

# Newsletter

**European Federation of City Farms**

for Social Change in Europe

*Kinderboerderijen*

*4H-garder*

*4H-Farms*

*Kinder-, Jeugd- en  
Gezinsboerderijen*

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City Farms and  
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## from the Board

### New contacts in Europe

The EFCF was contacted for information about events and visitors programs for a big Manor Farm in Austria. The Manor Farm is a restoration project and is one of the largest baroque estates in Central Europe. It dates from 1725 and consists of large stables, a manorial inn with a brewery, a dairy, a school and various workshops.

Link your federation and city farms to the EFCF-website! Please, make sure that your website has a link to the EFCF website on a prominent place. In that way your members and other visitors of your website will always have immediate updated information about conferences and other EFCF-events. Please ask you members to do the same on their own websites.

### EFCF Blue Booklet and Website

The text of the July 2003 Blue Booklet with information about the EFCF and its members can be downloaded from the EFCF-website. We want to link the descriptions of the member federations in the Blue Booklet to the address information of the members. In this way interested people whose Norwegian, Dutch or Italian is not too perfect can directly find english information about your federation. The EFCF website is updated regularly, the Blue Booklet only once a year, just before the annual conference in Autumn. The descriptions in the Blue Booklet have a 'last update' date. Please let Pauline Wolters know if there have been changes in addresses, telephone numbers, contact persons etc. [pwolters@planet.nl](mailto:pwolters@planet.nl)

### German and Flemish farmworkers took a look behind the scenes

Thirty youth workers, members of from ABA Fachverband in Germany, paid a visit to several city farms in Maastricht on 12 November last year. On 10 December a group of twenty city farmworkers from the Flemish federation visited the same farms and a farm just across the border in Belgium. Both groups were very much interested in the school programme by handicapped people on one farm and in the self-guided school activities on another farm in Maastricht. There is a close cooperation between the Maastricht farms and the Belgium farm which has among other things resulted in a joint quarterly farm magazine.

## EFCF - Conference Oslo 15. - 19.9.2004

### Dear members of the EFCF!

This is just a short reminder from Norway about the coming City Farm Conference in Oslo from the 15. – 19. september. This year we can celebrate the 15 anniversary of making City Farm Conferences since the EFCF was established in 1990.

The Norwegian 4H and the FNG (Federation of Norwegian Visiting Farms) want to show you the width in our visiting farms and also the health-bringing in working this way. We hope to give you nice experiences during these days and we have prepared for a practical conference with short but interesting speeches.

A lot of the presentation will be visual – beautiful slideshows and video, museum visit and also mountain climbing! (Not dangerous or difficult for anyone). We will visit 3 different farms around Oslo.

In this way, we hope our Conference will be informative and fun for everyone, no matter language.

Remember the Chinese proverb:

What I hear – I forget,  
What I see – I remember, and  
What I do – I learn!

So, remember now, close these 5 days in your diary, bring your good mood and visit Norway in september. No, there's not snow here in september! The weather has promised to be nice, and with you all here together with nice food and social evenings this must be The Event of 2004!

Looking forward in seeing you all again  
Inger Synnøve Vaaden  
Board member of the FNG

Psst. Did I mention we probably will have a participant and a speaker from Australia?



Bedrooms in Oslo

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## Torino here we come

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Marc de Staercke, chair person of the EFCF was on holiday and paid a visit to the city of Torino in August 2003. His report:

'It was too hot to go outside. The airconditioning in the hotel room made a noise like a Volkswagen from the fifties. We had to close the window because they were working on the road outside. And we had to shut the curtains, not to let any sun enter the room. The best time to visit the city was early in the morning or late in the evening. And we could see that the whole city was preparing for the Olympic Wintergames of 2005. There was a big hole next to our hotel and in it were bulldozers, trucks and when we looked better we could see some man working day and night.

"The city council invests a lot of money to prepare Torino for this big event. They are also rebuilding our City Farm": Daniela Viroglio and Angela Melchionda of the department of education explained to us. They told us about their plans with their City Farm. Next year they will have accomodation for 30 students and rooms for the teachers.

In the afternoon, we visited the City Farm: an enormous garden, an orchard, grasslands and lots of trees. You can read everything about this project in the EFCF Newsletter 2002-2. We paid a visit because we wanted to know more about their plans about organising the EFCF-City Farm Conference in 2005.

