

Grazelands Rewilding

Rewilding by Natural grazing and  
the Tauros programm;  
impact and opportunities

THE

**AUROCHS**

BORN TO BE WILD

[www.stichtingtaurus.nl](http://www.stichtingtaurus.nl)  
[www.grazelandrewilding.com](http://www.grazelandrewilding.com) (coming soon)  
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- Marchegg 7 November 2023

# Grazelands Rewilding

(earlier Taurus Foundation)

Grazelands Rewilding contributes significantly to the **restoration of wild European landscapes.**

By restoring **natural processes** (including restoring soil ecology) we enhance **biodiversity**, contribute to **climate adaptation** and **vitalizing soils** and let **public support** for wild nature grow.

Grazelands Rewilding achieves this

- through sharing **knowledge** and **expertise**
- By reintroducing **herds** of wild grazers
- And with its flagship species, the Tauros.

# Grazelands Rewilding

## **'Grazelands team**

Over 30 years of experience with natural grazing (started early 90's)

- 7 employees on daily basis, 3 board members
- around 70 volunteers

## **Our herd and the Tauros-herd**

- Ca 1.200 animals in NL (cattle and horses); ca. 400 Tauros
- around 300 Tauros' abroad in 5 other EU-countries
- Around 400 hectares managed area in the Netherlands, abroad around 10.000 hectares

## **Main partners – customers**

- Nature conservancy organisations and municipalities in the Netherlands
- Rewilding Europe abroad (close cooperation)
- Credit Nature (European outreach and nature finance)



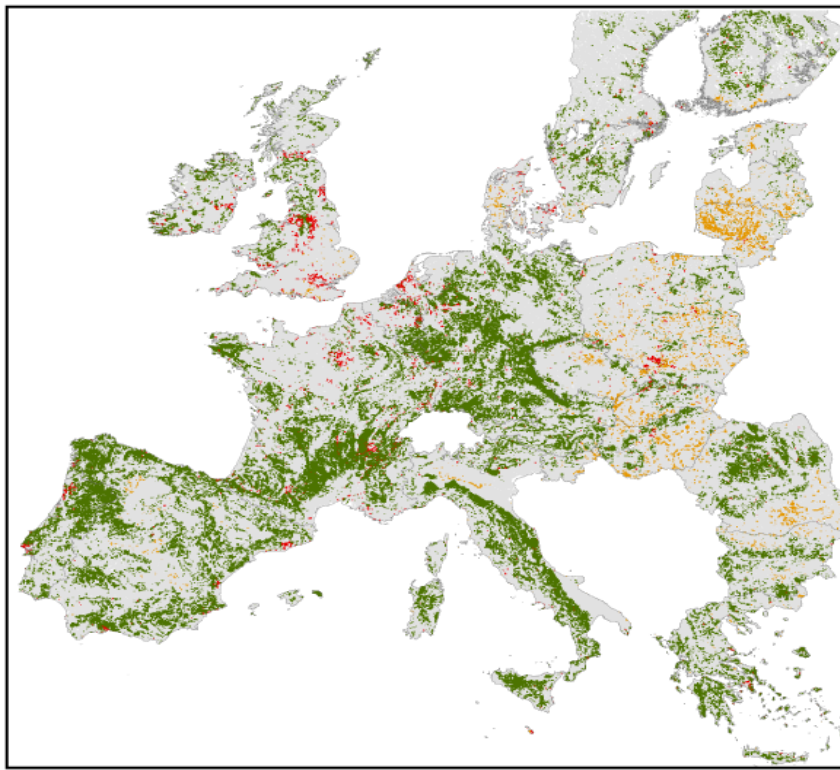
# The why of the Tauros-Programm

The reintroduction of large herds of natural grazers (cattle) is key to **restore wild European landscapes**, to enhance **biodiversity** and to create **resilience**. Cattle-herds being self-reliant, cattle-herds having habitat-impact.

