

NordGen Farm Animals is a coordinating unit and a competence and information center that contributes to the categorization, conservation and sustainable utilization of farm animal genetic resources in the Nordic countries. NordGen Farm Animals also promotes Nordic competence and views on the value of animal genetic resources, both within the Nordic region and world-wide.

On NordGen's website you can find more information on our activities.

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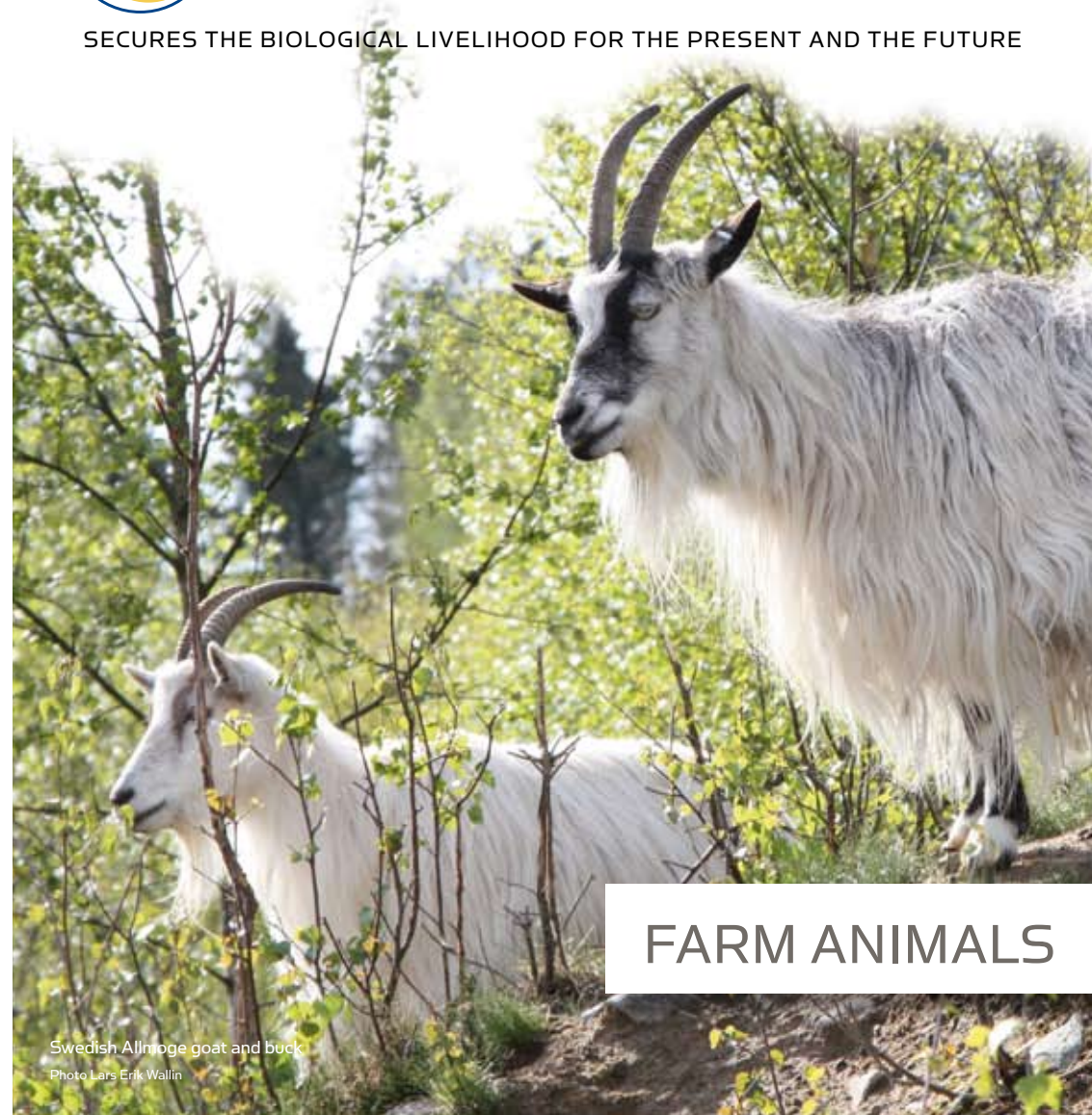
Sow of Danish landrace
Photo Kim Conrad Petersen



