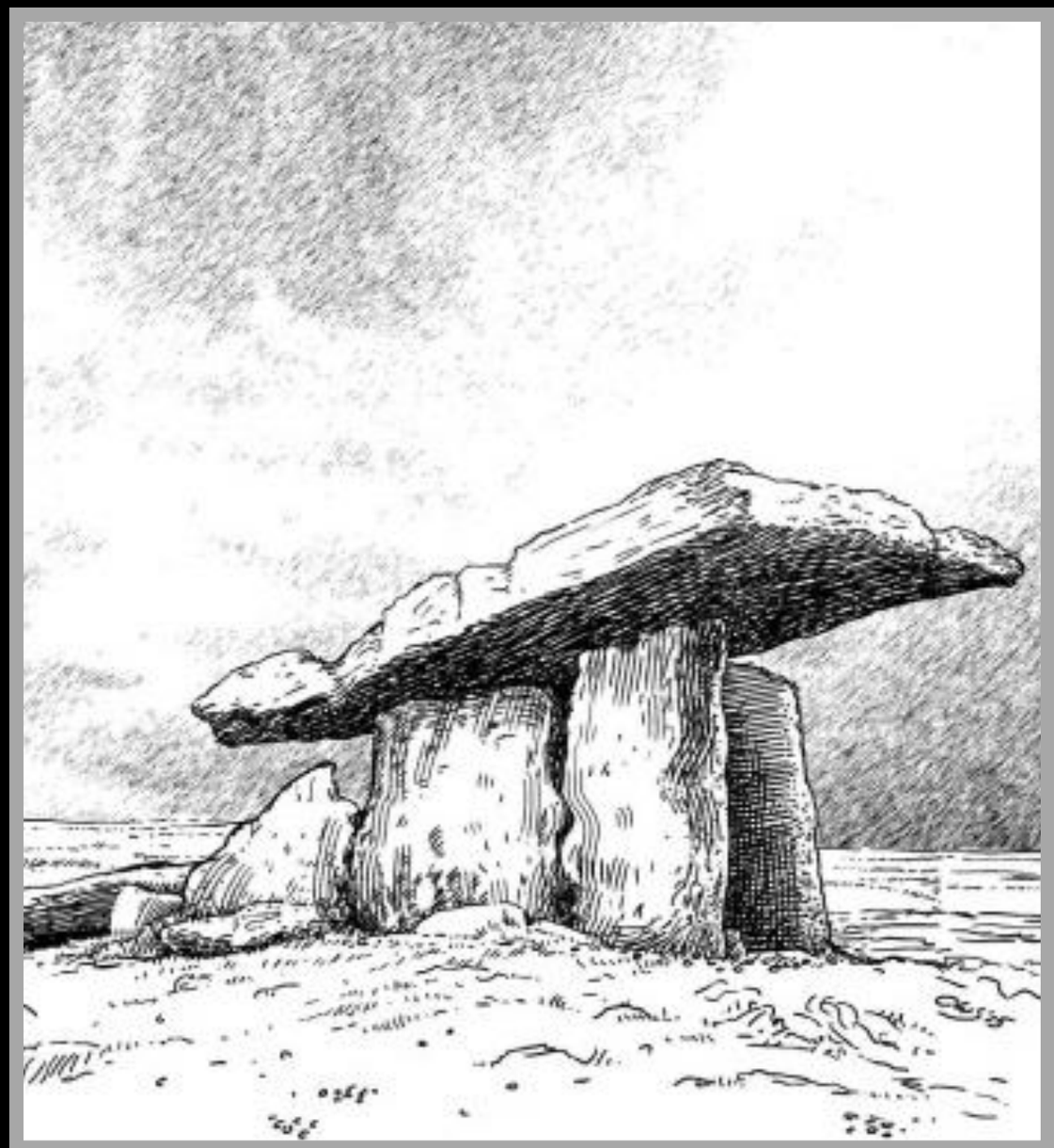
The Old Irish Goat Society

"To preserve and promote the Old Irish Goat"

THE Old Irish Goat SOCIETY

'**Handlebars**', John Joyce Photography and Pamela Gray, Mulranny Heritage Map Flyer Artwork

Old Irish Goat Heritage Value in Context



Colin Johnston, Old Irish Goat Society Member

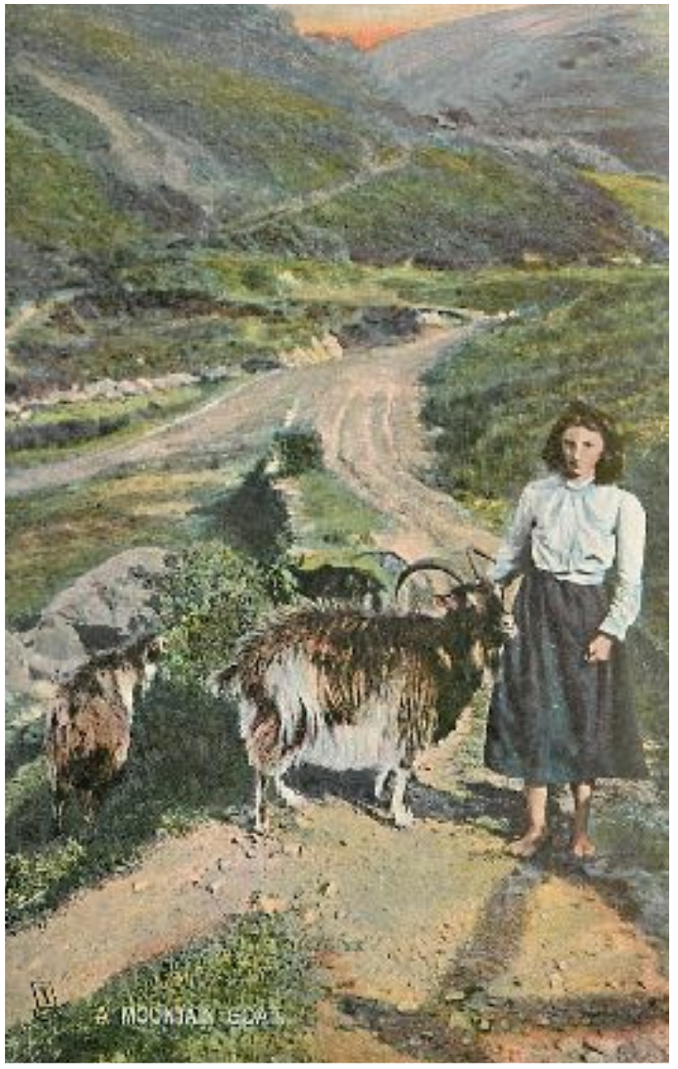
Famine Reenactment, Mulranny

Old Irish, Scottish and English Goat Heritage Value in Paintings

‘Augustus Burke, Connemara Girl’, 1880

Nora Drummond (1862 - 1949)

