Small Ruminants versus Large Carnivores in the Alps

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Georg Höllbacher, chairman
Introduction

transnational Federation of sheep and goat breeders in the alps

members: Austria, Italy, Bavaria, Slovenia

same problems – same solutions?
# Numbers of heads in the alpine space area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French A.S.A.</td>
<td>1,814,069</td>
<td>1,427,377</td>
<td>195,200</td>
<td>-5,5</td>
<td>-1,9</td>
<td>-0,2</td>
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<tr>
<td>German A.S.A.</td>
<td>2,579,179</td>
<td>319,860</td>
<td>17,068</td>
<td>-6,3</td>
<td>-0,6</td>
<td>10,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1,554,696</td>
<td>446,350</td>
<td>73,970</td>
<td>-2,1</td>
<td>6,1</td>
<td>18,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>5,473</td>
<td>3,149</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>8,3</td>
<td>-5,1</td>
<td>19,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian A. S. A.</td>
<td>3,525,400</td>
<td>257,448</td>
<td>134,906</td>
<td>-4,8</td>
<td>-13,5</td>
<td>-8,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria*</td>
<td>2,010,680</td>
<td>325,728</td>
<td>55,100</td>
<td>-6,5</td>
<td>-4,2</td>
<td>7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>452,517</td>
<td>129,352</td>
<td>25,480</td>
<td>-8,3</td>
<td>34,4</td>
<td>15,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesamter Alpenraum</td>
<td>11,942,014</td>
<td>2,909,064</td>
<td>502,010</td>
<td>-5,3</td>
<td>-0,7</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quellen: Ministère de l’agriculture et de la pêche (AGRESTE), Ministerium für Ernährung und Ländlichen Raum Baden Württemberg, Bayerische Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft, Swiss Federal Statistical Office, ISTAT, Landesverwaltung Liechtenstein, Statistik Austria, Statistici Urad Republike Slovenije

Small ruminants in the alps

- using highest altitudes
- important for erosion control
- gene – centre for breeds
- suited for landscape management
- conservation of alpine pastures
Production systems in the Alps

- Non specialised keeping
- Extensive and semi–extensive keeping
- Intensive keeping

Permanent systems:
- permanent pasture
- enclosure keeping
- alpine meadow keeping

Non–permanent systems:
- Transhumant system
- Nomadic system
enclosure keeping
transhumant system
Behaviour of sheep after being attacked from large carnivores

- sheep basically defenceless, have no means of protecting themselves.
- only protection: staying together in group
- run when frightended
- often scatter in all directions
- becoming very shy
- hide themselves when hear any noise
Protection against large carnivores

Electric fences
- Expensive
- Lot of work
- Daily controlling
- not possible in rough terrain

Guard animals
- Wintertime
- Tourists
- Defence farms

Good management necessary!
Problems

• Agriculture in the alps for centuries without large carnivores
• Small structures
• Close colonisation
• No alternative income for farmers in mountainous regions
• Time / money needed: shepherds, building fences, controlling
Cohabit of small ruminant and large carnivore

• Trentino: alps kept empty (bear)
• Bavaria: farmers are going to stop breeding
• Slovenia: farmers stop farming
Paying compensations - Difficulties

• competences not clear
• many regions without agreement
• compensation only for proved cases
  ? lost animals, fallen into canyons
• farmer has to make the evidence that it was not his fault
• compensation only paid if everything is perfect stock list..
• loosing support:
  endangered races, size of farm – heads, penalties, disadvantaged regions
Chances

• self – defence has to be allowed
• „troublemakers“ have to be hunted immediately:
  after predators kill once, they will come back again to kill more.
• good management plans are needed:
  compensation for farmers,
  help for self – protecting
• stop setting free large carnivores
• allowance for stock – control
Thank you for your kind attention.