

Should endangered local breeds be preserved?

AIMS

1. To report on the current situation of local breeds.
2. To provide arguments and counterarguments about conserving local breeds.
3. To analyse different views on local breeds in Catalonia.
4. To present a final critical analysis about conservation.

ARGUMENTS

PROS

They are source of genetic diversity that can be used for future changes.

They help to maintain ecosystems.

They are part of the cultural heritage of the towns.

They provide differentiated products.

CONS

There are not enough financial resources to keep local breeds.

Preserving all local breeds we can get to fall in "Diogenes Syndrome".

These breeds are less productive.

Keeping these breeds causes people to have to live more poorly.

INTRODUCTION

Local breeds have been formed since the process of domestication. Up to 14.895 breeds have been selected according to the interests of a particular region. Unfortunately, 17% of these are currently endangered. But why do we have to keep these breeds if there are better ones?

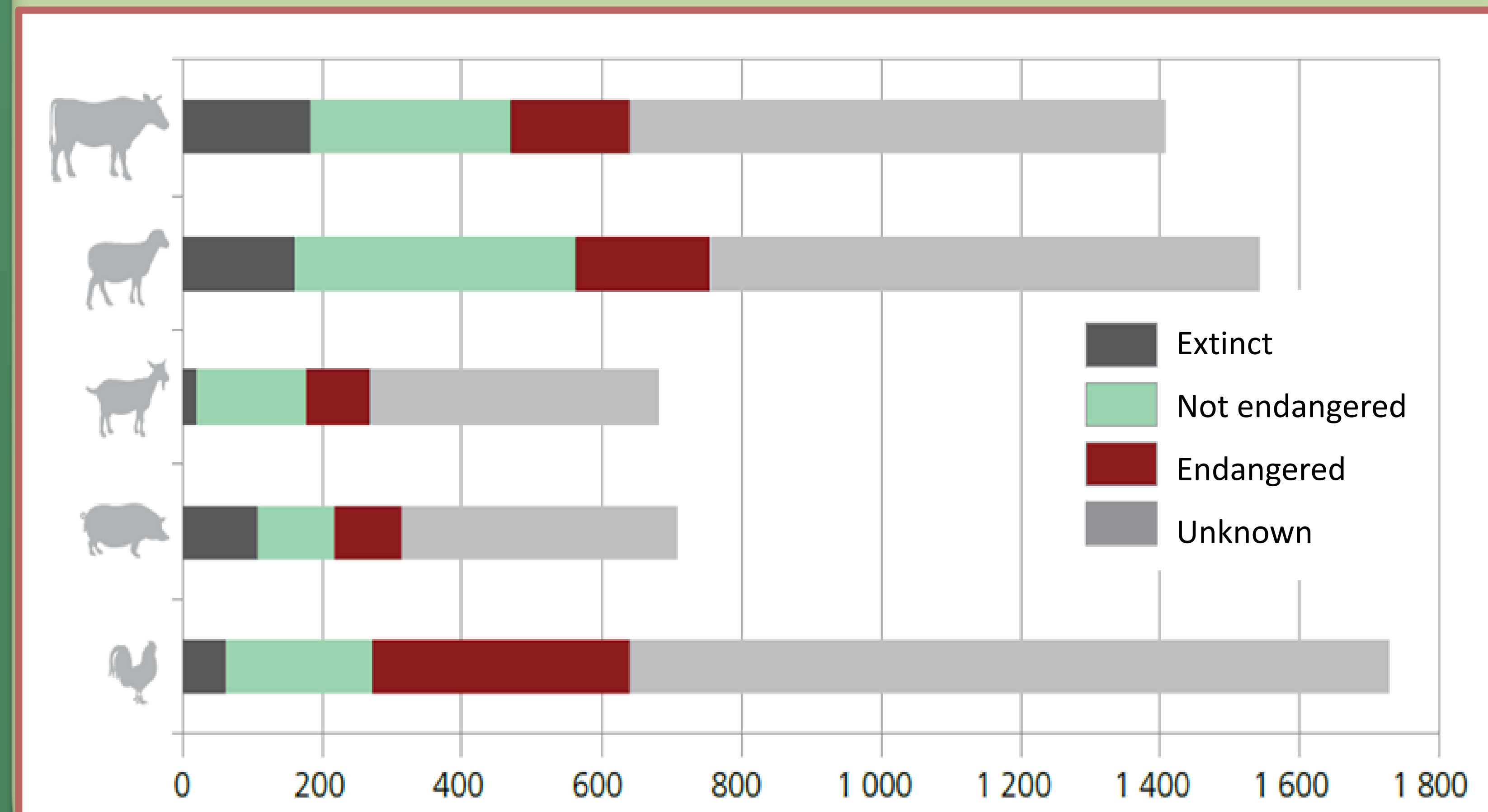


Figure 1. Situation of local breeds in the world (FAO, 2015).

