



The LIFE Initiative
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Inside

- Camel *yatra* in Rajasthan **2**
- Publications and websites on camels **2**
- Nguni story **3**
- Sustainable smallholder poultry projects **4**
- Deccan breeds **4**
- Pastoralists meet in Ethiopia **5**
- Publications **6**
- Coming up **7**
- Links **7**

People and Livestock

is an occasional newsletter for those interested in promoting socially and ecologically responsible livestock development. It is produced by the League for Pastoral Peoples with support from Misereor.

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LEAGUE FOR
PASTORAL PEOPLES
www.pastoralpeoples.org

People *and* Livestock

Socially and ecologically responsible development

Focus: Camels – Bearer of problems, or bringer of solutions?

Special anatomical and physiological features enable camels to stay without water for about 10 days in the dry season, and up to two months in the rainy season. This is why they survive water shortages much better than cattle, enabling people to use very dry areas where cattle cannot cope.

Worldwide there are about 20 million camels. However, governments rarely recognize the value of this useful animal. Rather, they continue to promote irrigated crop cultivation into areas unsuited for this type of agriculture – at the expense of grazing lands.

Fewer humps

India once had the world's third largest camel population, after Somalia and Sudan. Now it has been surpassed by Pakistan and Mauritania. Between 1992 and 1997, camel numbers in Rajasthan, where about 80% of India's camels live, declined by 11%. There are indications that the trend has greatly accelerated since. To counteract this trend, non-government organizations are helping pastoralists to raise government attention for their problems (see the *Camel yatra* article below).

In **Kenya**, the trend may be reversing. Here, the Kenyan Camel Association – an association of commercial camel ranchers, representatives of camel communities and those working to help them – has organized annual forums to exchange information and findings about camels. Such forums have also drawn government officials into the discussion. Although Kenyan development policy and laws continue to neglect camels, awareness of and interest in camels and their products are growing among urban consumers and livestock keepers.

An unrecognized asset

According to the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** (UNCCD) one-fifth of the world's population is threatened by the impacts of global desertification. A quick search for the word "camel" in the national strategies developed under UNCCD shows that governments tend to view camels as a problem rather than a solution.

Much lobby work remains to be done to convince policy makers of the potential of camels for the sustainable use of dryland areas. Perhaps the **World Day to Combat Desertification** on 17 June provides an opportunity to do this.

More information

camelides.cirad.fr, pastoralpeoples.org, www.new-agri.co.uk/05-1/focuson.html, www.unccd.int

Note to readers

Thanks for the positive response to issue 1 of this newsletter. Several contributors have sent summaries of articles and field research for inclusion in this issue.

Short contributions for future issues are very welcome (maximum of 500 words). The editors reserve the right to edit contributions and adapt them to the style of the newsletter. We are also happy to include announcements you may have, provided they are relevant to the focus of this newsletter. Please send any information to the editor, Evelyn Mathias, evelyn@mamud.com.

A month's trek through the deserts of western India drew attention to the problems faced by pastoralists in Rajasthan

Camel *yatra* in Rajasthan

Camels are a symbol of Rajasthan, in western India, and they are a traditional lifeline for the people of the Thar Desert. But in the last ten years, their numbers have fallen by half. This has important ecological, social, and economic dimensions, and may have serious consequences for the many poor people who rely directly or indirectly on camels. It may also affect Rajasthan's ability to withstand drought.

Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan, an Indian NGO, is holding a series of activities to raise awareness about this issue. One of these was a **camel *yatra*** – a pilgrimage – through Rajasthan's prime camel-breeding areas.

The *yatra* set off from Sadri, in southern Rajasthan, on 15 January 2005, and wended its way through Jaisalmer in the west, arriving in Bikaner, in the north, on 12 February. It succeeded in attracting national TV and newspaper coverage to this neglected topic.

The *yatra* followed a national workshop of camel herders and an international scientific conference (proceedings available on the website below). Both herders and scientists called for the restoration of grazing rights, changes in milk marketing policies, more effective veterinary services, and improved research and extension efforts to make the camel industry more profitable and attractive.

