

The Black of Strei – a Swine Population on the Verge of Extinction in Banat

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Abstract

The Black of Strei swine was declared to be extinct in 1974, but research conducted in 2008-2010 proved that there are still 61 specimens (Black of Strei proper and hybrids) in the Hatzeg county and in the Lugoj area. Body measurements have been made in the case of those specimens and they showed that the specimens are a morphoproductive type. The local people appreciate the Black of Strei especially for its fat and bard which are very dry and used in order to obtain the traditional food products in the area. Prolificacy of sows farrowing is an 8 piglets per gestation. This breed is best kept in organic farms. The Black of Strei females are usually cross-bred with wildboar (*Sus scrofa ferus*) males, the hybrids' meat being very appreciated.

Keywords: swine population, biodiversity, swine breeding

1. Introduction

Nowadays meat production is mainly based on industrial hybrids breeding, which have a low fat percentage, a high level of body development and other economic advantages. One of the great disadvantages, however, is the meat's mediocre quality, which can be observed both in meat consumption as such and in the salamis and sausages prepared from this meat. Another disadvantage is the animal's low resistance to disease and stress [1-4].

Meat quality is one of the main research themes which are financed by the European Union. Here comes the importance of the traditional swine breeds.

Cross-breeding between modern and traditional breeds, as well as the growing transformations regarding their breeding and feeding methods have led to obtaining hybrids of a high quality, plus resistance to disease and climate change.

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These results can be seen at the Raumberg-Gumpenstein Research Center in Austria and in general in every pig market in this country [5].

In Transylvania and Banat there have been formed many traditional swine breeds: Mangalitza, Bazna, The Black of Strei, The White of Banat.

2. Materials and methods

According to the data published by FAO in 2009, the Black of Strei has been extinct in Romania since 1974. This swine population which is very much appreciated by the locals due to its rusticity, has been encountered only in rare specimens of pure-blood or hybrids in the region of Hateg. Research conducted between 2008-2010 has led to the identification of other specimens in remote and isolated areas such as Ohaba Sebesel (near Rau de Mori), Gintaga, Bosorod, Rusi, Bretea, Bretea Romană, Covragiu, Bășălari.

Thirty-six specimens have been identified and they presented a phenotype similar tot that of the Black of Strei. In Victor Vlad de la Marina, a village near Lugoj, twenty-five specimens have

been identified which, according to the owners, had been bought from the Hateg area and had had as ancestor the Black of Strei. The DNA tests would have led to no specific result because there is no Black of Strei DNA kept for comparison.

For the 61 specimens of the Black of Strei (or hybrids) tests have been made regarding body measurements and questionnaires have been filled in by the owners in what concerns the performance of this population, the reasons why they keep it and the products they obtain.

3. Results and discussion

In Table 1 there are the results of the body measurements and the weight of the 61 adult specimens, male and female.

The results haven't been compared to other data regarding the body development of this swine breed because there aren't any in this field of specialty.

Those specimens had the morphoproduative type which is typical for mixt productions. 36 specimens were black, droopy ears and their body was covered in flat hairs or slightly wavy. The specimens near Lugoj were white with spots and the ears were either droopy or lateral directed.

The specimens had been kept on pastures and in sties where they got corn, bran and leftovers from the kitchen [6].

The Black of Strei is highly appreciated for its lard. The fat is very dry. Before being smoked, the fat is cut into layers of desired thickness.

Traditionally, the ham is not very big. The leftovers are melted into lard [7, 8].

It is common in this area to cross-breed the Black of Strei females with wild boars, and the resulting meat is very much appreciated. When the local breeders were asked why they appreciate the Black of Strei so much, the answer was that beside its qualities, they don't want to bring other swine breeds into the area because there might occur certain problems in adaptation, whereas the Black of Strei is very resilient to disease or climate change [8].

The Black of Strei is good for breeding in an organic farm, especially since it is used to grazing on pastures [9].

Reproduction. The female give birth to 8 piglets once and they have a good capacity for breast feeding. Only natural mating is being practiced.

The body weight of the piglets is 0,9-1,2 kg when they are born. At 28 days they have 6,4 kg and at 2 months 11-14 kg. During the time the swine breast-feeds the piglets they get thinner and more agitated, because their maternal instinct surfaces.

Table 1. Weight and body measurements in adult Black of Strei, male and female

Feature	Male	Female
Withers' height (cm)	71,30	69,20
Rump's height (cm)	73,20	71,50
Trunk's length (cm)	92,30	90,60
Thorax' perimetre (cm)	139,10	120,40
Ankle's perimetre (cm)	14,70	14,30
Total weight (kg)	111,80	105,20



Photo 1. Black of Strei from Bretea. Orig

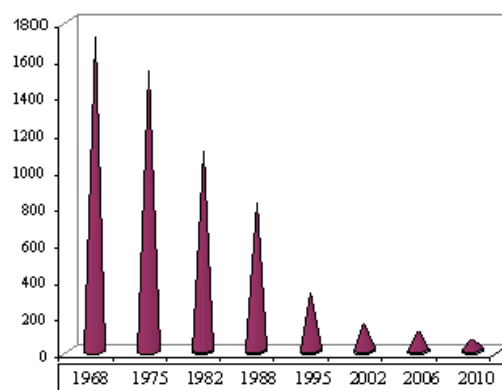


Figure 1. Evolution the numbres of animals in period 1968-2010

4. Conclusions

The results of this research show that there still are some specimens of the Black of Strei. The loss of this populations means to lose genes which give

resistance to disease and environment features. In the areas surrounding Hateg there are probably more specimens of this kind of breed.

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