



IYRP Support Group formed in Germany

A national IYRP Support Group has recently been formed in Germany. It currently consists of around 40 members – from herder associations, environmental organisations, advocacy groups and interested individuals, including shepherds, photographers and book authors – and is reaching out to gain still more members. It was initiated jointly by the nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) League for Pastoral Peoples & Endogenous Livestock Development (www.pastoralpeoples.org), Aktion Agrar (www.aktion-agrar.de) and Deutsche Umwelthilfe (German Environmental Aid, www.duh.de). These three NGOs are sharing coordination tasks.

The German IYRP Group seeks to raise public awareness about the importance of grazing animals for natural landscapes and the valuable skills of the people who graze their animals in these landscapes, in order to address current and future challenges to sustainable food production, conservation of nature and dealing with climate change. Here, the group will target the general public in both rural and urban areas, through education and training, news media and consumer-awareness campaigns.

The group also wants to target German policymakers and government administrations in order to promote extensive livestock husbandry on natural pastures. It would like to see better collaboration between authorities for nature conservation, water management and agriculture; an improved legal and funding framework for livestock grazing on natural pastures; and an increase in the area available for natural pasture landscapes in Germany.

It has a specific focus on the European Nature Restoration Law, a key element of the European Biodiversity Strategy. The German Government must submit its restoration plan to the European Union by August 2026. The German IYRP Group wants to ensure that pastoralism has an important place in this plan and that, as a result, better support will be provided for herders grazing their animals on natural pastures.

Member organisations have already announced some activities they have planned for IYRP 2026. The Weidewelt (Pasture World) Association has chosen the Lueneburg Heath in the northeast of the State of Lower Saxony as the "Grazing Landscape of the Year 2026", partly because there are still so many shepherds grazing their flocks there. The GEH (Society for the Preservation of Endangered Livestock Breeds) has chosen the traditional German sheep breed "Schnucken" as the "Breed of the Year 2026".

Besides such special activities for the IYRP2026 being planned by individual member organisations, the group also wants to implement some joint activities in 2025 and 2026 and is setting up a calendar to coordinate this all.

The group is in the process of developing a short paper outlining its aims, expectations and key messages to be used in media campaigns and events and in policy dialogue in Germany. It will be sharing this soon with the other members in the Regional IYRP Support Group (RISG) in Europe and in the global IYRP alliance.

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