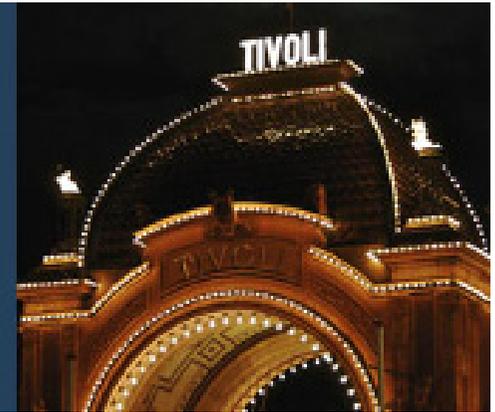


**EAAP 2014**

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*S32. Discovery Session*

*The horse as key player of local development: looking to the future in the  
3rd millennium*

The horse as key player of rural development in Europe -

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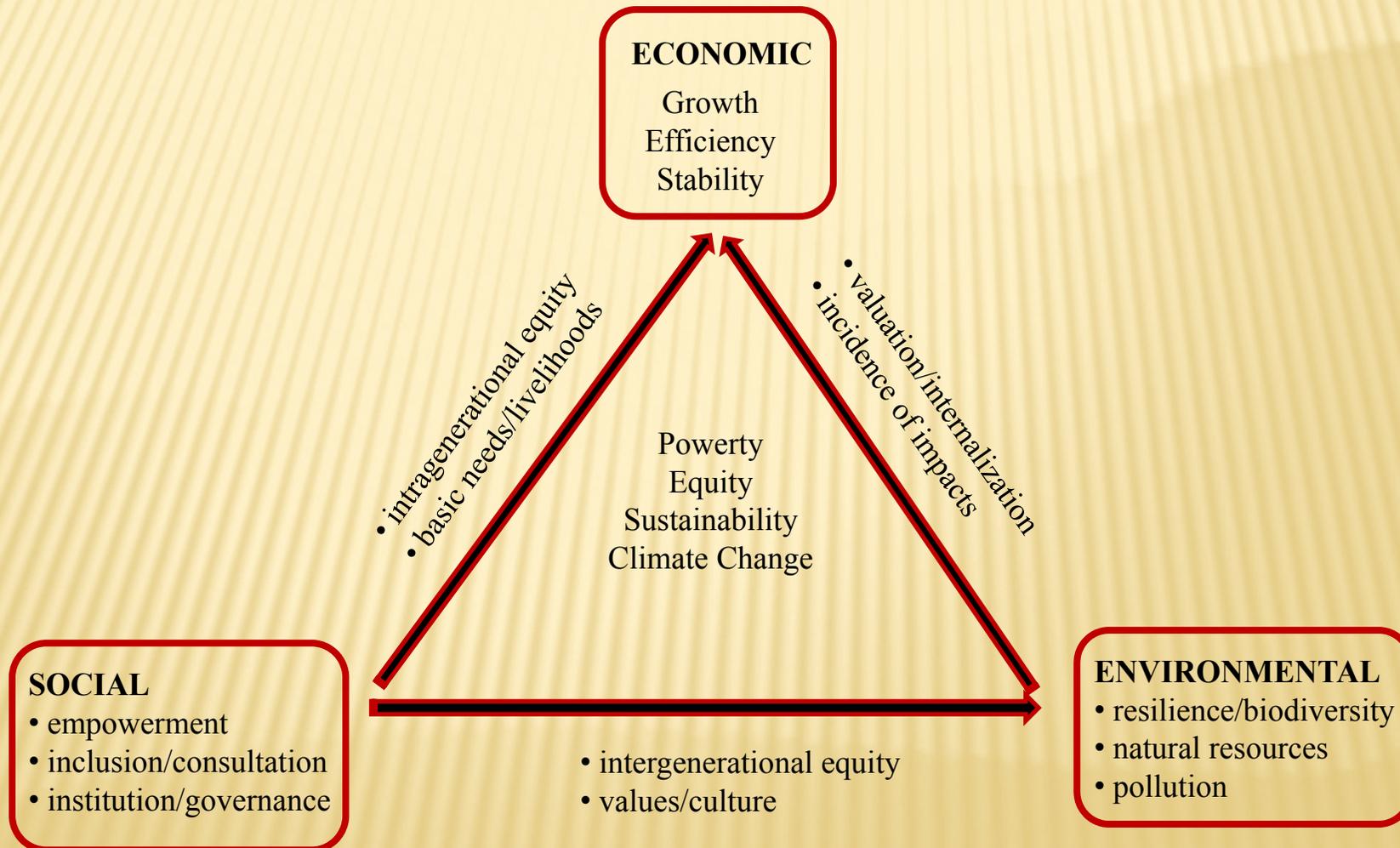
[www.horse-web.net](http://www.horse-web.net)

