

13th Eurasian Grassland Conference

***Management and Conservation of Semi-natural
grasslands: from theory to practice***

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

(Oral and poster presentations, in alphabetical order of
first author)

Cover picture: xerophilous/xero-mesophilous grasslands on slumping mounds (Rom: *movile*) near Apold, Romania

Owen Mountford 2008

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Environmental education about grassland biodiversity, pasture management and research social utility

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Dry grassland ecosystems represent a fundamental resource of plant species richness and are defined as 'habitat of priority importance' for nature conservation by EU, in particular as orchid species concerns. Biodiversity conservation depends on key elements such as habitat productivity, plant species functional features, type of management, density and grazing behaviour of herbivores.

Information about the aforementioned interactions can offer key knowledge to promote grassland biodiversity conservation and for management decision making, and may help to improve the governance of economic benefit as indicated by EU agricultural policies. In this perspective, the dissemination of information could be a paramount tool to understand the importance of environmental scientific researches for the territory development.

In the Marche Region, the agri-environmental project for the biodiversity guardianship comes from the grassland research activities, provided economic aid to the farmer that manages the natural grassland systems in agreement with European Community guidelines for the biodiversity maintenance and the use of animals for habitat prevention/maintaining.

Research projects have been turned into an environmental educational project aimed to educate and sensitise the primary school children to the environmental issues, in addition to show the social utility of research.

Our environmental educational project was carried out by means of the following steps:

- definition of biodiversity and ecosystem,
- illustration of grassland plant and animal biodiversity,
- biodiversity threats and their interplay with other environmental, social and economic issues,
- example of research project leading with biodiversity conservation, animal welfare and zootechnic activities.

Students of the first university degree in Natural and Environmental Sciences participated to the project with the aim to acquire specific competences about scientific dissemination.

Children have shown great involvement and attention towards environmental problems.