More information

www.pastoralpeoples.org

Publications and websites on camels

Allcamels.com

Comprehensive site with information on care, equipment, books. Includes resource database with more than 360 links to other sites.

www.allcamels.com

Analysis of pastoral camel husbandry in northern Kenya

Kaufmann, Brigitte. 1998. Hohenheim Tropical Agricultural Series 5, Margraf Verlag, Weikersheim

Analysis of camel husbandry systems, using a combination of participatory techniques and bio-economic modelling.

www.uni-hohenheim.de/~www480/docs/publish/bkdiss.htm

Australian Camel News

Useful information source on camels.

www.austcamel.com.au/informn.htm

Camels

Wilson, R.T. 1998, The Tropical Agriculturalist Series, CTA and Macmillan

Book covers breeds, production systems, adaptation, reproduction, management, nutrition, health and productivity of dromedaries.

www.agricta.org

Camélidés

<http://camelides.cirad.fr>

Informative site devoted to dromedaries and Bactrian camels. Site in French, but much material in English. Links to other sites on camels, plus

information booklets in French, Tifinagh and Arabic.

Camels and camelids

Publishes the *Journal of Camel Practice and Research* and scientific books on camels.

www.camelsandcamelids.com

A field manual of camel diseases: Traditional and modern veterinary care for the dromedary

Köhler-Rollefson, I., P. Mundy and E. Mathias. 2001. ITDG Publishing and League for Pastoral Peoples

www.mamud.com/camels.htm

Information resources on Old World camels: Arabian and Bactrian 1941–2004

Extensive listing of literature from the AGRICOLA database and the National Agricultural Library. Overview of different types of camels and links to web resources.

www.nal.usda.gov/awic/pubs/Camels/camels.htm

New Agriculturist

The January 2005 issue of this online magazine focused on camels.

www.new-agri.co.uk/05-1/focuson.html

The one-humped camel in eastern Africa: A pictorial guide to diseases, health care and management

Schwartz, H.J. and M. Dioli (eds). 1992. Josef Margraf, Weikersheim

Beautifully illustrated guide for veterinarians and practitioners.

Nguni story

An indigenous cattle breed in South Africa coming home

Wolfgang Bayer, AGRECOL

The Nguni are a cattle breed in South Africa that is thought to descend from animals domesticated in northeast Africa or the central Sahara, when it was a bit wetter there. The breed probably arrived in South Africa about 1500 years ago. They are relatively early maturing, long lived, with good fertility, well adapted to low-quality feed, have a high degree of tick and disease resistance, and were widespread in the provinces of Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal.

Not a real breed?

European settlers in South Africa regarded the Nguni as inferior. This was partly because Nguni are comparatively small, differ greatly in coat colour and horn shape. According to European traditions they do not form a single breed, and considerable cultural importance attaches to them. Nguni cattle are used for dairy, are traditionally important for culture, particularly for marriage contracts and for sacrifices, e.g., during funerals.

Especially in the 20th century, extension services discouraged the keeping of Nguni cattle by small-scale farmers, and made dipping against ticks compulsory (and free). Marketing, particularly the carcass classification system, favours large animals.

After more than a century of being told that their animals were “scrub”, small-scale farmers started to believe it, and increasingly crossed their cattle with breeds of European origin.

Low-input

However there are still a “large number of various purity” (Bester et al. 2003) in communal areas, particularly because the crossbreds – although they can grow better under optimal conditions – did not perform well under local farming conditions.

Researchers and local people recognized the potentials of Nguni cattle as a “low-input breed”, and a breed society was formed in 1986. Presently more than 19,000 cattle are registered as “stud” animals. A book on the cultural importance of various Nguni types (Poland et al. 2003) became a bestseller. These efforts have found international recognition, but – until recently – very little of this information has reached local farmers.

Tick resistance

During studies for development projects in Kwalu-Natal supported by Misereor, Nguni cattle were discussed with farmers, and tick resistance and other potential advantages were first met with disbelief.

The projects initiated visits to stud farms and research stations, and farmers started to realize the advantages of “adapted animals”. In 2004 one of the projects started to experiment with artificial insemination with Nguni semen.

Although breeding will show its benefits only in the long run, there is hope that the Nguni cattle will come home again.

More information

Bester J., Matjuda L.E., Rust J.M. and Fourie H.J. 2003. *The Nguni: a case study*. Pp.45–68 in: FAO. 2003. *Community-based management of animal genetic*

After a century of being told that their animals were “scrub”, farmers started to believe it

The potential of Nguni cattle as a “low input” breed is now recognized

resources – Proceedings of a Workshop held in Mbabane, Swaziland, 7–11 May 2001.

