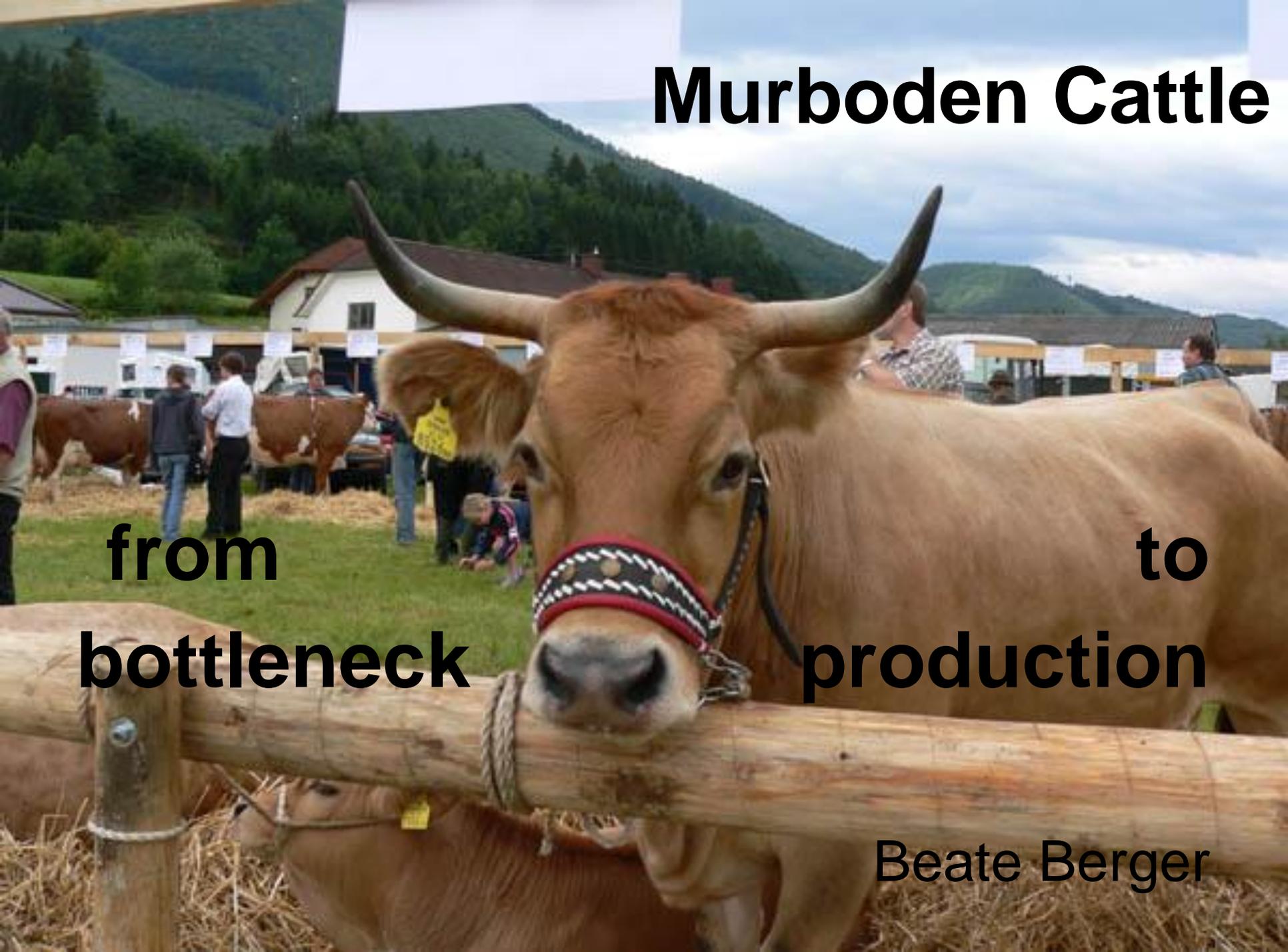


# Murboden Cattle



**from  
bottleneck**

**to  
production**

Beate Berger



# Breed history

- Mixture of Celic-Illyric cattle and grey Slovenian cattle
- Grey to fawn cattle known in Styria since 18<sup>th</sup> century = Mürzthal cattle
- Mixed with Bergschecken and Blondvieh = Murboden cattle
- Well muscled, growing quickly
- Suitable for draught and fattening
- First breeding organisation founded in 1896