"Torino has only one City Farm. But in the neighbourhood there are lots of 'real' farms with educational programs for schools. It would also be the occasion to bring together the educational farmers from the north of Italy": Angela confirmed us. We thought this was a good idea because these farmers also want to visit us. (see Newsletter 2 in 2003).

Our day ended at five. We walked through the street and we were wondering which museum to visit next day, then we stopped to eat a pizza and we even had to pay for our cutlery! Strange people the Italians. We would like to know them better.'

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## EFCF Rare Breeds network!

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The different breeds used in farming have changed a lot since we started to breed for food. Demands from the moneymarked have forced farmers and the breeding organisations to have a narrow focus; as high production as possible from each animal. The opinion on which abilities to breed on and how much weight to put into them differs from country to country. In some extreme cases, the modern breed is not possible to recognize. —And still we know that there are still many of the old farming breeds still living in the european countries. Some of the breeds are related from country to country, and some organisations cooperate

across borders. We need to make friends throughout Europe and exchange enthusiasm and information on this!

The breeds as we knew them 50-100 years ago are gone. At least in production. Luckily, there are still small groups of the rare breeds left. Thanks to some stubborn farmers and an increasing number of educational institutions, the caretaking of the old breeds is getting better and better. Clever minds understand that we need them.



Why take care of these dying breeds? There are several good reasons, I will mention three;

1: The genes represent a value beyond our understanding. We could look at it as a bank deposit, one day we might need the savings, as the genes used in production could be vulnerable. Lack of biological diversity can potentially knock out an entire population, if it's genes are buildt up only for quantity, not for quality. Alike as they are, they could bring us trouble if they all die out. It is in the modern farmers interest to help us taking care of the old "natural buildt" genes. Although the old breeds are likely to be useless in the modern market, they represent a great value also there. It is possible to have a frozen bank, however, it would be sad to miss the value of the old culture these animals bring with them. To say it simple; our genebank of old living breeds secures biological diversity.



2: The rare breeds represent the basic or the beginning of agriculture as we know it today. New generations grow up



in danger of not learning about the old animals, why we developed the modern breeds and learned the techniques of making food and clothes. – Or something as simple as just being with animals. Schools and universities, not only the ones dealing with agricultural matters, will have greater benefits from the living genebank. The old genes will stand as a reference, and in future we will be able to take some steps back. We don't know for sure now, but we might have to put weight into some of the old breeds' abilities and make use of them in modern breeding later.

3: The two reasons already mentioned tells us that the Rare Breeds would be a very positive contribution to the City Farms. The rare farming breeds can help us to rebuild the relationship between the producer and the consumer. City farming gives us the opportunity to influence peoples attitude towards several important matters. Showing the old breeds to children of all ages (!) and transmitting bits and pieces of an understanding of our culture. We know from our work how perceptive people can be when exposed to the positive environment on the farm. It is my belief that the city farm is one of the best arenas for learning about sustainable development.

There are too many wars in the world. It influences debates too. Many differences in opinion continues in discussions without ending. There are, beyond doubt, always conflicts around agriculture, in every country. We need projects with a low risk of conflict. Putting some effort into taking care of the rare breeds I am sure will build many bridges and make people meet. It is important to be able to involve young, effective farmers as well as environmental activists. It is always possible to find something to agree on and on that basis create something to build on together.

So what could we do? Here's a list of suggestions:

- Send me an e-mail, I will put you on my list of interested and send more information from me and others and invite to exchange experiences.
- Find out if your country has a national programme for saving the old genes. Some countries even support the ones who actively join caretaking efforts.
- If you have rare breeds on your farm, make publicity! Be proud of the animals and make sure that every visitor gets good information.
- Locate organisations that focus on rare breeds and biological diversity. Make contact and invite them to use your arena.
- Contact local schools and check if they see the value of teaching the children about old culture through the living animals.

The rare farming breeds could be a diplomatic tool to make more people concerned about earth and our part of running it. – And, naive as it may sound, it could be fun!



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## Next Newsletter

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**Copy dead-line** for the next newsletter is **1-5-2004**

Please send all your text by email or send a disk in word-format or rtf-format to our office in Stuttgart - we don't want to type your text.

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