## *The general context*



- *Sustainable Development*
- *Rural Areas in Europe and less favored areas*

The attainment of sustainable development implies the balance  
Between three objectives and their simultaneous achievement  
(Brutland report, 1987)



Rural areas represent 93% of the territory in EU-27

- 20% of the population live in predominantly rural areas
  - 38% live in significantly rural areas

Rural areas generate

- 45% of gross value added in EU-27
  - 53% of the employment

Rural development is a vitally important policy area

=

EU priority

## The management of natural resources in the EU's rural areas

*represent*

a platform for economic diversification in rural communities

*because*

they offer real opportunities in terms of

- potential for **growth in new sectors**
- provision of **rural amenities and tourism**
- attractiveness as a **place to live and work**
- reservoir of **natural resources and highly valued landscapes**

*Nevertheless.....*

...57 % of the overall **Utilized Agricultural Area** in the EU is classified

as

**Less Favoured Area**

=

agricultural production or activity is more difficult

*because of*

- natural handicaps
- difficult climatic conditions
- steep slopes in mountain areas
- low soil productivity

- ❖ *significant risk of agricultural land abandonment*
  - ❖ *possibility of loss of biodiversity*
  - ❖ *desertification and forest fires*
- ❖ *loss of highly valuable rural landscape*

*In these situations.....*

Appropriate farming systems help to preserve  
Less Favored landscapes and habitats

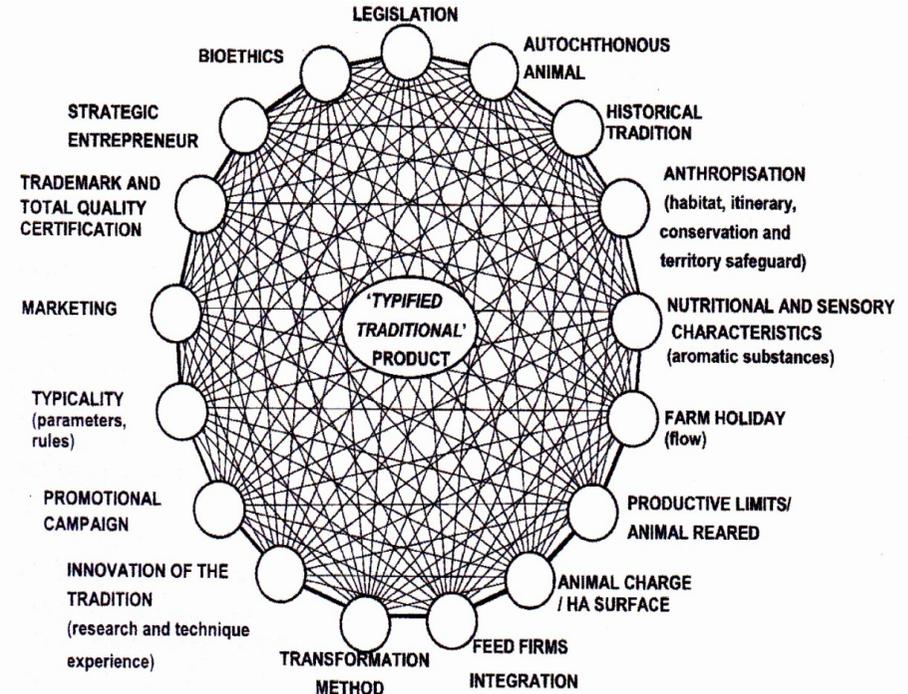
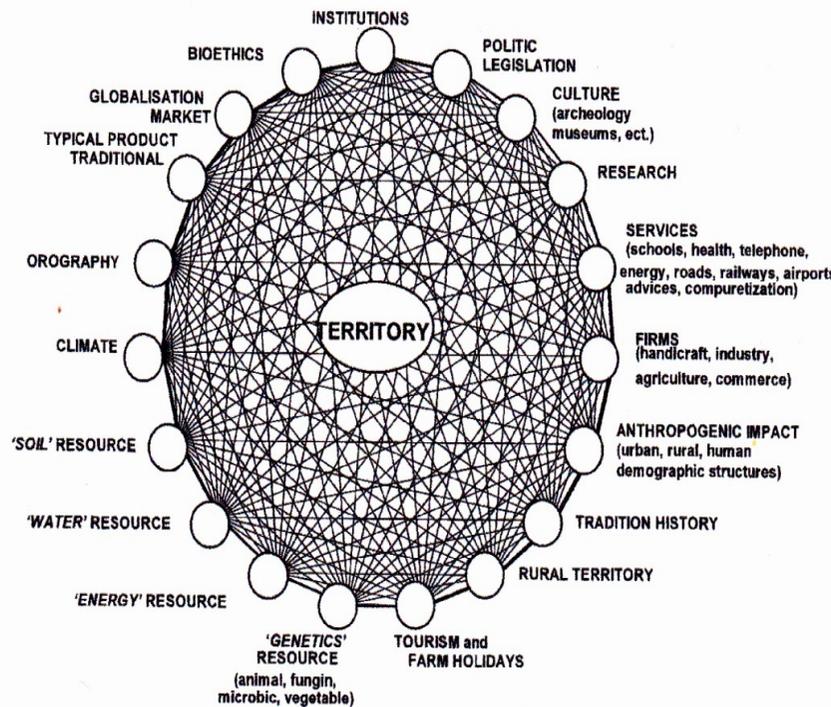
- ❖ wetlands
- ❖ dry meadows
- ❖ mountain pastures
- ❖ other natural pastures and meadows, forest meadows