# More history

- Start of 20<sup>th</sup> century – consolidated breed with breeding organisations in Styria, Lower and Upper Austria
- Famous for draught oxen and beef quality
- ~ 270.000 animals in 1954 = 11,7% of total cattle population
- 3 purpose breed: draught, beef and – emerging - milk



# Bottleneck

- Mechanization in agriculture – draught oxen redundant
- Breed almost extinct in less than 20 years!
  - 1969 < 100 purebred cows
  - Replacement crossing with Simmental or German Gelbvieh to improve milk yield
  - Herdbook dissolved in 1970
  - No purebred bulls in AI





# First conservation activities

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- 1979 first breeding co-operation „Gelbvieh-Zuchtgenossenschaft“
  - Herdbook re-opened. Murboden and Gelbvieh not distinguished
  - 1982 ~500 animals registered, mostly crosses.
- 1984 ÖNGENE starts first conservation program for Murboden cattle
  - Nucleus herd at Piber stud (Styria)
  - First bulls collected at AI center





# 1995 to 2000

- 1995 first conservation program in the Austria program for sustainable agriculture (ÖPUL)
  - 310 (mostly purebred) females in herdbook
- Phenotypical survey to broaden basis
- Conservation program based on pedigree analysis
  - More semen collected
  - Strict mating plan for each female
  - Closure of herdbook in 2000





# Calves in herdbook

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# Situation 2010

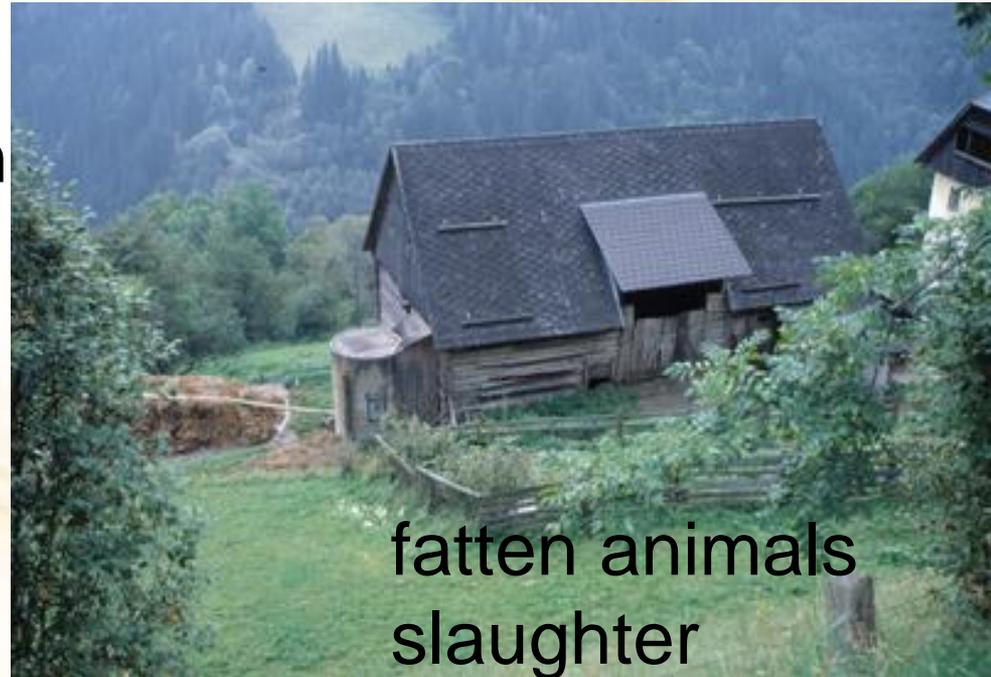
- Currently third conservation program (until 2013)
  - 4407 animals in herdbook
    - 258 dairy cows milk recording (~ 4000kg)
    - 3055 suckler cows beef recording
  - Carcass yield \* ~ Brown Swiss x Limousin
  - Carcass quality (fat, marbling) = purebred Limousin
  - Unique taste





