the local tourist office of San Giorgio La Molara, also thanked not only the breeders who had taken part, but also the numerous volunteers who had made a considerable

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contribution to the success of the event, of which the local tourist office was one of the “traditional” supporters. After that, Antonio Irlando, an executive of the Agriculture Council of the Campania Region, gave a brief yet comprehensive overview of the peculiarities of the territory and the problems most strongly felt by breeders, guaranteeing them the support of the body he represented. The next speech was by the President of Anabic, Fausto Luchetti. After having brought the greetings of the director, Roberta Guarcini, who was unable to attend, he picked up again on the concepts expressed in the previous speech in order to underline how the fragmentation of the offer, characteristic of farms in Benevento, represented a peculiarity of the territory that was synonymous of quality production and, if adequately coordinated, was capable of gaining the trust of consumers.

During his speech, President Luchetti, reiterated the support of the association for the breeders of Benevento, undisputedly amongst the most committed with regards to the Marchigiana breed, with the hope that they would be more active in sending the best livestock to the renewed Anabic Genetic Centre and purchase bulls leaving the centre more regularly, especially as they have at their disposal recently-agreed regional contributions for the purchase of bulls and cows. Another support for breeders is represented by the community bonuses provided for by Article 68, which will be allocated, Anabic hopes, only to herds of the beef cattle breeds registered on the national herd book.

The next person to intervene was Antonio De Renzis, recently-elected Director of ARAC (Campania branch of the Regional Breeders Association), who as well as

offering the greetings of the Commissioner of ARAC, Sergio Pompa, said he was conscious of the hard work that awaited him and assured breeders of his firm desire to address their exigencies. Aniello Cimitile, President of the Province of Benevento, then spoke and underlined the importance of the show in San Giorgio La Molar, a municipality that, thanks to the high concentration of Marchigiana breeders deserve a more suitable and user-friendly show venue. This was also something Anna Caroscia mentioned in her opening speech, confirming her commitment to achieving this objective.

Next to speak was Gennarino Masiello, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Benevento, who recalled how the agricultural sector of the Province of Benevento is characterised by a high percentage of young entrepreneurs whose function of providing continuity for the best quality productions, protecting the territory, must be supported adequately by the local economic system. He guaranteed the awareness of the Chamber of Commerce to their needs and the willingness of the organism to support all the initiatives that promote the production specificities of the territory.

Bringing the large number of speeches to a close was the Right Honourable Gianfranco Nappi, Councillor for Agriculture of the Campania Region, who first warmly congratulated the breeders on their livestock and then outlined the key points for the zootechnics sector in Campania, underlining the difficulties that breeders have in handling the market and indicating in cohesion between production entities and collaboration between all the actors in the chain the only way to overcome obstacles that would be overwhelming for individual breeders. He mentioned how a similar reorganization of

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the production chain had been implemented successfully by wine producers that represented one of the production excellencies in Campania. Gianfranco Nappi concluded that relaunching zootechnics in Campania was a risk that could be overcome if each producer realised that a colleague in the same job was not a rival, but a potential ally. The conference was followed by a tasting of PGI Marchigiana meat.

The following day, after the finals and handlers competitions, the prize-giving ceremony took place, involving local authorities and coordinated by Giampaolo Parente of STAPA CePICA Benevento (Provincial Technical and Administrative Sector for Agriculture, Provincial Agricultural Information and Consultancy Centre), tireless and ever-present life and soul of the event. An intense moment coincided with the handing over of a plaque to Francesco de Jeso,

enthusiastic former manager of a public breeding farm, who has played a key role in improving the Marchigiana breed in the Province of Benevento. The plaque was presented by Antonio Politano, IPA executive (Provincial Inspectorate for Agriculture) and Anabic expert, to whom Anabic

expressed all its appreciation for the choice of animals shown and his constant organizational support. Francesco De Jeso was also given a plaque in memory of his son, Donatangelo De Jeso, local health authority vet and tireless supporter of the Marchigiana breed, who died before his time.

Next, prizes were presented to the judge, Antonio Chiavini, and his ring assistant, Romano Palazzo, who the mayor of San Giorgio congratulated for their professionalism in carrying out their



All the owners been at the show

demanding work in the ring. The prize-giving ceremony was attended by a large delegation of around fifty breeders from the Province of Macerata, who had come to visit their colleagues in Campania. There were a number of well-known faces and show regulars amongst them and they congratulated their colleagues for the quality of the livestock on show. The

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prizes to breeders and the group photo that followed ended the event on a light note, turning the spotlight on the vivacity and freshness of the Samnite Marchigiana breed, one of the most promising realities in the entire panorama of the breed.

Junior champion heifer – Gagliardi Giuseppe owner (BN)



Foreign delegations visit Anabic

by Chiara Matteucci
Shows Office



Foreign professionals interested in Italian beef cattle breeds have become frequent visitors.