The momentum is there; all over Europe **huge areas are being abandoned**; offering opportunities to create half-open landscapes

The Aurochs was a key species in Eurasian ecosystems, adapted to living with big predators. The best adapted bovine for rewilding purposes would therefore be **the Aurochs**. **We owe this extinct Aurochs a contemporary surrogate.**

The **dedomesticated 'Tauros'** is second-best and a **powerful ally for ecosystem restoration**



**Legend**

- Stable
- Abandonment
- Agricultural expansion
- Urbanisation
- Urbanisation and abandonment
- Urbanisation and agricultural expansion

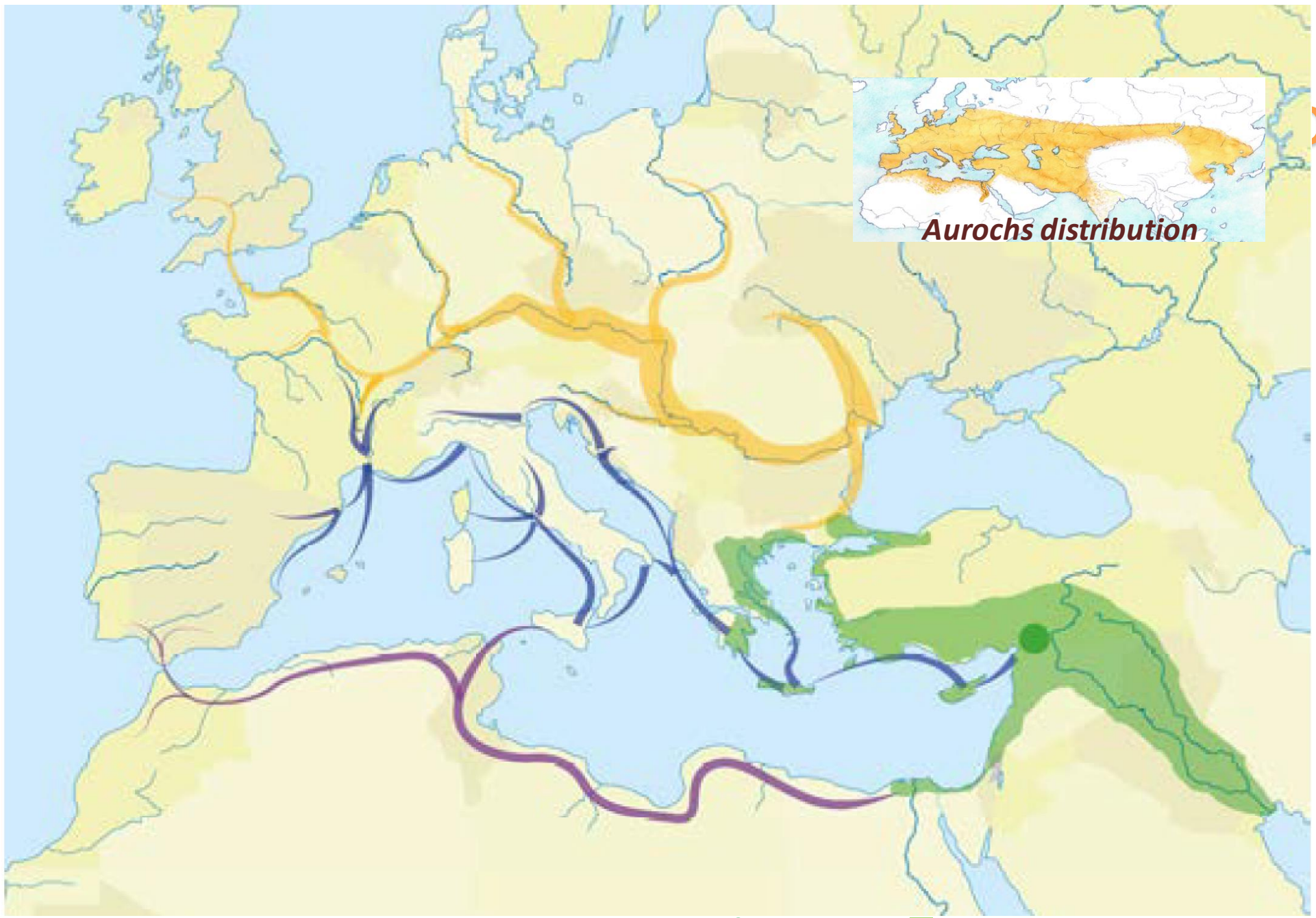
0 250 500 1,000 Kilometers



**Rewilding  
Europe**

*Europe changes, every year 1 million hectares of agricultural area being abandoned (IEEP)*