## *The horse as a key player*

- *Territory management*
  - *Products*
  - *Biodiversity*

# Territory building and traditional products

Mandala exemplification model concerning the diversified components of “territory” and typified traditional products with their interrelationship and interdependence ratios



Mandala exemplification of a territory

Some factors influencing “typified traditional” products

# The horse as a key player

## Main activities

- Races
- Sports
- Leisure
- Hobby farming

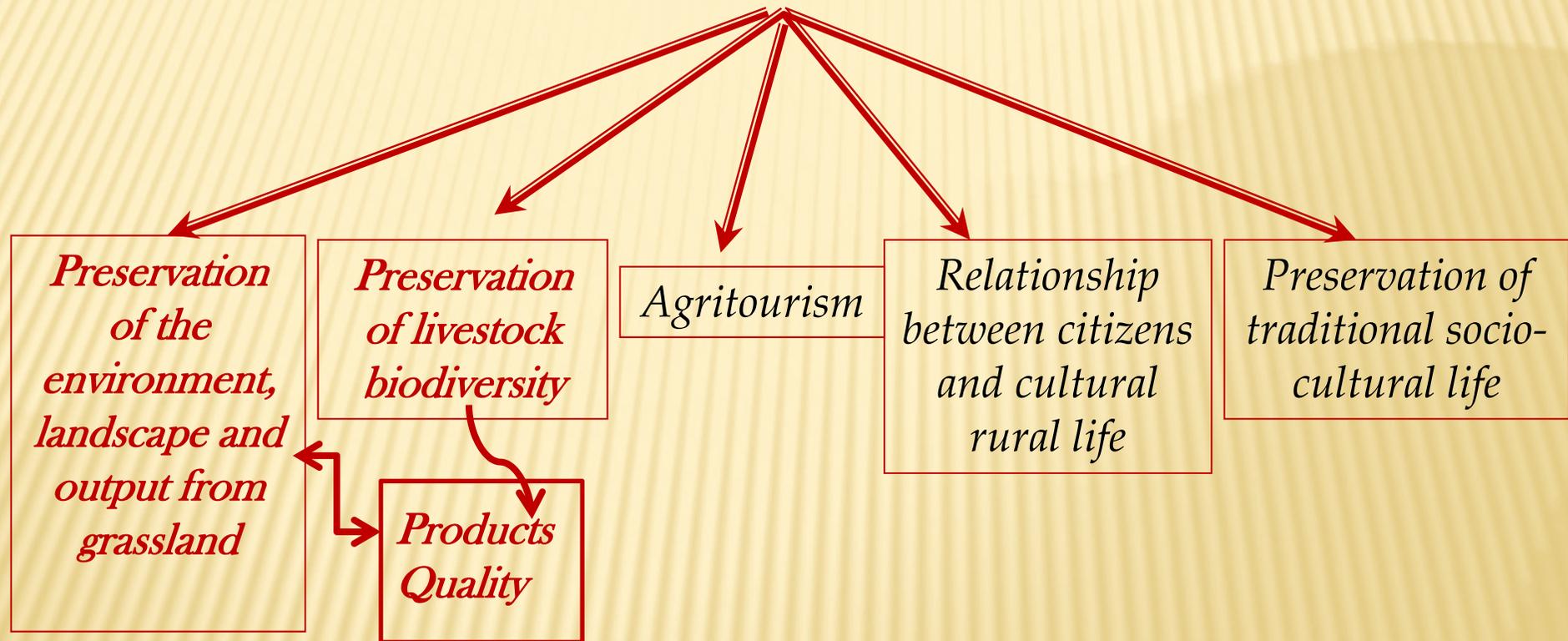
## New activities

- Social cultural events
  - Agritourism
  - Medical therapy
- Social rehabilitation
- “Green care activities”

## Niche activities

- Meat, milk

# HORSES ARE PART OF TERRITORY MANAGEMENT



## HORSES ARE PART OF TERRITORY MANAGEMENT

### *Grass and preserved forages*

=

- ❑ *50-80% of horse's feeds in the year*
  - ❑ *Grazing 6 to 10 months*
- ❑ *Forages can supply 40-70% of annual feeds requirements of the horse*
- ❑ *3,2 % of the agricultural surface is destined to horse feeding during the year*

*It has been estimated that across Europe, ~6.8 million hectares of land are used to breed horses*

## In free ranging conditions

*Horses spend 50 to 70% of their time to consume available food resources  
only 20 to 30% for other activities*

- Ingestive activity over the day during several grazing meals
  - Important grazing activity at night
  - Grazing time can increase in autumn and winter

Length of grazing is in relation to the fiber content of the sward

*The ability of the horse to be managed  
in high forage feeding systems*

*is explained by the distinctive features of the horse  
which enables it to*

➤ *select*

➤ *consume*

➤ *digest*

*forages and grazed resources*

## *QUALITY OF PRODUCTS*

Equid's milk for  
human consumption



Meat production

- Animal biodiversity preservation
- Micro economy of rural areas

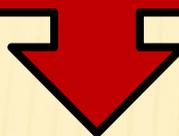