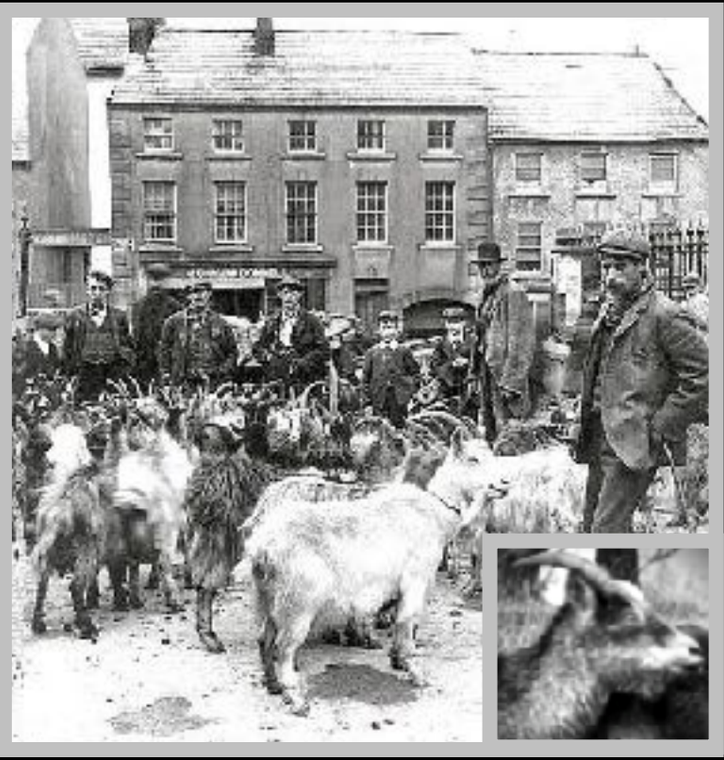
Edgar Hunt (1876–1953)



‘A Mountain Goat’, Early 20th Century

Old Irish Goat Heritage Value in Photographs

'A Hospitable Home in Ireland', 1909

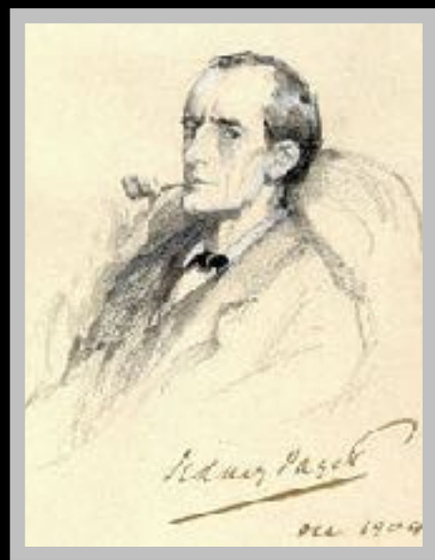


Nanny Goat Market, Athlone, Ireland

Travelling Herd, Wiltshire, England

Travelling Herd, Surrey, England

International Calls to Preserve the Old Irish Goat

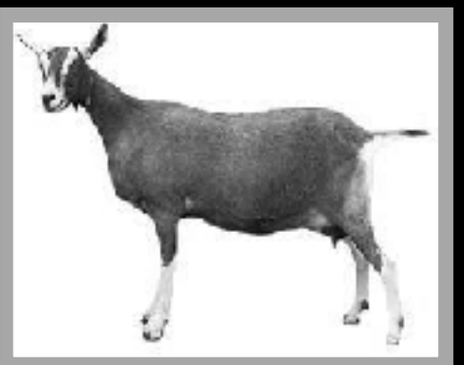


"The Irish goat, we maintain, is the best we have for the purpose, and it should be kept pure in type… to graft Nubian or Swiss blood into this breed does not add to its beauty, and, to our mind, impairs its usefulness."
Walter Paget, 1918

"There is a very compelling and urgent need to preserve the Old Irish Goat breed as a genetic and cultural resource. The Old Irish Goat is the ancient breed of the nation and the symbol of its past."
Raymond Werner, 2009

Old Irish Goat Breed Standard

"*The Old Irish Goat has a distinct regal image, with it's long beard, oversized side-burns, flamboyant coiff, long coat and of course… it is ostentatiously adorned with a crown of impressive horns*"
- Seán Carolan



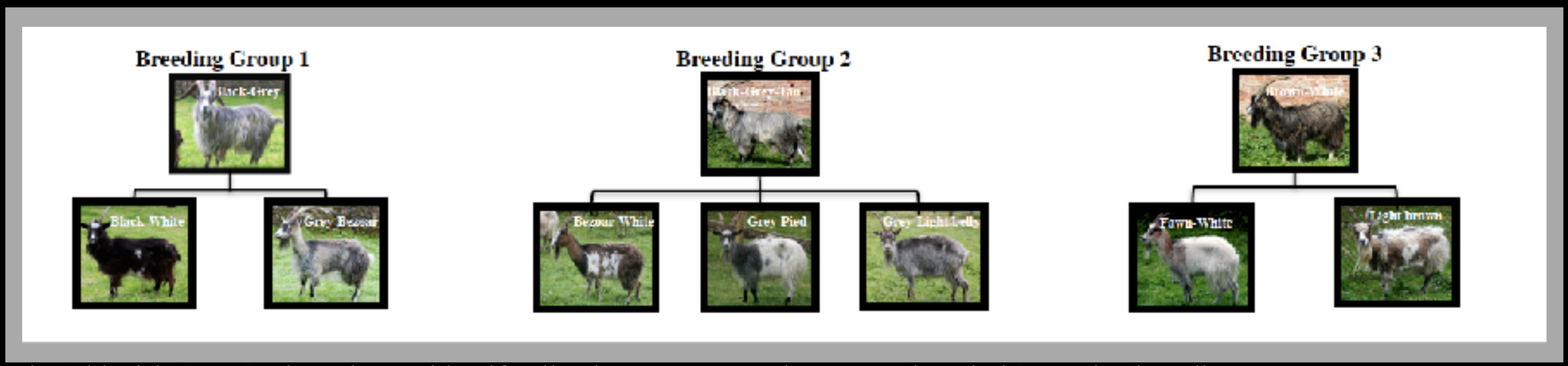
Contrast between Old Irish and British Alpine Breeds