Poland M., Hammond-Tooke D., and Voigt L. 2003. *The abundant herds: A celebration of the Nguni cattle of the Zulu people*. Fernwood Press Vlaeberg, South Africa.

Sustainable smallholder poultry projects

Incorporating socio-economic contexts; leaving room for local practice

Karin Thomsen, Network for Smallholder Poultry Development, Denmark

Intensified poultry production can be a welcome source of extra income for smallholders. An anthropological study of the **Programme d'Appui au Développement d'Aviculture Villageoise** (PADAV) in Benin offers some suggestions on how to make poultry development projects sustainable.

Projects must consider the various economic strategies that smallholders use, the local marketing facilities, and fluctuations in related farming activities. While both men and women may keep poultry, they may raise and market them in different ways. For example, a woman with many children may be short of time, so sells to a trader in the village. Her husband may bring his birds to the market himself, so can get a better price. Such socio-economic and gender-related factors influence the amount of work and income that each participant in a poultry development project can invest in their poultry enterprise.

Development projects are more likely to succeed if they leave room for locally suited poultry keeping practices. Smallholders adjust what they have learned from fieldworkers to their own conditions. They mix old and new – for example, using both local treatments and modern veterinary medicines. They end up using a range of practices that are neither purely indigenous, nor strictly in accordance with the project-introduced model. The relative costs, availability and effectiveness help determine whether farmers adopt a new technology.

Small-scale poultry development interventions should be pragmatic and flexible – open to adjustments in accordance with local socio-cultural, ecological and climatic conditions. Smallholders cannot be treated as homogeneous. People have different reasons for participating in development projects: reasons that depend on their other sources of income and on prevailing local livestock management practices.

More information

www.poultry.kvl.dk, karin_thomsen@hotmail.com

Deccan breeds

Nitya Ghotge and Sagari Ramdas, ANTHRA

The Deccan Plateau of south-central India is one of the driest parts of the country. There, shepherding groups such as the Kuruma, Kuruba, Golla and Dhangar have traditionally reared sheep and goats. They rear Deccani, Sangamneri, Madgyal and Khillari sheep breeds, and Osmanabadi goats.

These pastoral systems used to provide coarse wool, meat, milk and dung: items that used to be in great demand by sedentary farmers. Today though, these systems are under threat, for a host of different reasons. Their disappearance may result in the irretrievable loss of valuable livestock breeds, products, indigenous knowledge of animal health, and social and cultural diversity.

Farmers end up using a mix of technologies that are neither purely indigenous, nor precisely what the project recommended

Using herbal medicines should reduce healthcare costs and contribute to biodiversity

Supporting Pastoral Livelihoods

The project **Supporting Pastoral Livelihoods**, is funded by Misereor and implemented by ANTHRA, works with pastoral communities in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka to strengthen the skills and capacities of pastoral groups. It aims to:

- Build a sustainable, effective health care delivery system for their livestock
- Improve the availability of natural resources, grazing, fodder and water
- Solve problems pastoralists face while migrating, such as health and education
- Find ways to keep local customs, language and traditions alive
- Design educational programmes for children of pastoral communities
- Design ways to cater to basic human health needs.

Building on indigenous knowledge

The project intends to provide technical advice and support so pastoral communities can use validated indigenous knowledge and other alternate health-care systems to prevent and treat diseases. This should reduce the current indiscriminate use of expensive allopathic medicines, which is leading to drug resistance and unethical practices. The use of herbal medicines should reduce the cost of healthcare and enhance local biodiversity. The project also seeks to build the pastoralists' capacities to mobilize resources from the government and to lobby for more effective services.

Documenting breeds

ANTHRA will document important livestock breeds raised by the pastoral communities. Many of these breeds are unique and constitute a special gene pool. Preserving these genes and breeds is of prime importance. However before initiating a programme for preserving the germplasm, the production parameters and traits of these breeds need to be adequately documented.

Certain pastoral production systems are under threat because of shrinking grazing lands and fluctuating markets. But new opportunities are also emerging. ANTHRA will be studying existing production systems and looking at opportunities for channeling these products effectively.