ochs



*Aurochs distribution*

*Domestication, co-evolution of human mankind and cattle*

● Domestication center; ■ Early range; — Danube route; — Mediterranean route.

'All good things are wild and free'

(Henry David Thoreau)

'Wild landscapes created by free  
living herds to liberate (our) minds'



● Domestication center; ■ Early range; — Danube route; — Mediterranean route; — African route.

ochs

# The how of the Tauros-Programm

1. Selection of '**primitive**' **cattle-breeds** based on knowledge of history, morphology and use of the breeds;
2. By active/(partly artificial) **breeding** under semi natural circumstances;
3. At first in **small** breeding groups, part of natural grazing herds;  
In later stages combining the results in **larger** herds;
4. Evaluation of the results, **active selection** in later generations
5. Based on **genetic monitoring** and evidence;
6. Rough estimation of needed time: around 15-25 years (6-8 generations)



Limia



Maremmana Primitiva



Maronesa



Sayaguesa



Pajuna



Aurochs 2.0?

*The Tauros Programm: principal breeds being used (mainly formerly used for traction)*



**Looks like its wild ancestor,  
easier to understand for people  
these animals fit into a natural  
system**

*Being surprised by the look of Manolo Uno (Maremmana x Pajuna)...2012*









***The 'Big five' of natural grazing***

# Tauros' Unique Values



**Being Self-reliant**



FIGURE 4. Map of recent developments recorded for the Grey wolf in Europe.

- EXPANSION
- PERSISTENCE
- CONTRACTION
- POPULATION INCREASE
- POPULATION MORTALITY
- RANGE EXPANSION
- NEW SIGHTING



**Better defence against predators**

**Flooding**

**Well-developed herd instinct**



# Tauros' Unique Values

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- RANGE EXPANSION
- NEW SIGHTING



