

Draft animals in the 21st century

A virtual archive on the significance, importance and preservation of draft animal usage



Initiated by:

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Draft animals around the world still secure the livelihood of millions of people. Be it in transportation, agriculture or forestry, the tradition of draft animal usage has been of key importance for centuries. Nevertheless, in many regions around the globe – although still economically sustainable in many respects – there is a massive decline in the actual numbers of draft animals in use. Pressure of capitalist markets, technological rationalization of agricultural workforce as well as the resulting worldwide decline of smallholders and peasant farmers have caused many people to give up or switch to other, fossil fuel based implements and means of transportation.

The virtual archive of draft animals is destined to document the status quo of draft animal usage in the 21st century. It furthermore follows the goal to showcase that the use of draft animals is no old-fashioned and primitive concept but - depending on the circumstances - can also be economically viable and sustainable. Through interviews, video-sequences and pictures, the virtual archive seeks to give people the chance to speak out why they use draft animals and what challenges they have to face. The same way of documentation is intended for organizations, associations and museums that are dedicated to the preservation of animal traction and which educate and train people in this craft.

How to use the digital archive?

As an open-source database-project, the archive will be accessible for free through a webpage. It will allow to browse through the clips using keywords or by using preselected topics in a dropdown menu (e.g. agriculture, transportation and forestry). It will also be possible to search by countries.

About the structure of the clips

Each clip is about 5 minutes long and starts with an intro-slide providing basic information (location, date, descriptive data etc.). It is followed by an interview section in which the person, association or museum introduces itself. A series of video-sequences and photos

concludes the clip and is supposed to give a vivid impression for what and which animals are used. For a better understanding of the clips, subtitling is provided.

How to provide clips for the archive?

It is not necessary to provide an already edited and finalized version of the clip. Separate files for the interview, the video-clips and photos can be sent in using a data storage device, shared drive or links (e.g. wetransfer). A separate text-file or letter needs to include all the relevant personal data, locations and information on the business, association, farm or museum as well as an approval that the “Digital archive of draft animal usage in the 21st century” is allowed to edit and use the material which is sent in. After sifting through the data, the clips will be edited, finalized and published on the database.

Virtual Conference “Draft animals in the past, presence and future” in 2021

The Archive and a first set of clips will be presented during the virtual conference “Draft animals in the past, presence and future” on May 8th/9th 2021.