

Sheep Pastoralism in Rajasthan: Still a Viable Livelihood Option?

**Workshop hosted by
Rajasthan Chervaha Vikas Sangatan (Rajasthan Pastoralist
Development Association) and Lokhit Pashu-Palak
Sansthan**

31.1.-1.2. 2005

in Sadri, District Pali, Rajasthan

Sheep Pastoralism has always been an important and typical livelihood strategy in Western Rajasthan, practiced not only by traditional pastoralist castes, but also by “non-traditional” pastoralists, because of its good economic returns. However between 1998 and 2003, Rajasthan’s sheep population declined by 31%.

What are the reasons behind this regression – drought, inappropriate policies, globalisation, or lack of interest in the young generation? How is this development reflected at the micro-level and what does it mean to the livelihoods of sheep breeders and rural economies? Does the trend of declining sheep numbers have repercussions on the state’s economy and ecology? Is the time of sheep pastoralism gone in this day and age? Should and can something be done to reverse the declining sheep numbers, and if yes, what?

These are some of the questions to be covered at a two-day workshop organised by Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan and the Rajasthan Chervaha Vikas Sangatan in the context of a Misereor-supported project to strengthen the sheep breeders of the Godwar area. It will bring together sheep breeders, policy makers, government officials, as well as NGOs and aims at formulating a concrete set of recommendations for policy makers that is informed by the needs of poor livestock dependent people.

The following topics will be addressed:

- Sheep nutrition and grazing problems: the crux of the matter?
- Sheep health care: do government interventions have an impact?
- Sheep breeding: are indigenous breeds losing out?
- Sheep breeders’ Indigenous Knowledge: how can it become appreciated?
- Meat production: can sheep compete with goats?
- Wool production: can Rajasthani sheep breeders be competitive?
- Organisational strengthening of sheep breeders: the way forward?
- Insurance for sheep pastoralists: what should it look like?
- Education for sheep pastoralists: how can traditional and modern knowledge be combined?

There will also be a field-visit organised by the Raika Sangarsh Samiti.

Venue: Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan, Butibagh, near Mammaji-ki-Dhuni, Alsipura, via Rajpura, Sadri, District Pali, Rajasthan.

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