# PRESERVATION OF LIVESTOCK BIODIVERSITY

## BIODIVERSITY PRESERVATION ELEMENTS



- **EXPLOITATION** of rural and less favored areas maintaining the habitat and the landscape as integral part of rural development;
- **SAFEGUARD** of a genetic “bank” linked to the characters of adaptability to extreme habitats that represent a “storage” of genes no more present in the cosmopolitan breeds;
- **SAFEGUARD** of traditional, social and historical values together with cultural manifestations and consequent tourist programs

## LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES



- *protect and conserve the genetic diversity*
- *enhance the environmental performance of the agricultural system*
  - *develop new techniques to safeguard animal genome*
  - *maintain genetic integrity and minimize genetic erosion*

***ACTUALLY THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF MARGINAL  
LANDS WITH EQUIDS BREEDING REPRESENTS***

***MANY POTENTIAL ECONOMICAL ADVANTAGES***

*coming from*

- ❶ DIFFERENT KINDS OF EQUIDS PRODUCTIONS**
- ❷ IMPROVING OF SUSTANAIBLE AGRICULTURE MODELS**
- ❸ INCREASE OF TOURISM DEMAND FOR THE DISCOVERY  
OF MOUNTAIN AND HILLY AREAS**

**Added value to land**

- ❖ Maintain rural landscape and biodiversity of flora and entomofauna**
- ❖ Maintain population + socioeconomic activities in rural area**

Rural development and and equids

the key tool for the restructuring of the agriculture sector  
encouraging diversification and innovation

a challenging issue

Biological diversity

- a real resource because it expresses variety of genetic information
- preservation of autochthonous populations
- products (milk, meat)

Rural development and equids

a challenging issue

- ❑ SOCIO-ECONOMICS ISSUES
- ❑ RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIZEN AND CULTURAL RURAL LIFE
- ❑ PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE



*The horse as a key player of rural development*



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