Flooding

Better defence against predators

Well-developed herd instinct

Better adapted to diseases

Compatible with a greater diversity of life



# Tauros' extra ecological benefits

**Enhancing biodiversity by  
'macro-habitat-engineering', supporting a plethora  
of other species**



**Roaming and move around more**

**Increasing wildness and  
temperament**

***Bigness and behaviour counts***



# Tauros' extra ecological benefits

**Enhancing biodiversity by  
'macro-habitat-engineering', supporting a plethora  
of other species**



**Temporarily overgrazing**

**Roaming and move around more**



**Increasing wildness and  
temperament**

**Re-distribution of minerals**

***Bigness and behaviour counts***

# Tauros extra ecological benefits

**Enhancing biodiversity by  
'micro-habitat-engineering'**



**Trampling**

**Habit of creating bull-pits**



***Bigness and behaviour counts***



# Tauros extra ecological benefits

**Enhancing biodiversity by  
'micro-habitat-engineering'**



**Trempling**

**Habit of creating bull-pits**



**Lying on the ground**

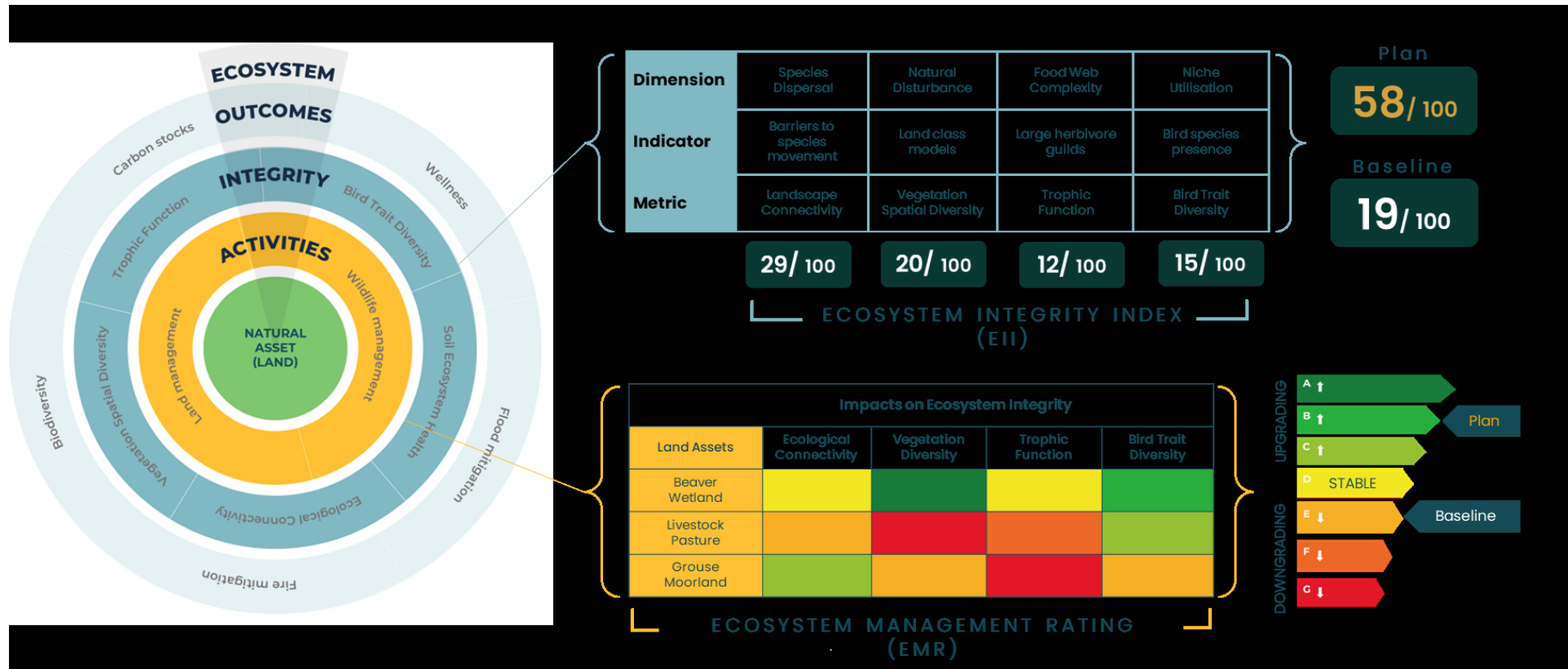
**Depositing dung**



***Bigness and behaviour counts***

# Financial feasibility by Innovative nature finance: 'Tauros Tokens'

Cooperating with CreditNature (UK)



# ***The possible role of a herd of Tauros in the Marchegg River plains***

- Restoring Natural grazing being an important ecological process in this floodplain-area; re-opening former grasslands and forests, creating half-open landscapes
- Significant biodiversity impact
- Significant resilience impact and climate adaptation
- Local economy impact. Tourist attraction for Marchegg daytrips: businesses wildlife-watching
- International publicity and funding opportunities
- Free roaming, unfenced. Would be unique in Europe and the truly rewilding of Aurochs. Part of the animals being collared (track & trace)

## ***Boxes to be ticked by the Marchegg area***

- **> 100 hectares**
- **Flood-free places**
- **Dedicated herd-manager**
  
- **Proven cases are there already**
- **Research to monitor and improve area-specific needs; learn form operational rewilding**
- **Be aware of the limited availability of decent Tauros' herds now (we do the best we can)**

***Let's be honest***

***“Wouldn't it be wonderful,  
your Cinderella being kissed awake by Tauros”***



*Bert van Beek*  
PHOTOGRAPHY

***Join the Tauros Programm!***