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Editorial

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Editorial

Lise Lykke Steffensen and Mervi Honkatukia

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You are currently reading the special issue of *Acta Agriculturae Scandinavica* honouring the 10-years-celebrations of the Nordic Genetic Resource Centre, NordGen. This issue is dedicated to all national farm animal breeds in all Nordic countries. Scandinavian countries have a long history in collaboration not only because of close neighbourhood but also due to common history and culture of the Nordic region. In addition to collaboration, Scandinavian countries have been standing on the front line in several subjects.

One of the frontline collaborations has been the conservation of the national breeds. Professors Kalle Majjala and Stefán Aðalsteinsson, to mention a few, have been the Nordic pioneers initiating the joint effort in local breed conservation already at the 1970s. They understood very early that locally adapted native breeds were valuable for the future's needs and therefore needed to be studied and conserved.

Research aiming for characterisation is fundamental for conservation actions since lacking information hinders decision-making and management plans. *'The status and need for characterisation of Nordic animal genetic resources'* by Sass Kierkegaard is the first comprehensive inventory of characterisation status at the

Nordic level. The results indicate that a large percentage of the breeds are still not adequately characterised. Moreover, surprisingly many breeds are lacking the population census size information – a fact that might be available within the country in question, but missing from international databases such as FAO's database.

NordGen Farm Animals is a service and knowledge centre for sustainable management of farm animal genetic resources in the Nordic countries. NordGen continues to collaborate with all Nordic stakeholders for maintaining the essential job to fill in the information gaps. All parties are strongly encouraged to continue the great efforts for raising awareness and adding value to local breeds.

It has been a great pleasure to act as a visiting editor in this issue since it provided an excellent overview of ongoing research in Nordic countries. Hence we invite the readers to view what is new with native cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, pigs, dogs and horses in Nordic countries. Majority of the papers are dealing with characterisation filling the characterisation gap, but gratifyingly also including paper with effort to add value for the product of native breed.