Old Irish Goat Colour Patterns

"*...they moved off and then strung out like a neck-lace of multicoloured beads*" - Ray Werner, Heritage Outlook, 2009.

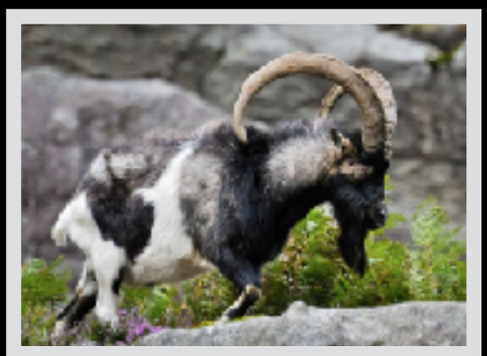
This unimproved landrace breed, has a range of colour patterns including:

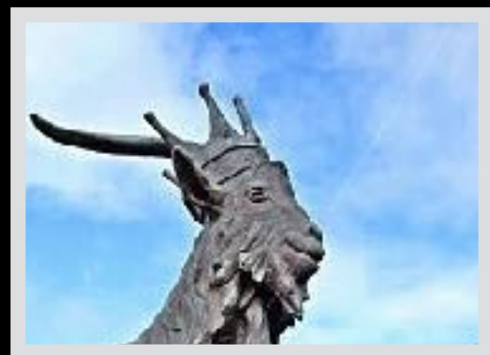
- White/Tan
- Mahogany
- Black
- Eyebar
- Grey
- Bezoar
- Red cheek
- Pied
- Light-belly
- Grey Light-belly



The Old Irish Goat Society aims to identify all colour patterns and preserve them in it's captive breeding programs

Old Irish Goat Introgression and Threats

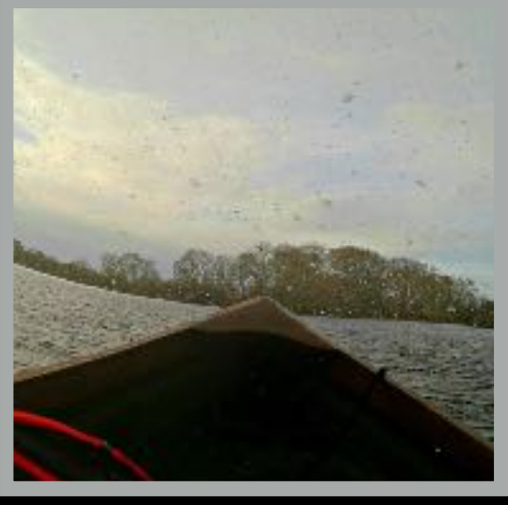


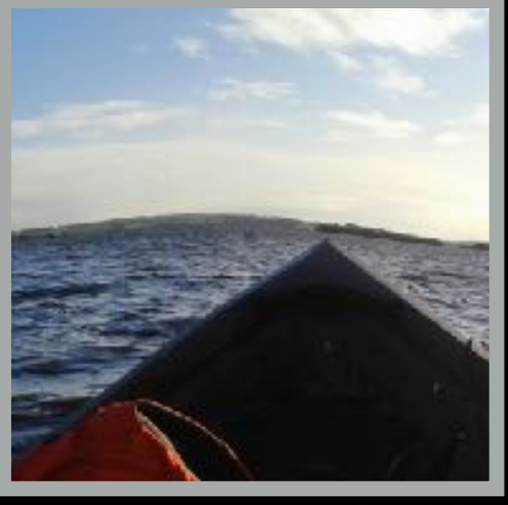


'The loss of genetic resources in Europe is such that 16 of the 19 extinct goat breeds worldwide are European' (Garcia et al. 2012).

Walled Garden Captive Breeding Program

Old Irish Goat National Survey





Lough Ree

Killarney National Park, Kerry

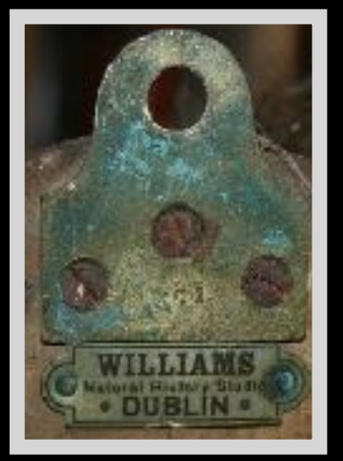
The Old Irish Goat Society's National Survey is part funded by Mayo, Galway and Longford Agenda 21 and the Department of Agriculture's Genetic Resources Grant Scheme

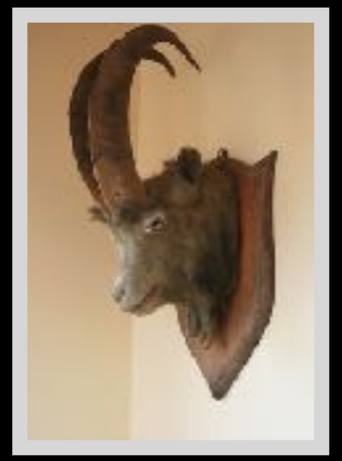
Lough Ree 'Back to our Future' Workshop, April 2017

The Old Irish Goat Society recently organised a facilitated workshop to explore the possibility of securing the Old Irish breed of goat in a conservation grazing initiative on the Lough Ree Islands for Irish Curlew habitat creation, whilst promoting ecclesiastical heritage conservation and responsible tourism creation.

