

# The institution of the common ownership system in Túrkeve

## Historical overview

Since the 1950's the agriculture has gotten necessarily an industrial character which caused that the sector become gradually more intensive. As the intensive agriculture has developed, the viewpoint of the nature conservation obviously got less importance and a new methodology appeared which needed significant energy investment and has a destroying effect on nature. Until the early 90's the same type of agriculture was usual in Hungary as well, then after the change in regime, the above described method has changed, the negative effects of the farming became less harmful for nature<sup>1</sup>. With our joining to the European Union, Hungary got opportunities to apply for such funds which supports the nature friendly, landscape protective agricultural practise and encouraged the countries which would like to join, to change their farming habits and principles<sup>2</sup>. In its entirety, after the change in regime and as a member of the European Union, a process started which brought the nature conservation and the agriculture 'closer to each other' again. Although we have to note that the nature conservation decrees and the roles and control system of the agricultural funds of nowadays' agricultural practise needs to be better harmonized with the farmers' interest as the arrangements have not brought the expected results yet.

## Concept

The officers of the Herman Otto Nature Conservation Group (HOTEK) with the establishments of the Túrkeve Landscape Rehabilitation and Regional Developing Program, worked out a management concept which could harmonize the most typical agricultural sectors with nature conservation again. The aim is to establish such a sustainable system where we try to fit the traditional farming methodologies to the landscape conditions<sup>3</sup>. The region's climate rather dry, the average rainfall during the vegetation period is about 300 mm, the amount of the underground water is not significant and concerning the soils besides the calcic chernozems which has better infertility, notable amount of luvic chernozems and alkali soil can be found<sup>4</sup>. Starting out from the above, we can say that despite the agricultural practise of nowadays does not show this, the extensive use of the grasslands with this ecological character would be more beneficial. Here we have to consider that in the town even during its intensive period, the grazing animal keeping was an important factor in its agriculture. This clearly shows that the landscape' character of Túrkeve is suitable for grazing and to establish a nature friendly farming methodology is not impossible. The Herman Otto Nature Conservation Group and its partners run a farm between Mezőtúr and Túrkeve on the Natura 2000 site of Pásztó pasture. According to the possibilities nearly 55 ha is grazed with traditional Hungarian breeds such as racka sheep, Hungarian Simmental cattle, Shagya-arab, Furioso North-Star horses and 51 ha is mowed.

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<sup>1</sup>Tar F. (2008): Fenntartható földhasználati stratégia kialakítása Magyarországon, PhD értekezés, pp: 10,11

<sup>2</sup>Ángyán J. (2008): Mezőgazdálkodási stratégiák, egyetemi jegyzet, p: 104

<sup>3</sup><http://www.nimfea.hu/ttp/r6.htm>

<sup>4</sup>Dövényi M. (szerk.) (2010): Magyarország kistájainak katasztere, p: 177

## **The institution of the common ownership system**

The organisations were pioneer in this initiative when they had started to establish the institution of common ownership system in the frame of the Túrkeve Landscape Rehabilitation and Regional Development Program. This common ownership system is a nature conservational co-operative form, mostly based on forestry practise with the thought of those private persons who do not want to use their land because of the size or of any other reason but think important to protect the landscape of the Alföld region, can offer their land for the Program. We would like to encourage our friends and our members who are committed to nature conservation, to buy lands which we can arrange in every sense and, in case the area is in the priority area of the Program, to work in cooperation with us. Naturally the ownership rights will remain the same, only the treatment of the areas will be offered to our Program's goal with a leasing contract. During the gathering and buying of the lands we prefer low quality plots. In these areas we would like to establish a nature friendly and bio grassland management. We would like to encourage first of all our local friends, members, secondly those committed supporting members of ours who agree with our common ownership goals and who would like to join us. On these lands will graze the association's sheep, here will be built the outdoor shepherd museum and with this solution we would like to provide the long-term maintenance. Those who have the possibility to take part in this unique initiative, please support our program with this kind of investments<sup>5</sup>.

## **Further objectives**

At the moment the just introduced extensive grassland management structure, managed by HOTEK is the main agricultural activity of the organisation, but we also have the intension to implement the following objectives:

- spread a farming method which fits into the landscape character and provide the long term use of the natural resources for the local inhabitants
- take the opportunities given by nature but in a way which do not risk their ecological rehabilitation ability and pretend the landscape elements without over exploitation
- keep the diversity of the landscape formed by humans, protect the biodiversity, restoration of the disappeared landscape elements
- harmonize the natural values of the landscape with human farming in a way which result in a sustainable system.
- organise professional programs concerning nature conservation priorities and insure the living conditions of the inhabitants whilst moderate the harmful effects for the environment
- humans are parts of the landscape therefore maintaining the human resource is the interest of the landscape as well and one of the project objective is to keep the young generation in the region. This can be reached by the improvement of the standard of living. The fundamental condition for this is the ensuring of the livelihood and the creation of local employment. We would like to establish such an employment program which complemented effect is the same as the project's goal such as the more favourable job opportunities.
- develop conception thinking concerning the middle and long term development of the town<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nimfea.hu/tttp/r3.htm>