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# Some good practices in Extensive sheepbreeding in Bulgaria



# **Traditional cooperation of sheep breeders in the Rhodope Mountains, for summer grazing and dairy production**



**Seasonal grazing sheep farming has been practiced since antiquity to nowadays and is a major livelihood in the Rhodope Mountains, Bulgaria. In the month of May, by tradition, the sheep of several farmers gather in a common herd and go to the highland pastures, where they stay until the end of September. The protection of herds from predators is carried out by Karakachan dogs**

# **Traditional cooperation of sheep breeders in the Rhodope Mountains, for summer grazing and dairy production**



**On the pictures are present a seasonal summer grazing of sheep in the Rhodope Mountains at 1800 meters above sea level, in Rozhen peak. Traditional summer dairy (“Mandra” in Bulgarian language) on more than 80 years old. Built with natural materials - stone and timber. Here milk is processed and local dairy products are produced - White cheese and Tolum cheese..**

# **Traditional cooperation of sheep breeders in the Rhodope Mountains, for summer grazing and dairy production**



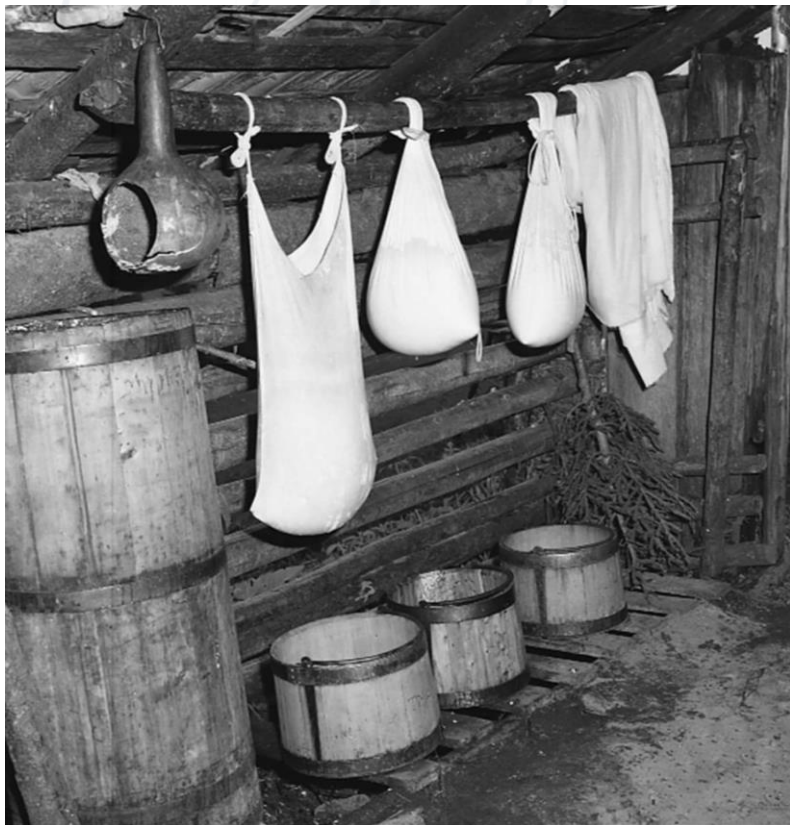
**The milking of sheep is carried out manually by a traditional method**  
**Depending on the number of his own sheep, each farmer milks all the sheep in the common flock for a certain time and processes their milk. The other farmer follows, and so on until all participants in the cooperative has passed**



# Traditional summer dairy in Rhodopes (“Mandra” in Bulgarian language) 1938 year and nowday



**Traditional summer dairy in Rhodopes (“Mandra” in Bulgarian language) 1938 year and nowday. Despite the small number of farmers and few sheep, these cooperatives still function today in the Rhodopes. In the past, sheep in such cooperatives numbered 2,000. Today, the flocks are considerably smaller.**



# **Traditional cooperation of sheep breeders in the Rhodope Mountains, for summer grazing and dairy production**



**In the “Mandra” each of the farmers produces white brine cheese and Tolum cheese in the traditional way from the milk that has been milked**

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**Tolum cheese is a traditional sheep's milk product that is produced only in the Rhodopes. Unique in production technology and unique in taste, this cheese cannot be found in stores of the wide market network.**



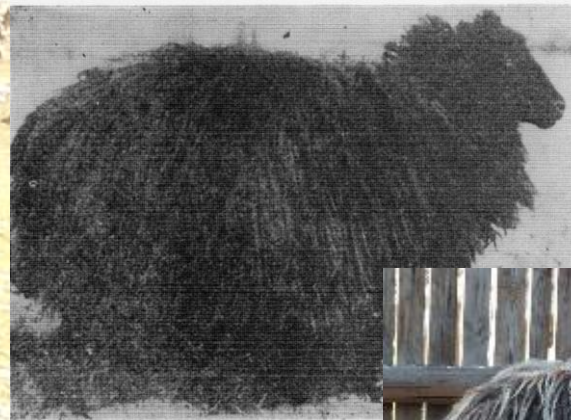
# **Rare breed center SEMPERVIVA in Vlahi village, Kresna municipality, Bulgaria.**



- Investigation the status of rare and endangered breeds
- Monitoring of breed populations
- Classification and standardization of autochthonic breeds
- Efforts for legal status improvement
- On farm and in situ conservation
- Promotion and conservation of the cultural heritage, traditions and customs of native people
- Promotion and recovering of transhumance practice
- Public awareness activities