Old Irish Goat DNA Study Results

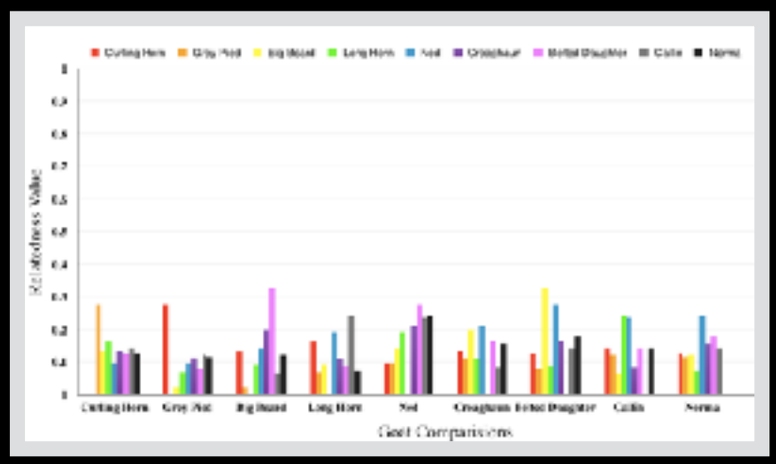
1. "…extant feral populations in Mulranny today are a distinct type of goat, seemingly unique…"
   Old Irish Goat Society in partnership with Smurfit Genetic Institute and Trinity College Dublin, 2013.





2. "…distinct variation from other breeds…"
   Old Irish Goat Society in partnership with University College Dublin and Weatherbys DNA laboratory, 2014

3. "…breed differentiation analysis produced predominantly distinct clusters…" Old Irish Goat Society in partnership with Weatherbys DNA laboratory, 2015



Adapt Map DNA Study - Irish Goat Lough Ree

Mulranny, Old Irish

Cheviot, Old English

Longford, Old Irish

Goat Exportation

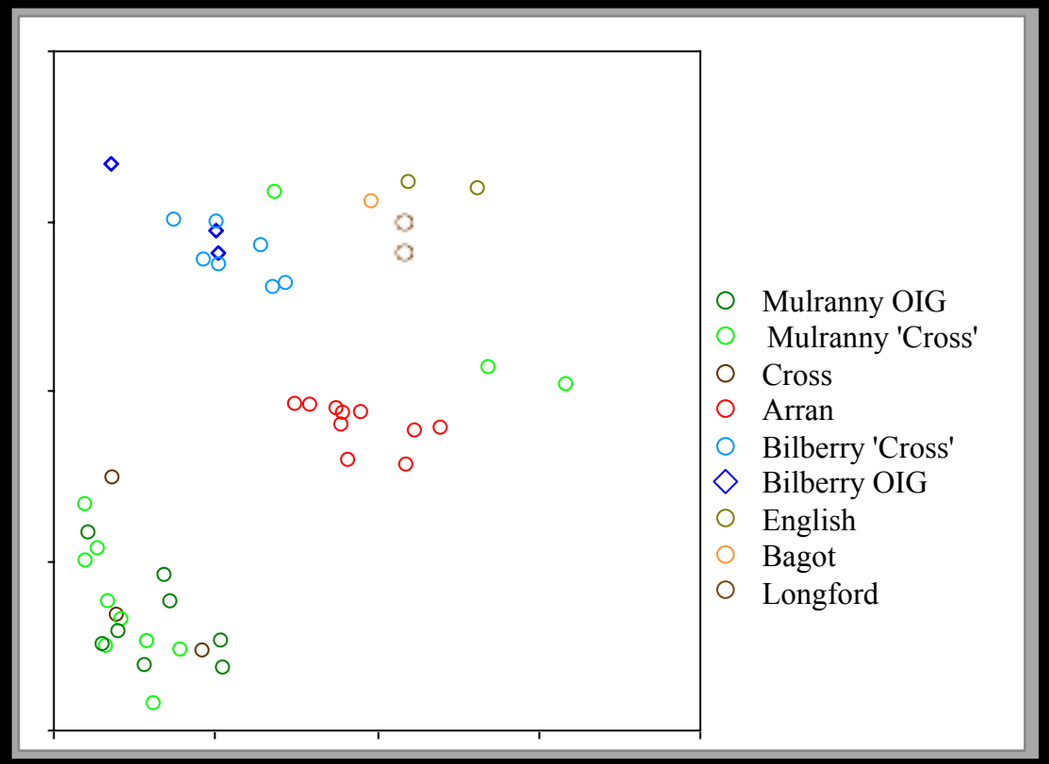


Fig.1 - Clusterings of the most related animals within Irish and English cold-weather goats

