



VARIETIES OF THE ȚURCANĂ CREAȚĂ DE CARANSEBEȘ SHEEP BREED

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Abstract: The authors of this paper present tone of the highest-performance variety of the Țurcană sheep breed – Țurcana Creață de Caransebeș. They present the morphological and productive features of this sheep variety, its origin and selection, its use and importance, and its cultural and economic context. The analysis of these features allowed the comparison of five varieties of Țurcană – Creață, Brează, Bucălaie, Oacheșă, and Ruginie from the perspective of their morphological and productive features and from the perspective of the genetic aspects and selection models in Țurcana sheep breed variety Creață de Caransebeș.

• Introduction

This variety is part of the subtypes of the Țurcană breed, one of the oldest and most widespread sheep breeds in Romania, known for its mixed production (milk, meat, wool), resistance, and rusticity. Here are some specific details about the Țurcana Creață de Caransebeș:

Morphological and productive characteristics :

- Adaptability: excellent to the climatic conditions of the mountainous and hilly area of Banat, with resistance to diseases and low maintenance costs;

- Body weight:

- Females: between 35–55 kg;

- Males: up to 80 kg, with a robust constitution and pronounced mobility;

- Milk production is significantly higher than the breed average, being able to exceed 100 l per lactation (5–6 months), which makes it attractive for dairy-oriented farms;

- The wool is curly, hence the name, with finer and denser fibres than other Țurcana varieties.

Origin and selection:

- It is one of the few local Țurcană populations with high performance, along with Breaza de Hațeg and Brastavățu from Olt;

- The variety was developed in the Caransebeș area, part of the efforts to improve the Țurcană breed to increase milk production without losing its rustic characteristics.

Use and importance :

- It is appreciated for its tasty meat, especially in Arab countries, and for its curly wool, used in traditional products;

- It lends itself well to extensive farming systems, being able to capitalize on mountain pastures.

Cultural and economic context:

- Banat breeders consider it a heritage value, being part of the pastoral identity of the region;

- Although specialized breeds (milk or meat) are gaining ground, Țurcana Creață de Caransebeș remains a strategic choice for farms that want versatility and resilience.

• Material and method

The material used in this paper consists in studies on one of the most representative sheep breed in Romania – Țurcana Creață de Caransebeș. The research method is the comparative one given that the study covers a comparison between the morphological, productive, and genetic features of five varieties of this sheep breed.

• Results and discussion

A comparison between the morphological and productive features of the varieties of Țurcană sheep breed shows (Table 1):

Table 1. Morphological and productive features of the varieties of Țurcană sheep breed

Variety	Creață de Caransebeș	Brează	Bucălaie	Oacheșă	Ruginie
Adaptability	Mountain and hill pastures	Alpine pastures	Mountain and hill areas	Mountain areas	Hill and mountain areas
Area of Origin	Caransebeș (Banat)	Valea Jiului Parâng	Apuseni Mountains	Făgăraș Mountains	Sibiu (Transylvania)
Cultural value	Regional symbol in Banat	Considered the "Milk Queen"	Symbol of the Apuseni Mountains	Esthetical and mythical	Rustic, linked to traditions
Distinctive Features	- Robust body - Curly, dense, white wool - White face	- Black face with a V-shaped white marking - Semi-fine, white wool	- Bulky body - Large head - Thick, white wool - White face	- Black face - Outlined eyes - Semi-fine, white wool	- Rustic appearance - Reddish-brown face - Reddish-brown rustic wool
Main use	- Milk + meat + wool	- Milk	- Meat + wool	- Mixed	- Meat + wool
Meat production	- Good, tasty meat	- Medium	- Very good	- Good	- Very good
Milk production	100-150 l/lactation	Up to 200 l/lactation	Medium (80-120 l/lactation)	Medium	Medium
Other notable features	- Good rusticity - Good utilisation of pastures	Considered the dairy sheep of Europe	- Resistance - Valued meat	- Mobility - Rusticity	- Adaptability - Tasty meat
Resistance to harsh conditions	Very good	Good	Excellent	Good	Very good

Table 2. Genetic aspects and selection models in Țurcana sheep breed variety Creață de Caransebeș

Variety	Creață de Caransebeș	Brează	Bucălaie	Oacheșă	Ruginie
Improvement type	Local selection for milk	Selection for performance	Rustic selection and massiveness	Esthetical selection Mobility	Traditional genetic conservation
Dominant genetic lines	Milk Resistance Prolificacy	Milk Fertility	Musculature Adaptability	Mobility Rusticity	Resistance Pigmentation
Genetic risks	Low heterozygosity on farms	Consanguinity in small herds	Great variability	Loss of esthetical features	Pigmentary dilution
Selection strategies	Guided mounting Lactation testing	Controlled mounting Daily testing	Natural selection Free-range	Visual and behavioural selection	Conservation on traditional farms

• Conclusions

Therefore, the best strategic choice of a farmer depends on the production goal :

- If the farmer is looking for appearance and aesthetic selection, the varieties Brează and Oacheșă offer visual and genetic variety;

- If the farmer is looking for milk performance, the varieties Brează and Creață de Caransebeș are the most suitable;

- If the farmer is looking for resistance and low maintenance, the varieties Bucălaie and Ruginie are excellent in mountain areas.