

## The Endangered Livestock Breeds of 2006

The German Saddle Pig

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### Press release on the endangered livestock breed of the year 2006

The German saddle pig is acutely threatened with extinction and is now known by the *Preservation Society* as an ancient and endangered pet breed which was identified as "Endangered Livestock of 2006". In recognition, the GEH created this special award which has been in existence since 1984 and which highlights the drastic loss of diversity in agriculture.

The German saddle pig has been listed in the Herd Book since 1949 and already accounted for 1.3% of the total pig population. The breed became popular after World War II, especially in the Soviet Zone of occupation. As a breed of "State genetic reserves" in Hirschfeld in the GDR it was also used for the development of the pig breed Leicoma. The majority of the 400 animals were slaughtered after the closure of the genetic reserve in Hirschfeld. Some animals were rescued and went to dedicated breeders and members of the GEH, through sponsorship.

Today, the German saddle pig is widespread mainly in Brandenburg, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. The German saddle pigs, which originally emerged from the two breeds, anglers saddle pig and Schwäbisch Hall, have a large frame with floppy ears. The name saddle pig comes from the striking black pigmented skin with white on the chest, which resembles a saddle. Of the German pig breeds, saddle pigs have the highest rates of piglet rearing (23.6 piglets per year) and they have very good maternal properties, producing a high milk yield. The daily weight gain of fattening animals is 600-700 g. They are unpretentious, robust animals. The flesh shows a beautiful marbling and consequently has a great taste.

In total, there are 34 registered holders of saddle pig in the Herd Book with a total of 103 sows and 24 boars. The saddle pigs are in the Red List Category 1 (extremely vulnerable) in The Society for the Conservation of Old and Endangered Livestock Breeds.

It is to be hoped that the naming of saddle pig as *the Breed of the Year* will bring support to the breed and that more farmers will decide to keep this breed of pig with its benefits and save it from extinction.

Source: Sommer, H. (after 2006): Gefährdete Nutztier rasse des Jahres 2006: Das Deutsche Sattelschwein. - (<http://www.g-e-h.de/geh/index.php/gefaehrdete-nutztier rasse-des-jahres>; accessed on the 01.12.13)