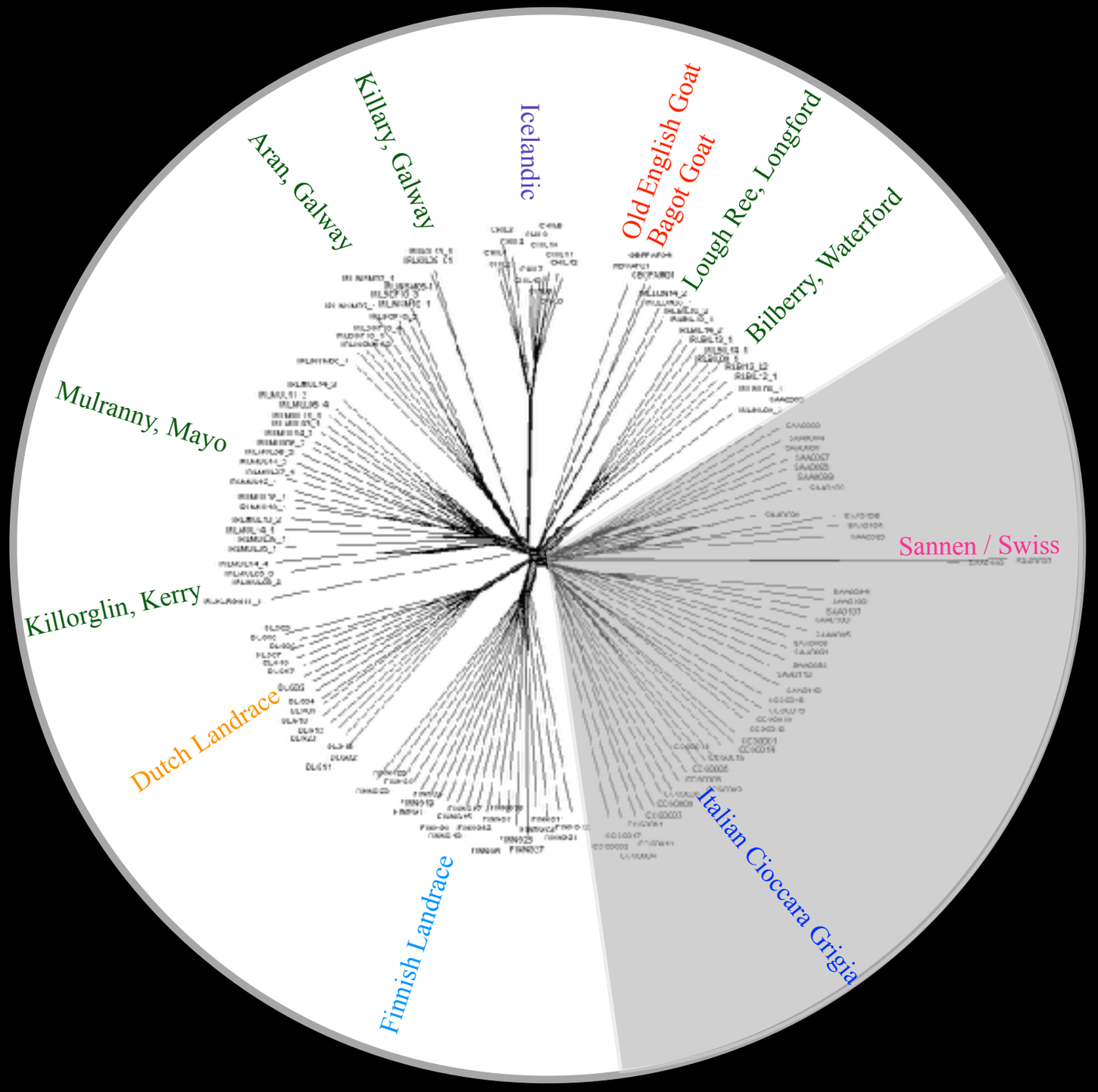


Fig. 2 - Network of genetic distances between cold-weather goats with Swiss Saanen and Italian Ciociara Grigia as outgroups

Old Irish Goat Breed Promotion

The Old Irish Goat Flyer

www.oldirishgoatsociety.com

The Inaugural Irish Rare Breeds Conference 2017

Marian Harkin MEP, Irish Rare Breeds Conference

The Old Irish Goat Society organised and hosted the event and were encouraged by the interest and support shown.

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

Bord Bia
Irish Food Board

Irish Rare Breeds Society

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara

WestVets

Preserving Ireland's Landrace Livestock Breeds

Proposed Categorisation of Irish Breeds

A.Landrace or Native Breeds

- A1. Purebred Unimproved
- A2. Purebred Improved
- A3. Landrace Composite

B.Foreign Imports

- B1. Purebred
- B2. Graded-up
- B3. Composite Breeds Developed in Ireland
- B4. Offshoot of Parent Breed

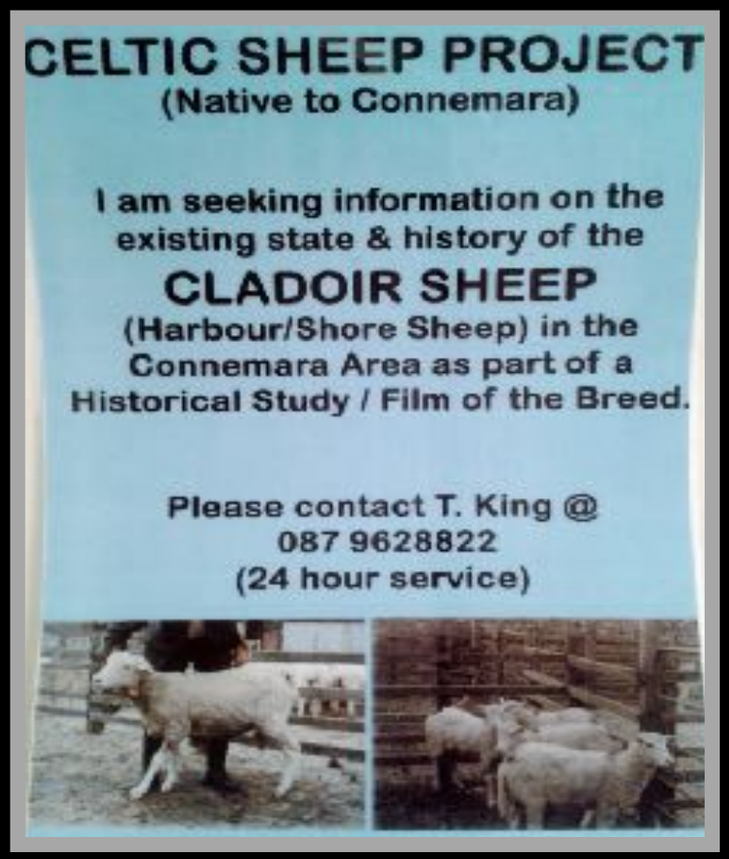
C.Recent Offshoots of Landrace and Foreign Imports