# Rare breed center **SEMPERVIVA** in Vlahi village, Kresna municipality, Bulgaria.

In this farm is rearing the largest nucleus herd of the ancient breed of Karakachan sheep in Bulgaria – 450 ewes. The **SEMPERVIVA** team is responsible for preserving the original type of this ancient breed below Butin. Peak



# Rare breed center SEMPERVIVA in Vlahi village, Kresna municipality, Bulgaria.

Transhumance are practiced, as during the summer months the herd embarks on summer grazing in Pirin National Park at an altitude of 2600 meters above sea level below Butin. Peak



# **Rare breed center SEMPERVIVA in Vlahi village, Kresna municipality, Bulgaria.**



# Rare breed center **SEMPERVIVA** in Vlahi village, Kresna municipality, Bulgaria.



Through horses climb the necessary food for shepherds, and household items. The herd travels on its own to the summer pastures high in the mountains. The herd is guarding by exelent working Karakachan dogs. High in the mountain there is a shepherd's hut where the shepherds live for several months. Every year the hut is rebuilt due to the destruction of avalanches in winter.

# Rare breed center **SEMPERVIVA** in Vlahi village, Kresna municipality, Bulgaria.



In the summer the sheep spend the night in light pens made with hand tools. During the winter months, the herd is at the main base in the village of Vlahi. In the winter farm the sheep are lambbed and lambs are reared here. In the spring, after weaning of the lambs, the sheep are milked manually. In a small dairy (mandra on Bulgarian) are produced in a traditional way White cheese

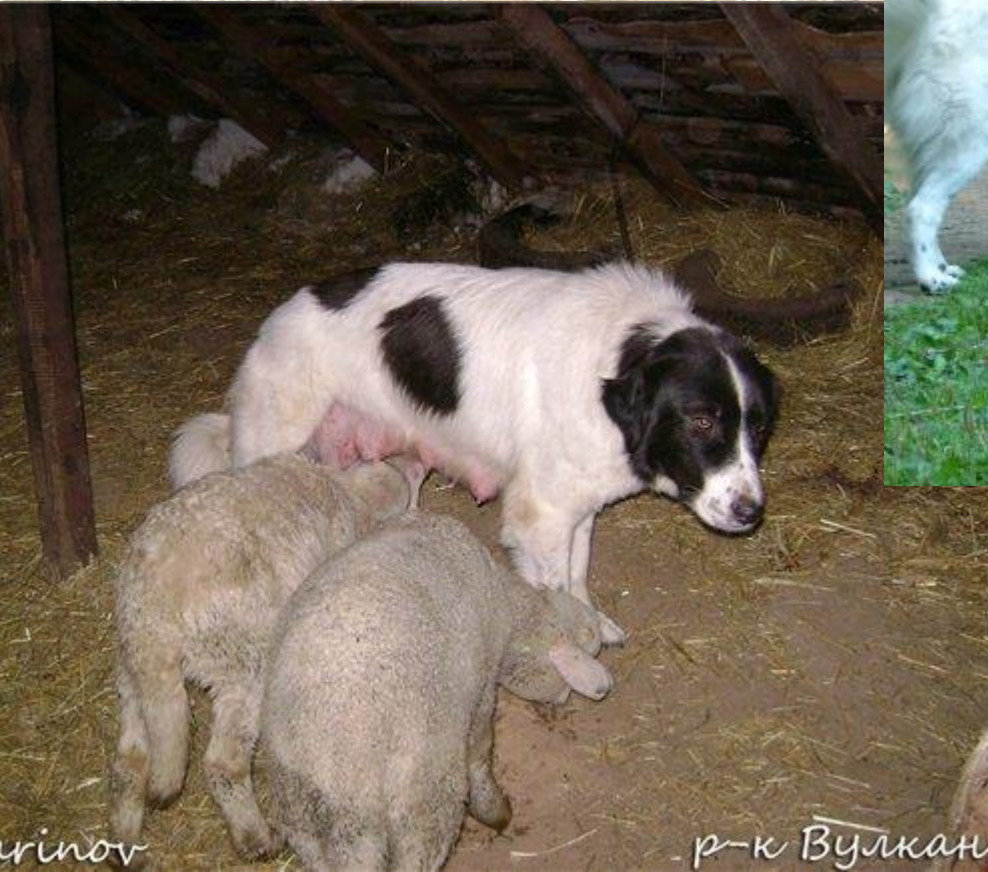
# International Karakachan Dog Association (IKDA)– Plovdiv, Bulgaria



**The main goal of the Association is to preserve the exterior and functional characteristics of the autochthonous breed used as herd guard - the Karakachan dog, As well as its intended use - preventing wolf and bear attacks on herds in mountainous and semi-mountainous areas**



# International Karakachan Dog Association (IKDA)– Plovdiv, Bulgaria



**Most of the kennels registered in the Association are sheep farmers who raise their dogs in a real working environment and often report fights with predators**

# International Karakachan Dog Association (IKDA)- Plovdiv, Bulgaria



**A well-worked group of Karakachan dogs is able to repel the attack of a Bear or a wolf**

# International Karakachan Dog Association (IKDA)– Plovdiv, Bulgaria



**Traditionally, shepherds put handmade metal collars to protect the dog's neck in the event of a fight with a wolf.**

# **International Karakachan Dog Association (IKDA)– Plovdiv, Bulgaria**



**The main priority in the practice of the kennels is to give puppies to shepherds who will raise them and use them as guardians of flocks. In this way, the working qualities of the breed are preserved for the future.**

# THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION!



**Agricultural University – Plovdiv , Bulgaria**