

# Promoting the diversity of useful plants and animal breeds through marketing

## The example of the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pig

Our ancestors domesticated wild animals over many generations, breeding a wide variety of farm animals that were extremely well adapted both to their local environment and to the various uses to which they were put. This is how local livestock breeds came into being with their specific traits. These landraces shaped farming culture over the centuries and left their imprint on the landscape that was their home. Industrial animal husbandry was encouraged by the intensification of agriculture, increasing use of growth promoters, antibiotics and feed concentrates. This was accompanied by the broad-scale use of a few animal breeds that were especially suited to this approach. With regard to pigs, for example, tried-and-proven old landraces were displaced by fast-growing “high-performance breeds” with low fat content or even died out completely. This meant that their special genetic characteristics were lost for future breeding. A study carried out in the year 2000 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) found that about one quarter of the 649 known pig breeds around the world have become extinct. About a third of the 333 pig breeds that had existed in Europe have become extinct, while many others are endangered.

### The Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein – an old pig breed rich in tradition

The Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pig breed emerged around 1820 as a result of crossing Chinese saddleback pigs with local breeds. The European domestic pig breeds of the time were all descended from domesticated wild pigs (*Sus scrofa scrofa*). Chinese Meishan pigs (*Sus scrofa vittatus*) from the Jinhua province found their way from China to Europe in the 18th century via the East India Company. At first they spread only in England, but with the lifting of Napoleon’s continental blockade in 1816, they quickly made their home on the continent as well. Upon the decree of King Wilhelm I of Württemberg, some of these pigs were brought to the royal domains in the area around Stuttgart and deliberately crossed with the local pigs. The new livestock breed developed especially well in the area around the town of



Back from the brink of extinction: In the mid-1980s, reconstruction of the breed began with the last 7 pure-bred sows and one boar.

Photo: Bäuerliche Erzeugergemeinschaft Schwäbisch Hall

Schwäbisch Hall, which eventually gave its name to the breed. The first breeders’ association was established in 1925.

Its characteristics like its high fertility and exceptionally good mothering ability made the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pig popular among the Hohenlohe farmers. Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pigs are also vigorous, robust, long-lived and tolerant of stress. The animals possess a natural layer of fat, and their flesh is firmer and somewhat darker than that of other breeds. These characteristics make it popular today among gourmet chefs. On account of their long bodies, the animals have longer intestines, enabling them to digest green fodder more effectively. This makes them especially suitable as grazing animals. In the 1950s, 90 % of the pigs that came onto the market in northern Württemberg were Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein, and in the district of Schwäbisch Hall itself the figure was nearer 100 %.

The introduction of fast-growing lean pigs, which were suitable for intensive farming, along with the industrial standards that were specially established for them displaced the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pigs during the 1960s at a breathtaking pace. By 1969 pedigree breeding had been halted, and by the beginning of the 1980s the breed was considered to be extinct.

At the last minute, however, seven breeding sows and one boar were saved for breeding as pure-bred Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pigs from the remaining small

stocks. The gradual re-construction of the breed began with these eight animals – in opposition to the established breeders of “modern” breeds and to scientists and agricultural extension services, who resisted the move. In 1986 a small number of farmers who were convinced of the advantages of the breed founded the new Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein Pig-Breeders’ Association (Zuchtvereinigung Schwäbisch-Hällisches Schwein). In order to ensure quality marketing of the meat the BESH farmers’ cooperative (Bäuerliche Erzeugergemeinschaft Schwäbisch-Hall) was established in 1988. After regularly achieving success at agricultural shows like the International Green Week in Berlin, where it was possible to demonstrate the especially high quality of the animals’ meat, the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein landrace gained increasing recognition once again.



Today more than 300 members of the producer association keep the breed.  
Photo: BESH

## The value chain of the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pig

Cooperation with existing breeders’ organisations proved to be problematic, so that in 1986 an independent breeders’ organisation was set up with 17 members at first (cf. table next page). This laid down the formal framework for systematic breeding work. The organisation has now grown to over 120 members. In 2006 the pedigree breeding stocks comprised 280 female and 26 male nucleus animals for breeding and about 3500 animals for fattening. As such, the stocks are still judged to be “moderately endangered”, but still form a solid basis for building up the breed further and ensure that there is an ongoing steady supply of fattening animals for the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein Quality Pork marketing programme. (TGRDEU, <http://www.genres.de/CF/tgrdeu/charakterisierung.cfm?idrass=195>). The breeding farms are simultaneously either fattening farms or suppliers of young pigs for pure fattening farms.