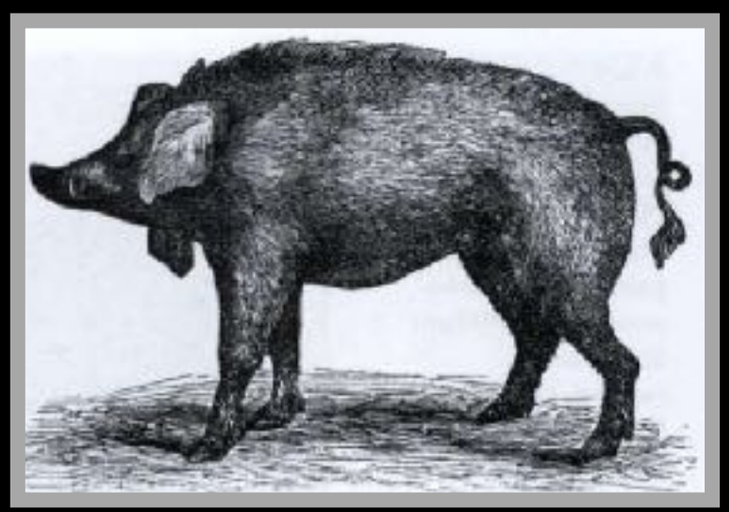
- C1. Landrace / Foreign Import Composite Breeds

D.Feral Breeds

- D1. Mono-Breed Origin
- Plural Breed Origin

Collective Action on Rare Breed Policy

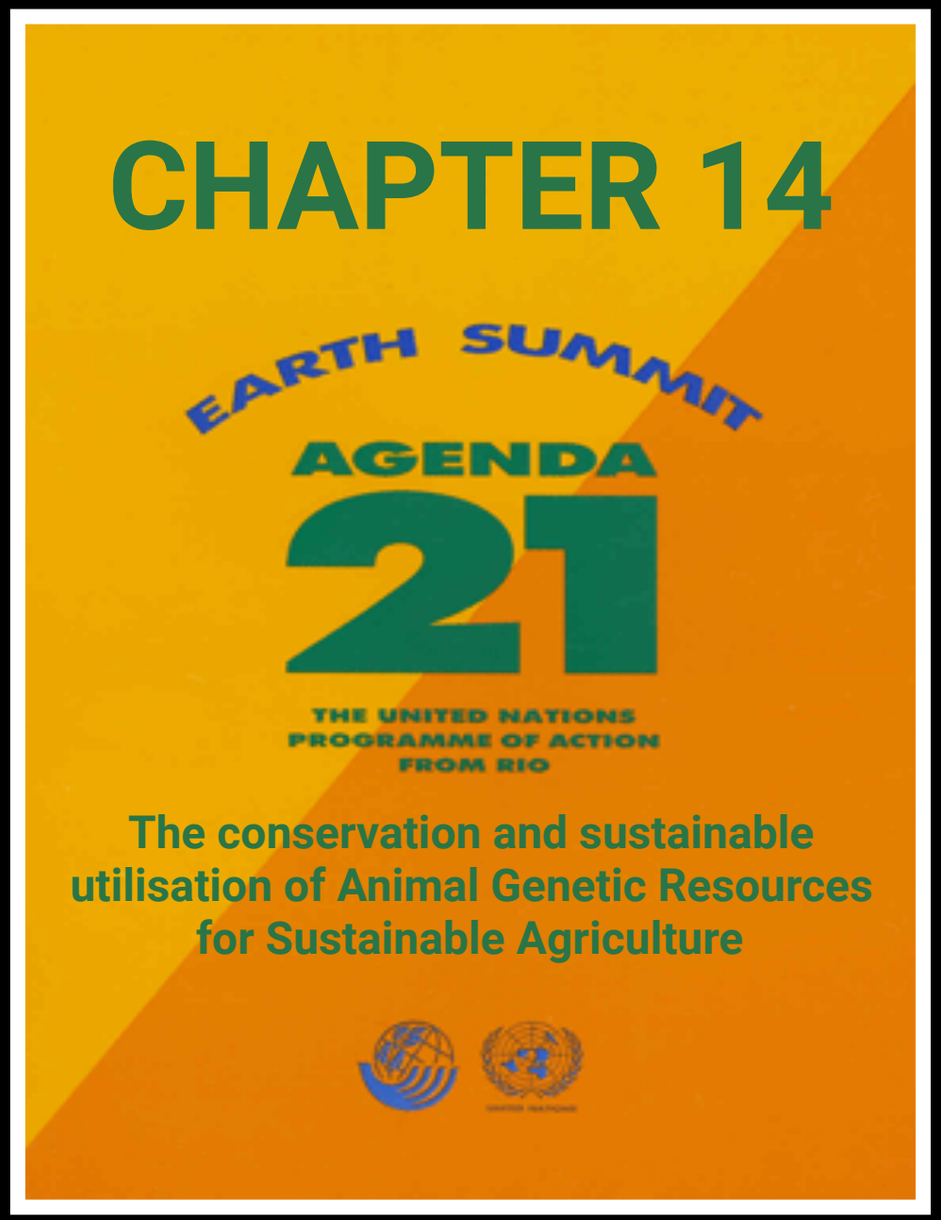




"Animal Genetic Resources are the most valuable and strategically important assets a country possesses. They are the animal breeder's raw material and amongst the farmer's most essential inputs."

- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (2009)