LOCAL BREEDS IN CATALONIA

Local breeds have been strongly displaced by more productive breeds. There are 13 local breeds in Catalonia and all of them are endangered. However, there are a few breeds which are not in such a critical situation, such as Ripollesa and Xisqueta sheeps and Bruna dels Pirineus beef cattle.

Breeding programs are being conducted to improve features of breeds, such as prolificacy, but always keeping its hardiness and adaptation to the environment. Breeders associations believe that raising high-quality products will enhance their marketing.

The role of the government in Catalonia is essential to ensure the survival and proper progress of these breeds.



Image 1. Xisqueta breed.
Background photo: www.ovejaxisqueta.org.

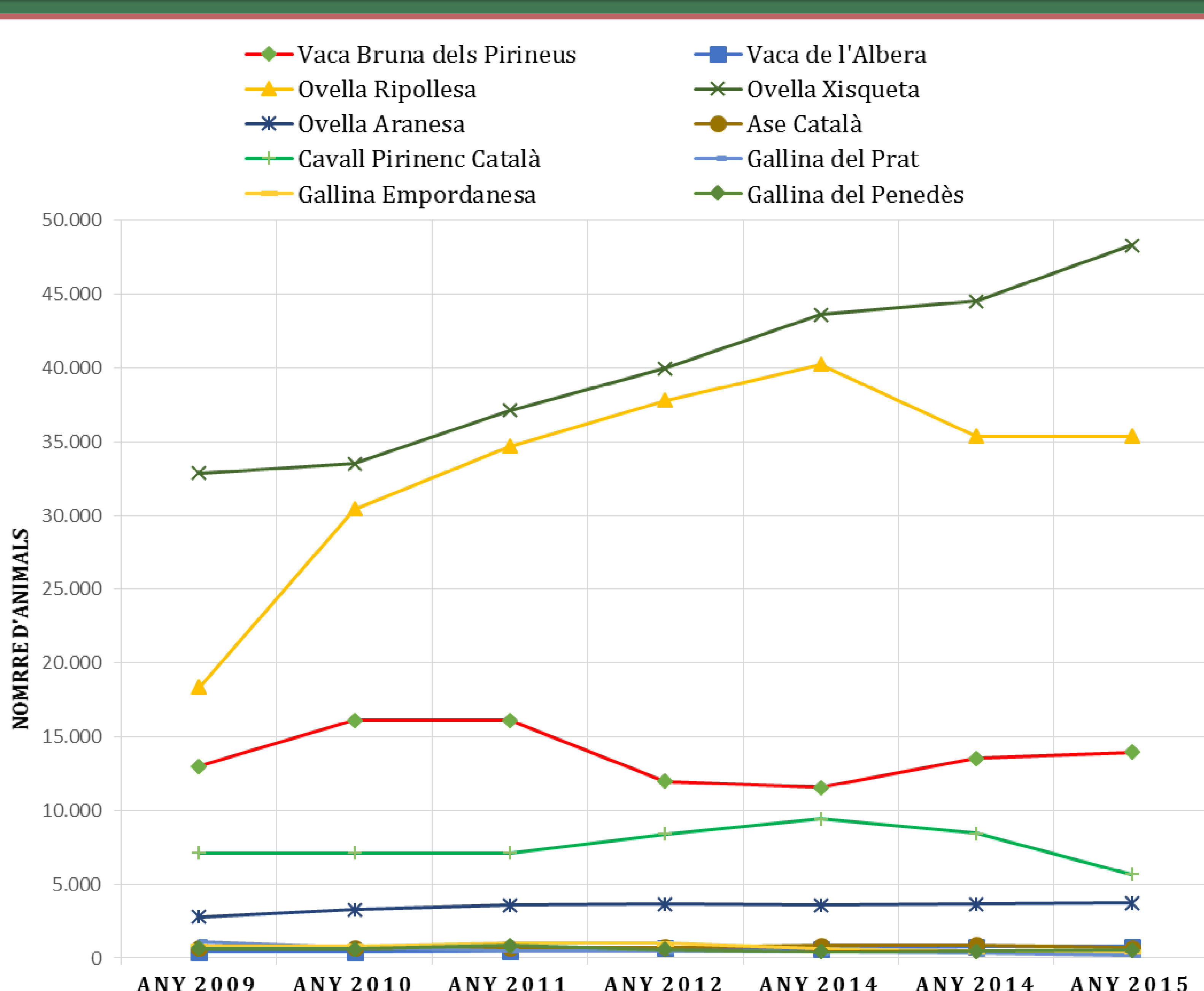


Figure 2. Census evolution of local breeds.
Performed with animals listed in Llibre Genealògic (MAGRAMA).



Image 2. Yakuto bovine in Siberia at -60°C.

Background photo: www.dailymail.co.uk.



Image 3. Llamas in the Andes Mountains.

Background photo: www.scientificamerican.com.

CONCLUSIONS

- Local breeds must be preserved, especially those which are endangered.
- Each region should have a list of priorities based on the integration of all values of each local breed.
- More sustainable livestock must be promoted in order to help farmers settle in remote areas and promote the expansion of local breeds.