Norwegian Smålens goose
Photo Nina Sæther



Icelandic sheep
Photo Askell Thorisson



Swedish Allmoge goat and buck
Photo Lars Erik Wallin

FARM ANIMALS

NordGen – Nordic Genetic Resource Center – is a joint Nordic institution under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers. NordGen is responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural, horticultural and forestry genetic resources, including the environmental aspects hereof.

WHY DO WE CONSERVE GENETIC RESOURCES OF FARM ANIMALS?

Farm animals secure the livelihood of people all around the world, and they have great economic, social and cultural value. They provide food, work, draft power and manure, and can convert plant material that is inedible for humans into protein with a high biological value. Through man-derived selection and adaptation to a multitude of local environments, the domestic animal species have developed into different breeds with a variety of characteristics. However, this diversity is currently threatened by the extinction of breeds as a result of agro-economic developments as well as very effective breeding techniques.

WE LOOSE ONE FARM ANIMAL BREED EACH MONTH, GLOBALLY

In addition, genetic variation is also lost within breeds. These trends lead to genetic erosion of domestic animal diversity. The loss of breeds, genes and gene combinations may hamper our ability to adapt to future markets, production systems, and environmental and climatic conditions. Agrobiodiversity plays an essential role in securing the world's future food supplies, both in the agricultural industry as well as in small scale and low input systems.

EACH COUNTRY HAS A NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Nordic countries have national strategies for meeting their responsibilities for conservation and sustainable use of these resources. The Global Plan of Action and the Interlaken Declaration, adopted by the FAO in Switzerland in 2007*, are currently being implemented by developing these strategies.

NordGen Farm Animals provides tools for national actors to characterize, conserve, and utilize animal genetic resources and to develop national strategies and plans.

**The International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture organised by the FAO*

NORDGEN FARM ANIMALS

NordGen Farm Animals promotes conservation and management of breeds and their genetic resources. We promote the value of maintaining a great diversity of farm animal genetic resources for the needs of future markets, production systems and climate change.

NordGen Farm Animals activates awareness about the historical, cultural and social values of animal genetic resources. We also promote the potential of small scale production based on native farm animal breeds, as a sustainable way of conservation. We contribute to collaboration between stakeholders in the Nordic countries, such as breeding organizations, breed associations, authorities and policy makers, to promote the Nordic approach to genetic resource management, both within the Nordic countries and world-wide.

TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS, NORDGEN FARM ANIMALS

- **Provides tools** for national actors to maintain genetic variation in living farm animal breeds (*in situ* conservation) and to design cryo-banking of genetic material, such as embryos, oocytes and semen (*ex situ* conservation).
- **Promotes sustainable breeding practices** and sound principles for fair trade with breeding material both in commercial breeding organizations and smaller breeding associations.
- **Maintains the database** on Nordic and Baltic farm animal breeds, which includes data on the breeds' census sizes, production characteristics, demographic history and on special food and other products based on these breeds.
- **Initiates research and developing projects** on the characterization, conservation, management and sustainable use of animal genetic resources.
- **Organizes workshops, seminars and courses** for students, researchers, animal breeders, and administrative officers on animal genetic resources with scientific and technical knowledge related to management of animal genetic resources.
- **Facilitates good cooperation** for different stakeholders and groups, and thus serves as a common platform for the Nordic and Baltic regions.
- **Provides a variety of information channels**, such as a website, an electronic newsletter, printed periodicals, folders, projects and reports.