Collective Action on Rare Breed Policy



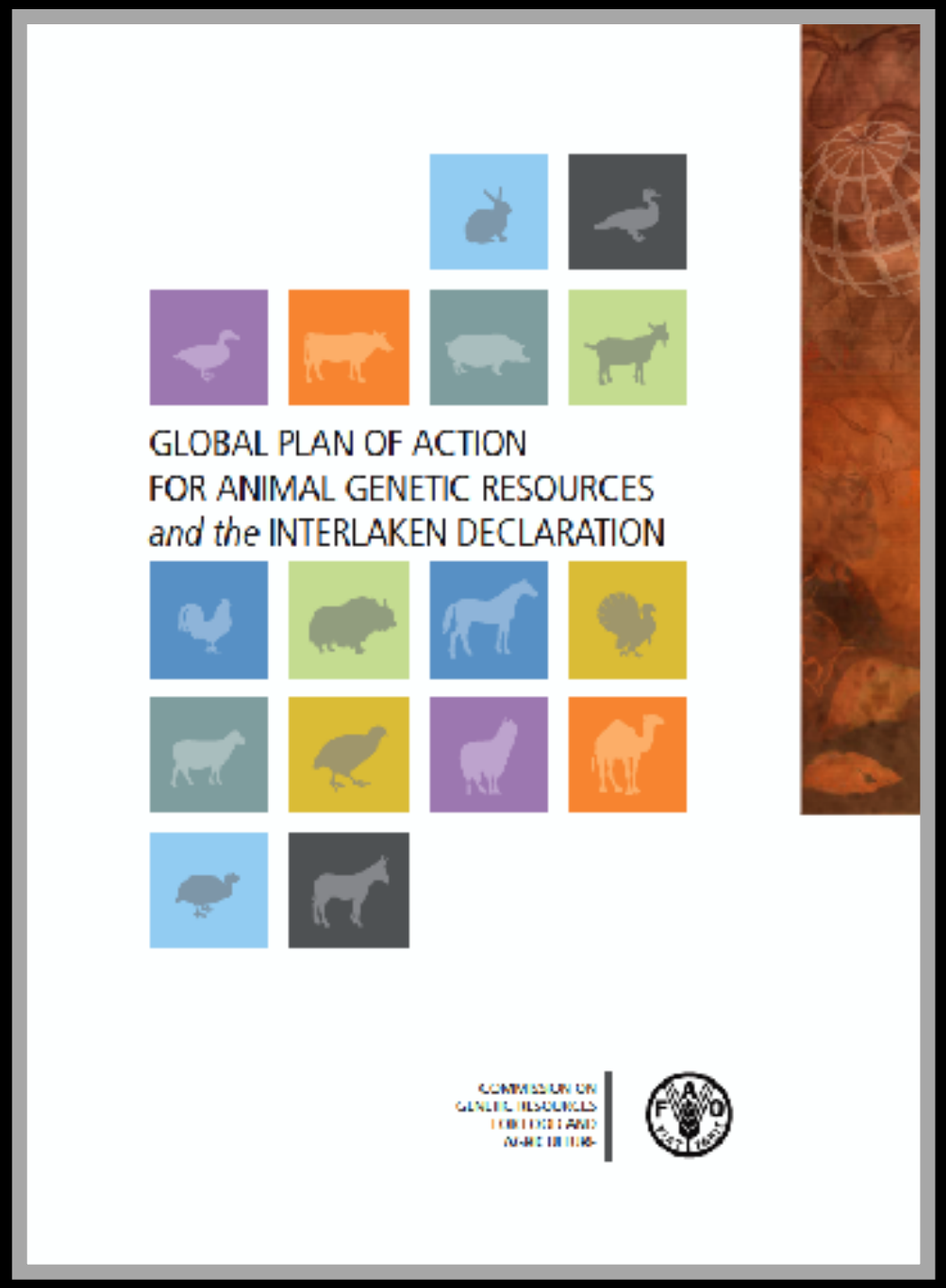
UN Earth Summit → Agenda 21, Chapter 14 → County Council Fund

- Local animal breeds, have a socio-cultural value along with unique attributes for adaptation, disease resistance and specific uses and should be preserved

- Where indigenous breeds are endangered, national capacities should be strengthened so that stakeholders can be enabled to implement programmes that take preventive action and guarantee their survival

- A cohort of indigenous breeds should be selected and kept for preservation of type and not for development

Collective Action on Rare Breed Policy



- We, the representatives of 109 states, note with alarm, the significant ongoing loss of livestock breeds

- We are convinced of the utmost importance of integrating Animal Genetic Resources into National Biodiversity and Agricultural Programmes for humanity, the environment and our cultural heritage.

- The lawful responsibility to record, monitor, research, develop, manage and conserve genetic resources rests with national governments. International and national capacities must now demonstrate sustained political will and mobilise the considerable resources needed

