

WORLD MEETING ON DOMESTIC ANIMAL BREEDS RELATED TO THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

P R E F A C E

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The opportunity to celebrate a major anniversary of a major event occurs infrequently. When such occasions do arise, it is incumbent upon those to whom the responsibility falls, to ensure that the event commemorates fully the original achievement and also effectively uses the anniversary to progress current projects and aspirations.

The University of Córdoba must be congratulated on enthusiastically grasping the opportunity to celebrate the Quincentenary of the discovery of the Americas by explorers setting sail from Andalucía. The subsequent movement of livestock across the Atlantic Ocean in both directions, following the Discovery, has had an enormous impact on the development of the livestock industry in both Europe and the Americas. Thus it is fitting that the Discovery should be celebrated and that the celebration should be a vehicle to highlight the conservation programmes being used to support the breeds in Andalucía which were the progenitors of many animals in the Americas.

Arch. Zootec. 41 (extra): 305-306. 1992.

The value of the Congress, and in particular its concern with genetic conservation, was enhanced by its amalgamation with the annual meeting of Rare Breeds International. The increasing global awareness of the need to follow active genetic conservation programmes was the reason for the creation of Rare Breeds International, which now coordinates the activities of national organisations around the world. The presence of breeds such as the Berrrenda cattle, Lebrijano-Churro sheep and Iberic pigs in the region around Córdoba, increased the awareness of the delegates and added an element of immediacy and relevance to the papers that were presented during the Congress. The Congress drew together delegates from many contrasting parts of the world, including not only the Mediterranean region but also Northern Europe, North America and the developing world, especially Latin America. This provided a forum for the active discussion regarding the different methods of applying genetic conservation programmes in various parts of the world, and the difficulty of fully harmonising standards and procedures. For example, in Northern Europe, most breeds are closely controlled and monitored by the regulations and registration systems of breed societies. In the Mediterranean countries there is less individual regulation of animals in recognised breeds but more of the old indigenous breeds have survived, while in the developing countries, animales are mainly recognised by type rather than being a member of an identified breed, but they also represent *original* genetic material. The Córdoba Congress enabled these varying situations and procedures to be discussed and rationalised within the context of genetic conservation and breed improvent. It also provided the opportunity for the mutual benefit of their respective organisations.

The University of Córdoba has established a precedent and achieved a standard in the **World Meeting on Domestic Animal Breeds Related to the Discovery of America** which hopefully will be repeated at future events in other countries. The decision to link the Congress with the meeting of Rare Breeds International must be applauded and was a significant factor in ensuring the undoubted success of the meeting.

Anyone interested in obtaining further information on Rare Breeds International should contact the Chairman at 1 Alexandra Mews, Alexandra Lane, Malvern, Worcs WR14 1JF. UK.