

## CROATIAN AUTOCHTHONOUS POULTRY BREEDS

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Recently, in Croatia there is a growing interest for protection and preservation of autochthonous poultry breeds, reflecting in signing the Convention on Biodiversity. This Convention sets the obligation for all the member countries to identify, monitor and protect the diversity of biological resources, what is a strategic goal of the National strategy and action plan for protection of biological and landscape diversity of the Republic of Croatia. Up till now, the biggest progress on evaluation of characteristics and establishing the originality of Croatian fowl breeds has been made in Zagorje turkey and Hrvatica hen, while in Dravska goose, Križevačka Kukmica hen and Posavska Kukmica hen this work is due.

In Croatia, in Hrvatsko Zagorje region, the first records on turkeys date back as far as 1561 and during the said four-century period, the influence of turkeys from other regions was very small. At the end of rearing season, when turkeys are 6 months old, the average weight of cocks and hens is 6 and 4 kg, respectively. The average annual laying rate is 21 eggs, of which 16 adult birds are reared (Mužic et al., 1999). Several trials have been made lately with purpose of establishing the phenotype and genotype characteristics of 4 different types of feather coloration in Zagorje turkey. Based on the visualization of the PCR products no polymorphic places in the ovalbumine gene have been found between and within the experimental Zagorje turkey types. It was concluded that Zagorje turkeys are genotypically identical on the level of ovalbumine gene, while their small phenotypic differences have origin in negative environmental influence (Janječić, 2002). During 2004 there have been 2570 Zagorje turkeys on 256 family farms listed in the record books (HSC, 2005).

At the area alongside river Drava today there is about 1800 breeding Hrvatica hens. There are 4 different types of this hen, different in feather coloration: red, partridge-golden, golden-black and black. The average body weight of cocks is 3-4 kg, while hens weigh 2-3 kg and they lay 200-240 eggs per year (Posavi et al., 2004).

During the year 2000 the program to preserve and rehabilitate the Dravska goose began. The breeding area has been researched and a preliminary breed standard determined. Present breeding population of Dravska goose in Međimurje and Podravina is estimated to be about 2000 birds. The average body weight of ganders is 5-6 kg, while geese weigh 4-5 kg and produce 10-15 eggs per year. Križevačka kukmica hen and Posavska kukmica hen are bred only by few breeders mostly as exhibiting poultry. Estimated population size is 50 and 400 breeding birds, respectively (Posavi et al., 2004). Protection and preservation of autochthonous fowl breeds is part of the effort made to preserve the cultural and historical background, inherited on this area from our ancestors and which we owe to future generations.

**Keywords:** Dravska goose, Hrvatica hen, Križevačka kukmica hen, Posavska kukmica hen, Zagorje turkey

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