Interlaken Conference → Global Plan of Action → Dep. of Agriculture Fund

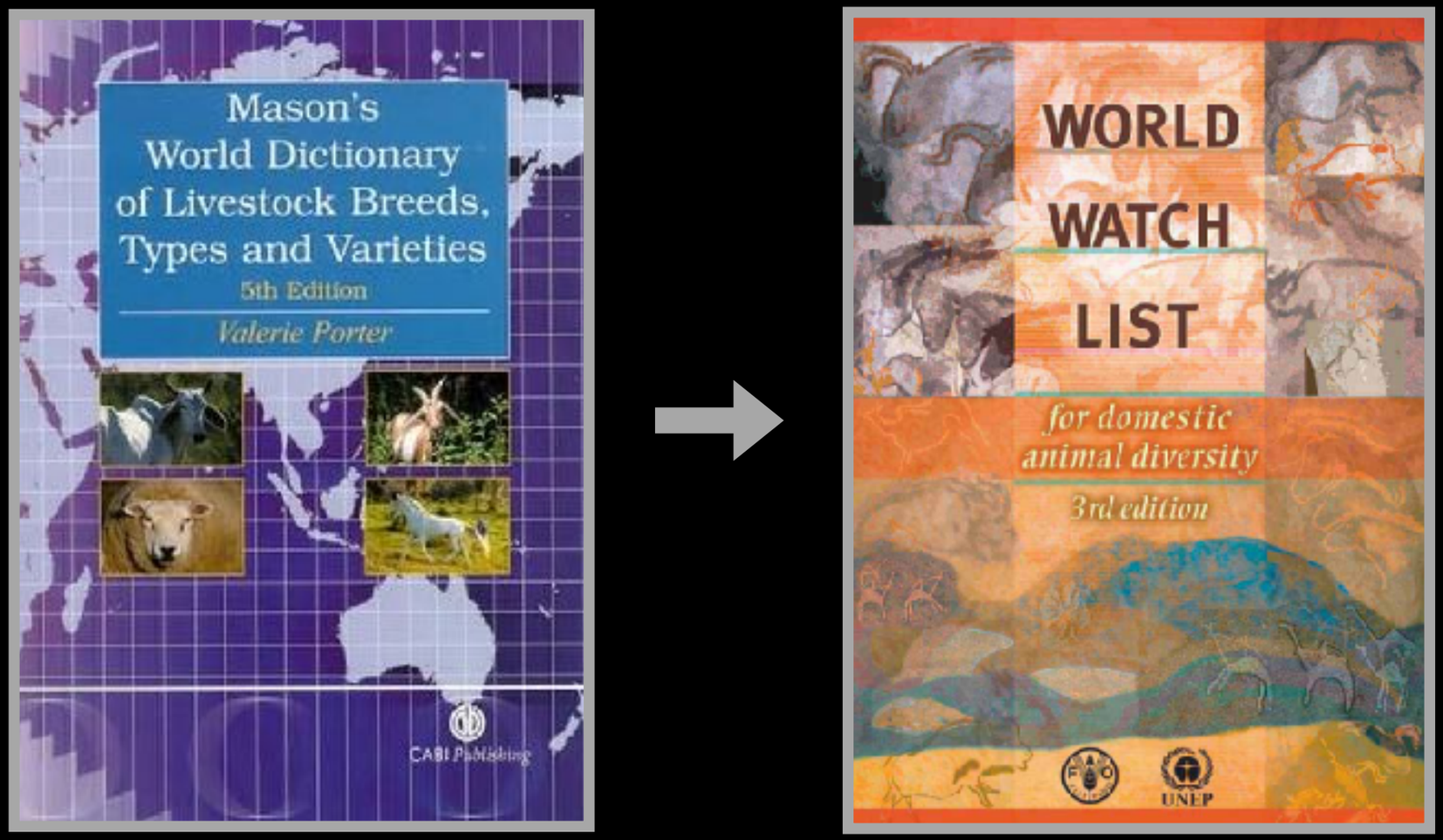
Collective Action on Rare Breed Policy

The National Biodiversity Plan was developed through Ireland ratifying the Convention on Biological Diversity in at the 1992 Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro

The National Biodiversity Plan's (2011 - 2016) Precautionary Principle states that:

"If there is a threat of significant loss of biological diversity, lack of scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimise such a threat."

Collective Action on Rare Breed Policy



Mason's World Dictionary of Livestock Breeds informed the preparation of the World Watch List for Domestic Animal Diversity. These important baseline documents acknowledge the Old Irish Goat as a breed but, quite alarmingly, the World Watch List incorrectly classifies the Old Irish Goat as ‘not at risk’ and the latest edition of the Dictionary declares it as ‘extinct’. These major gaps and weaknesses need to be addressed by rare breed societies to enable effective population monitoring and early warning systems.

Securing and Utilising the Old Irish Goat

Conservation Grazing with the Kerry Bog Pony, 'Goats from Howth' and the Cheviot Goat

"In the innovation age, a deep sense of the past is central to creativity, contributing to wholeness, integrity, civic responsibility, aesthetic sensibility and ecological stewardship"

- Finbarr Bradley

Howth Head Heathland SAC, Fingal, Co. Dublin

The Old Irish Goat Society are working to develop a grazing scheme that utilises Old Irish Goats to conserve a Dublin Bay Biosphere, UNESCO-Designated Site

Old Irish Goat Cultural Connection in Howth

'Milking Old Irish Goats on Howth Head' c. 1990

Old Irish Goat and Aideen's Dolmen on Howth Head' c. 1760

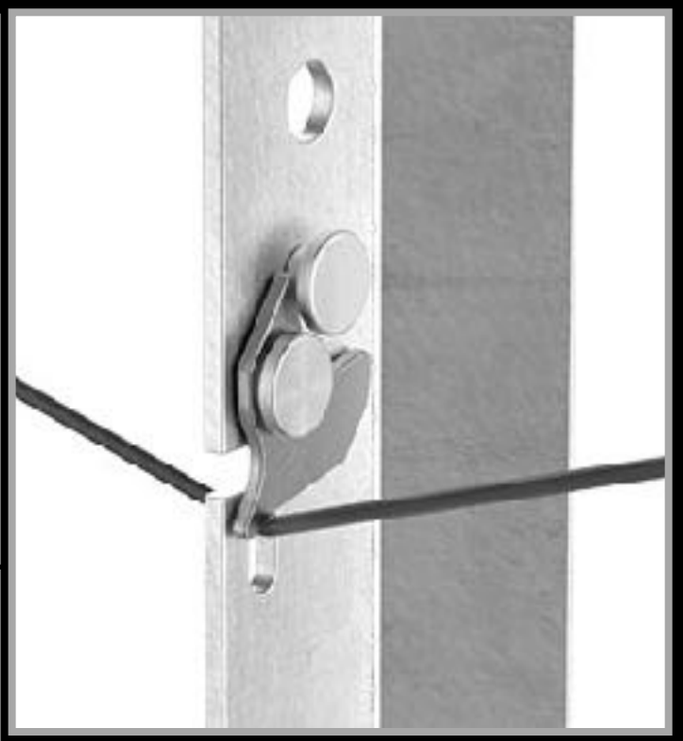
The last Old Irish Goat on Howth Head

The Role of the Old Irish Goat in Transitioning Heathland

Old Irish Goats have been shown to control and even eradicate Gorse, given time and sufficient stocking rates

The Search for Appropriate Old Irish Goat Proof Fencing

In addition to the top wire being electrified, an offset electric wire set lower, stops goats from stepping up onto the non-electrified wires below



Best Practice in Establishing Conservation Grazing Schemes

- Outline Management Goals
  - E.g. Aim, project rationale, time frame, etc.

- Ensure Project Continuity
  - E.g. Reliability of funding streams, staffing, resources, etc.

- Secure Community Trust and Favour
  - E.g. Conflict mitigation and resolution, etc.

- Stocking Type
  - E.g. Stocking rate, grazing preferences, etc.

- Access Site Topography implications
  - E.g. Water supply, appropriate fencing, public access, etc.

- Develop a Legally Compliant Animal Health Plan
  - E.g. Nutritional requirements, behavioural requirements, etc.

The Old Irish Goat Society is ensuring to learn from models such as the previous 'Goats for Howth' grazing initiative

- Monitoring of Grazing Progress
  - E.g. Measurables, recording methods, resources required for interpretation, etc.

- Allow for continuous objective appraisal and improvements
  - E.g. Up-skilling of staff, cost reduction, project sustainability, etc.

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would like to acknowledge and thank the individuals and institutions that have lent us support and encouragement