# Drawbacks

- Small and very small herds
  - Average 5 to 6 cows/farm
  - Part time farmers
  - Summer grazing on Alpine pastures
  - Spring calving
  - No opportunity to fatten animals for slaughter





# Marketing attempt

- Breeding organisation and private association work together
- Fatteners buy young oxen from breeders at premium price
- Biggest Austrian food retailer involved
  - Buys oxen ready for slaughter
  - Sells the beef specially promoted





Österreichisches  
**Landbeef**  
Rindfleisch für Genießer  
**MURBODNER**

# Ochsenfleisch

für Genießer

**TANN**

**SPAR**

Ausgezeichnet mit dem  
Geprüfte Qualität  
**AMA**  
GÜTESIEGEL  
AUSTRIA

Sold in the region where it is produced

Very well received by consumer

Higher price

Premium quality beef „extra“ value

Originally targeted for 4 weeks

Sold out after 14 days

700 animals until now

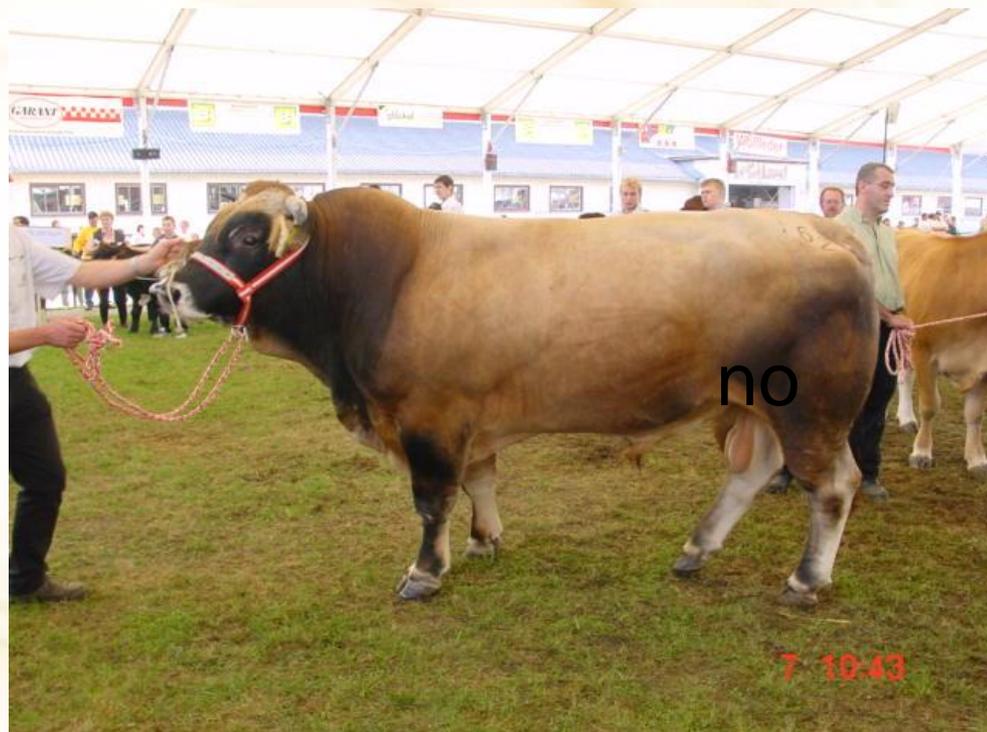




# Conclusion/Outlook

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- Semi-extensive breed back in production
- Subsidies will be cut
- Careful selection
  - Beef
  - Middle frame, giants
  - Special trait easy calving!!
  - Do not lose milk yield
- Ongoing monitoring of population





Thank you!