## Protected brand

The marketing programme forms the economic basis for the preservation of the breed. In July 1988 the eight founder members of the BESH farmers’ cooperative set down their aims, activities and principles in a constitution. This states that animals are to be kept according to principles appropriate to the species and the environment – no medicines, antibiotics or growth promoters. The

constitution also prohibits the use of genetically modified feeds. The producers receive a guaranteed price that is 25 % higher than the normal market trading price, making Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pig farming a lucrative activity. The farmers bring their fattening pigs to the slaughterhouse themselves.

The cooperative invested about EUR 6.4 million to renovate the originally communally-run slaughterhouse and bring it up to standard. This infrastructure facility guarantees the producers direct access to the market and ensures that all the production and processing requirements are fulfilled.

During slaughter, a slaughter protocol is completed containing details about the owner, the quality of the meat, its weight and the results of the meat inspection. The animal halves are branded with the BESH “trademark”:

“Schwäbisch Hällisches Qualitätsschweinefleisch g.g.A.” (Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein Quality Pork PGI). PGI stands for “protected geographical indication”. This is a specific kind of brand protection for agricultural food and produce valid throughout the EU (see also the Issue Paper *Creating value from products with protected designations to conserve agricultural diversity*). In Germany the applicant for this type of protection (through the German Patent and Trade Mark Office, Munich) can only be an association, as is the BESH cooperative. Now, the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pig enjoys the same brand protection as Italian Parma ham or Greek feta cheese.

Currently about 4000 pigs, 250 cattle, 150 sheep and about 1000 suckling pigs are slaughtered every week in the producers’ slaughterhouse. The animals are supplied by the 950 BESH member farms, which now produce not only pork meat but also beef (under the brand name of Boeuf de Hohenlohe), lamb and goose.

Quality management is of great importance to BESH. The slaughterhouse and every producer facility are monitored at least once a year and are subject to an audit. These inspections are carried out by an independent, EU-accredited institute.

## Professional marketing strategy

From the very beginning BESH has considered a professional marketing strategy to be of great importance. Newspaper, magazine, radio and television reports about the cooperative and the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pig help to make the activities of the cooperative better known, as well as helping to promote transparency and trust between the producers, buyers and end customers. 70 % of the meat produced goes to specialist butchers shops, 30 % goes straight to the restaurant trade and to delicatessen shops. The butchers commit themselves to supplying BESH meat exclusively; this goes for beef and other types of meat as well as for pork.

# Promoting diversity through marketing: Pork from landraces



The slaughterhouse and cutting facility operated by the producer association.  
Photo: BESH

The 280 specialist butchers and 150 restaurants receive direct deliveries every day from more than 20 BESH refrigerated vehicles. The customers appreciate the demonstrably high quality of the meat, as well as the fact that they are able to purchase it directly from the farmer via the cooperative.

Special care is also taken with the processing of the meat to ensure the prime quality of the final products, regardless of whether they are cold cuts and tinned meats or restaurant meals prepared especially for those with sophisticated tastes. In some cases, old processing methods are used, such as hot boning, where the meat is not cooled first, but rather is cut up when it is still warm from the slaughter and thus stays especially tasty.

The excellent quality of the meat supplied by the cooperative created the basis for a business cooperation with Unilever. The prime meat products supplied under the corporation's brand name "Du darfst" are manufactured

exclusively from meat produced by BESH. In addition to the use of Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pigs, other landrace pigs are also supplied for this range, likewise produced according to the strict BESH guidelines. The sole exception to this is that the transport time to the slaughterhouse is permitted to be two hours rather than one, since the Unilever facility is located 60 kilometres away.

In addition to the marketing channels mentioned so far, BESH also has some sales outlets of its own. In Stuttgart and near Heilbronn farmers' markets have been set up at which BESH markets its products directly to consumers. Another sales outlet is operated in the market hall in Stuttgart.

Both on the production side as well as in the area of slaughter and marketing BESH works with strategic partners who provide advice and support. For example, the cooperation with Unilever is supported by the European Natural Heritage Foundation (Euronature). The Society for the Conservation of Old and Endangered Livestock Breeds (Gesellschaft zur Erhaltung alter und gefährdeter Haustierrassen e.V., GEH) was a part of the set-up from the start when the breeders' association was first established. Trials are conducted together with Stuttgart-Hohenheim University in order to further improve livestock management and production processes and shape them in accordance with aspects of animal welfare.

