ENNSTALER BERGSCHECKEN (AUSTRIA)



Origin: The "Ennstaler Bergschecken" are an almost extinct cattle breed from Austria. Its original distribution area is in western Styria. This light, delicate dual-purpose breed, also popular as draft animals can be traced back to the Celtic cattle. Other sources report about the Bavarian "Weißkopfschecken". But today it seems to be refuted. Popular for its fine fibrous meat quality too many good bulls were fattened as an ox. Due to this negative selection, the race was already displaced at the beginning of the 18th century by larger breeds such as Murbodner, Pinzgauer, etc.

Characteristics: approximately 1,3-1,4 m tall, light and slight dual-purpose cattle with a weight of 550-650 kg (cows) and 800-900 kg (bulls). The dewlap is weak developed, tongue and muzzle are unpigmented. The claws are unpigmented as well and coloured in yellow. A characteristic feature is the red fox ground colour with white markings on head and neck region, abdomen, and extremities and the tail tuft.

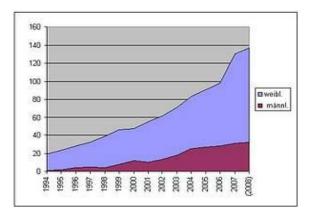
Because of its small size they are an easy calving breed and so they are very suitable for suckler cow husbandry. Unfortunately the milk yield is not that high with about 4000 kg.

Products: The "Bergschecken" meat is characterized by its tender texture and light marbling. Because of their light bone structure the meat yield is very large. Their milk is rich in fat and kappa-casein, so it is ideal for cheese production.

Population number: In ÖPUL¹ the "Ennstaler Bergschecken" are mentioned as a highly



endangered species. In 2004 there have been kept 65 animals in 6 farms (ennstalwiki.at), in 2009 their number increased already to 162 animals (nbwikis.at). In 2010, 236 pedigree animals were published and the Styria cattle breeding association currently publishes a number from 10 farms with 34 herdbook cows. These figures and the cited statistic of the Ark-Austria give reasons for hope.



¹ ÖPUL Österreichisches Programm für umweltgerechte Landwirtschaft

Bibliography:

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