

STUDY ON THE GROWTH OF MANGALITZA BREED IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

Mangalitzza breed was once widespread in our country and then breeders have lost interest. Today, farmers are trying to revival of the Mangalitzza breed, its meat is much appreciated for its nutritional qualities. Currently the number of heads and breeders is low throughout the country, but there is core recovery mainly located in Transylvania.

Key words: Mangalitzza pigs, farmers, breed

INTRODUCTION

The Mangalitzza breed comes from primitive large European pigs, with long and curly hair (from the Balkans), infused with some Asian breeds brought by the Romans in Europe. It is a specialized breed for fat production and has five varieties: blond, red, black, with swallow abdomen and baris. In Romania this breed has been raised for more than 160-200 years (since 1803). (5)

Mangalitzza breed is not very demanding in terms of food and shelter, it is resistant to diseases and harsh weather conditions. Prolificacy of breed is 6-7 piglets, specific consumption is 5.5-6 kilos of food and the average daily gain is 400 grams. (2)

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was aimed to follow the evolution of Mangalitzza breed in Romania, to highlight how local growers have lost the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of this breed.

Also, I tried to assess the possibilities of revival of the Mangalitzza breed at national level, using a comparative and descriptive study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It is of major importance the description of the technologies and installations used at a national level for backing the use, conservation and development of national animal genetic resources. In the 1960s, Romania gained legislative support for agriculture. (1)

At the Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Forestry, Gheorghe Ionescu Sisești has encouraged the establishment and consolidation of several swine core populations. Such a population belonging to the Mangalitza breed, the red variety was founded in 1976 at SCDA Turda (Farkas et al., 1979). After being established, the population underwent a breeding program and intense research. The studied parameters were related to the dynamics of reproductive indexes, meat production, meat and fat quality, heritability, genetic parameters for the most important carcass traits, etc. (3)

After 1989, the agriculture was affected by arbitrary decisions of questionable competence, and so the genetic resources for Bazna and Mangalitza were almost liquidated (1). Economic pressure has led to a continuous reduction in the number of swine breeds used for meat production. This has had a negative influence on genetic diversity and the possibility to improve existing traits and to develop new characteristics in response to consumer needs. Most important among these would be the improvement of pork quality and traits related to reproduction.

While Romanians abandoned the race after 1989, Hungarians sensed its potential and are now among the world's largest exporters of Mangalitza ham, priced up to 80 Euros per kilogram.

Romanians gave up growing Mangalitza pigs after the revolution, because they have 60-70% fat, unlike other races where the ratio is reversed. Romanians did not know to take this opportunity, while the Hungarians are leading exporters of Mangalitza pork in Western Europe, Japan and the U.S.

The races are cultural and historical importance; it attests to the presence of Romanians in the region, extensive areas of Europe and contributes to the clarification of controversial issues. (1)

Today, Romanian farmers are now up for lost time and try reviving this breed with newly created Mangalitza Pig Breeders Association. For now there is no question of exports, farmers are just selling meat in the country, through restaurants in big cities, but also by traditional fairs and retail chains.

Romania is one of the few European countries where traditional agro-systems represent significant reservoirs where the genetic diversity of plants and animals were kept at the place of development (in situ). Maintaining species diversity and genetic diversity at the peasant households is one of the key elements for sustainable agriculture (3)

In 2005 there were 31 Mangalitza pigs in Cluj and Neamt counties. (4).

In the area of livestock, the main objectives are:

- Maintaining genetic stock of Mangalitza and Bazna pig breeds;
- The production of young breeding for Mangalitza and Bazna breeds.

Mangalitzza pig is not suitable for growth in large-scale farms, in intensive system, but in farms up to 100 animals. Most breeders of this breed are in Transylvania in Baia-Mare, Bihor, Cluj, Covasna, Harghita, Brasov and Arad.

It seems that Mangalitzza pig, a breed once widespread in Transylvania; it is now appreciated again by Romanian farmers.

The association organizes every year in April, in the city of Baia Mare, the Mangalitzza Festival - an event organized to promote the growth of the breed by small farmers.

Romania cannot yet export because herds are still below 30,000 heads animals. Customers of Mangalitzza meat are restaurants from big cities. There are distributors for sausage of Mangalitzza meat for retail chains and markets in Baia Mare, Cluj- Napoca, Brasov, Iași, Sibiu and Bucharest. Also, it has been registered at OSIM the brand of "Săpânța sausages", made from Mangalitzza meat and Brown Maramureseana Beef. (7)

CONCLUSIONS

- Mangalitzza breed is a breed currently highly acclaimed for nutritional quality of meat
- Once, a breed prevalent in Romania, today it is valued by other people
- In Romania there are about 30,000 Mangalitzza pigs, there is a wish to increase their number so that we are able to export Mangalitzza meat.
- Mangalitzza pig grows in small husbandry units Events are organized and there is an association designed to promote Mangalitzza breed

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