**Chart: Functions and participants in the value chain of the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pig**

| Functions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Production                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Processing                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Marketing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Processing                                                                                                                                                                                          | Consumption                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b><u>Pig breeding:</u></b><br/>Organising and implementing breeding (Breeders' association)</p> <p><b><u>Pig fattening:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organising the producers' association</li> <li>▶ Introducing &amp; checking guidelines</li> <li>▶ Certifying as a brand product (PGI)</li> <li>▶ Implementing fattening and monitoring quality</li> <li>▶ Relevant research</li> <li>▶ Transport to slaughterhouse using own vehicles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Slaughter in producer-run slaughterhouse</li> <li>▶ Completion of slaughter protocol</li> <li>▶ Branding the seal of origin</li> <li>▶ Auditing and independent quality controls</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Customer deliveries</li> <li>▶ Direct sales at farmers' markets, market halls, restaurant trade</li> <li>▶ Sales to butchers</li> <li>▶ Introduction of marketing standards</li> <li>▶ Sales to a middleman</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Processing into fresh meat products</li> <li>▶ Production of industrial premium products</li> <li>▶ Preparation of meals for direct consumption</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Consumption in households as meat or meat products</li> <li>▶ Consumption in the form of a meal</li> </ul> |
| Participants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 180 organised breeders</li> <li>● 950 pig producers</li> <li>● Auditors</li> <li>● Researchers</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Producers</li> <li>● Slaughterhouse workers</li> <li>● Quality inspectors</li> <li>● Environmental organisations as partners</li> </ul>                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Producer community</li> <li>● Marketing experts</li> <li>● Certifiers</li> <li>● Butchers</li> <li>● Restaurants</li> </ul>                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Specialist meat shops</li> <li>● Food industry</li> <li>● Delicatessen shops</li> <li>● Restaurants</li> <li>● Hospitals</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Households</li> <li>● Restaurant trade</li> <li>● Gourmets</li> </ul>                                      |

## Impacts of the preservation of the pig

The targeted use and marketing of the special characteristics of the Schwäbisch-Hällisches Landschwein pig has enabled this old breed to be preserved as a cultural asset and the carrier of valuable genetic traits. At the same time it has also been possible to create a niche market with added value for the producers.

In a rural, structurally weak region, BESH has created a business enterprise with an annual turnover of EUR 72 million and a workforce of 250 in processing and sales. Through the marketing provided by the cooperative, the nearly one thousand production and breeding facilities have access to a quality sales channel that safeguards their survival and offers them opportunities for the future. The range of tasks undertaken by agricultural facilities in the region has thus been cut back and new structures built up. Since the cooperative also organises a specialist advisory service for the producers and sees to marketing and sales, farmers who had already halted agricultural production have been able to start keeping pigs again, in addition to their non-agricultural work. The buyers in the butchers and restaurant trades have been able to offer a higher quality product range with the high quality meat and to open up new sources of custom.

The producers stress that their working conditions and job satisfaction have also improved through their commitment to animal-friendly and environmentally-friendly production. Pastures that had been given over to scrub have been put to use again as grazing land for pigs.

### The Issue Paper series “People, Food and Biodiversity” aims to:

- stimulate an interest in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity,
- present quickly and clearly concrete actions and experiences,
- explain new concepts and issues relating to the topic of biological diversity,
- encourage and stimulate the mainstreaming of this topic within development cooperation projects and programmes.

**We look forward to your suggestions and experiences so as to enable us to improve this series.**

Both the countryside and the natural animal and plant world have recovered a measure of diversity through this mode of preserving the countryside and have thus become more attractive to tourists.

## Useful elements for development cooperation

This successful example is located in a highly developed industrialised country and cannot be applied straightforwardly to developing countries. Nonetheless, a few elements are of use to development cooperation.

As with other value chains, a direct relationship between producers and customers was helpful for the selling process. It made it possible to market an appreciation for the product's origins, mode of production and cultural specificity and thus to build up the necessary trust on the part of the customers. Within the value chain a large number of small, well-organised producers work together with a large number of buyers. This means that the power of decision making and knowledge of the product is not concentrated solely on the buyers' side. All those involved in the value chain have a transparent share in the profits. The cooperation with strategic partners from the sphere of environmental protection and research helped when it came to establishing and improving production. The use of traditional knowledge as well as the ability to innovate played an important role both in the production of the animals and at the processing stage.

### Further information:

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