MEXICO LIKES THE ROMAGNOLA

This past 2–3 March ANABIC received a small Mexican delegation composed of Cesar Cantù and his wife. Cantù has already visited Italy on several occasions and is an old friend of ANABIC. A member of the Board of AMECRI (Mexican Association of Italian Beef Cattle Breeders) and president of the

association's Technical Committee, Cesar Cantù is a longstanding expert on Italian breeds, six of which are also raised in Mexico: a total of 500 head are registered, and annually about 1000 calves are registered. Alongside the Romagnola, followed by the Chianina, both of which play a preeminent role, there are also herds of Marchigiana and Piemontese. Italian breeds are raised as purebreds as well as crosses, exploiting their high growth potential for the production of hybrids. In addition to the register of full-bloods, AMERCI also manages another one for subjects

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obtained through upgrading. Furthermore, considering the growing requests from commercial breeders, the association is planning to set up another section of the herd book for hybrids obtained through crosses with other breeds (particularly Angus and Brahman) for the production of synthetic lines. At the end of the term of office of president Antonio Trevino, a Chianina breeder whom many will remember because of his participation at the World Congress in Gubbio in 2005, Adrian De La Garza, a Romagnola breeder, was elected president. The association publishes a magazine for its members and annually organizes two exhibitions that take place respectively in Monterey, which is in the State of Nuevo León, and Guadalajara. Italian breeds – particularly the Romagnola – seem to have adapted well to the Mexican climate and especially the country's more arid areas, showing great heat tolerance as well as excellent resistance to tick fever. The black pigmentation of their skin, which has proven to be extremely important, is not the only feature that has aroused interest. Ease of calving, good maternal aptitude and the rusticity of the cattle, which easily wean their calves even in difficult conditions, are factors that continue to draw growing numbers of operators to our breeds. Cantù's visit revolved around the need for updated genetics to reinvigorate the existing herds. Director Roberta Guarcini welcomed him to ANABIC and the technical staff illustrated the activities of the association, followed by a brief tour to show Cesar Cantù herds of Romagnola and Chianina in their respective breeding areas. Cesar Cantù showed enormous interest not only in the cattle he inspected, the genetics that produced them and the bulls that are currently

being used, but also in the selection program implemented by ANABIC, the linear morphological evaluation method and the activity of the breed experts. The visit of our Mexican friends was completed by the purchase – through Italiana Genetica e Servizi – of semen from Romagnola and Chianina bulls, whose progeny will help reinforce the presence of Italian cattle in the land of the Maya.

TOM RIJKEN AND THE DUTCH DELEGATION IN SEARCH OF MARCHIGIANA CATTLE

On 12 May ANABIC received the visit of a small delegation from the Netherlands, headed by Tom Rijken, a well-known Dutch Marchigiana breeder who has followed the association's activities for years, participating in the main breed events. The delegation was welcomed by ANABIC director Roberta Guarcini, whose greeting was followed by a presentation of the association's activities by the heads of the different services. Tom was accompanied by several friends who, thanks to him, have gotten to know the breed; they plan to spend several days visiting farms in the provinces of Ancona and Macerata, and will purchase several head during the auction organized at the Heifer Center in Fabriano.

THE FRENCH DELEGATION

On 30 June ANABIC received a French delegation composed of about 50 breeders from Normandy. Following a brief visit to the headquarters of the association, the guests went to Collazzone (Perugia) to visit the Luchetti farm, where they had the chance to see

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not only the Chianina cattle on the farm but also all of the Luchetti facilities. The farm is involved in various activities and also has its own meat outlet shop, thus representing an outstanding example of a short production chain.

FRIENDS FROM THE ISTRIAN DELEGATION

Following the International Congress for Podolica breeds, held in Matera from 9 to 12 July, our friends from the Istrian delegation visited ANABIC on their way home. The group was composed of Graziano Prekalj, director of AZRRI (Agency for the Rural Development of the Istrian Region); Gordan Subara and Edmondo Suran, AZRRI officials; Prof. Ante Ivankovic and Melena Ramljiak from the University of Zagreb; Aldo Stifanic and Alfredo Jedrevic, respectively president and secretary of the Istrian Cattle Breeders' Association (SUIG); Ivanka Bervida, the head zootechnician for SUIG; and journalist Ante Gugo. They were welcomed by ANABIC director Roberta Guarcini and ANABIC's technical staff. During a short meeting the guests stated that they wanted to work more closely with ANABIC, whose technical support is considered one of the keys to safeguarding Istrian cattle. After a presentation of ANABIC's activities and the services it provides to its members, the technical staff of the Genetics Center demonstrated the new and updated facilities. The visit not only reinforced the friendly relations that had already been established, but also portended new and more in-depth contacts.

THE BELGIAN DELEGATION IS INTERESTED IN THE CHIENINA

A few days after the visit of our Croatian friends, on 17 July a small delegation of Belgian veterinarians came to ANABIC.

The veterinarians were interested in using Italian beef-cattle breeds – and particularly the Chianina – for cross-breeding programs. The tour at ANABIC was led by Giovanni Conti, president of the “Amici della Chianina” Club. They were welcomed by ANABIC president Fausto Luchetti and Antonio Vagniluca, head of the Genetics Center, who illustrated the selection activity conducted on Italian beef-cattle breeds, paying close attention to the work done by the Genetics Center, where the delegation had a chance to see the auction area.

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