More information

anthra@vsnl.com, www.anthra.org

In every country, the biggest concern was the loss of rights to grazing land

Pastoralists from 25 countries meet in Ethiopia

About 120 pastoralists and some 100 government and non-government staff met in Turmi, South Omo, for the **Global Pastoralists Gathering** on 29 Jan–2 Feb 2005. The event was hosted by the Hamar pastoralists and organized by several UN organizations.

Participants warned that access to education, health, clean water, economic progress and legal protection is declining in pastoralist areas. This will affect the environment and create problems not only for the pastoralists themselves but also for their neighbours and the country in which they live.

However, there are many examples of small scale improvements – mostly the result of pastoralists' own efforts to organize themselves. These efforts had then led to recognition and co-operation from government and international bodies. In **East Africa**, for example, there is a recognition of pastoralists' need to cross borders freely. **Spain** and **India** provide economic support for pastoral production. **South**

Pastoralists can gain by organizing among themselves, by enhancing their links with governments, and by winning recognition from the international community

Africa has strong pastoralist organizations. In every country, the biggest concern was the loss of rights to grazing land. Women are often little respected and have limited access to education.

The event was a strategic first step in the launching of a major **World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism** (WISP) spearheaded by UNDP and a consortium that includes IFAD, FAO, DFID, the World Bank, USAID, IUCN, IIED, OXFAM, and many other international NGOs.

The global gathering concluded that pastoralists can improve their livelihoods by becoming better organized from local to global levels, by enhancing their links with local and national governments, and if they are granted recognition and support by the international community.

More information

Adapted from: www.ocha-eth.org/Home/HotTopics8/Downloadables/Global%20PastoralistGathering.pdf

See also www.ocha-eth.org/Home/HotTopics8/Hottopics8.htm

Publications

Community Based Animal Health Workers: Threat or Opportunity?

The IDL Group, 2003. £8 (UK) or £10 (world). Contact liz.stockley@theidlgroup.com

Discusses issues around primary animal healthcare based on original and literature research.

www.theidlgroup.com/downloads/communitybasedanimalhealth.pdf

Donkeys, people and development

Edited by Paul Starkey and Denis Fielding, 2004. ATNESA Publications.

45 papers by 70 authors from 25 countries discussing issues around donkeys, their management and use.

www.atnesa.org/donkeyspeopledevelopment.htm

Drought Cycle Management: A toolkit for the Greater Horn of Africa

Published 2004 by the International Institute of

Rural Reconstruction, Cordaid and Acacia Consultants. Contact admin@iirr-africa.org

Shows how the concept drought cycle management can be used to prepare for and mitigate the effects of drought in the drylands of Eastern Africa.

www.mamud.com/droughtcycle.htm

Enhancing animal health security and food safety in organic livestock production systems

Proceedings of the 3rd SAFO Workshop, 16–18 Sept 2004, Falenty, Poland. Sustaining Animal Health and Food Safety in Organic Farming (SAFO).

www.safonetwork.org/publications/ws3/index.html

Food security in pastoralist areas of Ethiopia

Published 2004 by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Nairobi. Contact admin@iirr-africa.org

Experiences from over 30 development organizations in strengthening food security in eastern and southern Ethiopia.

Covers interventions in water, livestock, rangeland and resource management, crops, alternative foods, income diversification, institutions, services, conflict management, policies and advocacy.

www.mamud.com/foodsec.htm

Legal factors driving agrobiodiversity loss

by Franziska Wolff. *Elni (Environmental Law Network International) Review* 1, 2004

Investigates the effects of intellectual property rights and other agreements on plant and livestock biodiversity.

www.agrobiodiversitaet.net/site/page/downloads/dateien/ABD.Elni.pdf

The Livestock and Poverty Assessment Methodology: A toolkit for practitioners

Claire Heffernan, Federica Misturelli, Louise Nielsen, and Dafydd Pilling, 2003. Livestock Development Group, School of Agriculture, Policy and Development, University of Reading, Reading, UK

www.livestockdevelopment.org/adobedocs/LPA%20Manual.PDF

The Organic Livestock Trade from Developing Countries: Poverty, Policy and Market Issues

Report of a DFID-funded project by P.J.C. Harris, A.W. Browne, H.R. Barrett and F. Gandiya, School of Science and the Environment, Coventry University, UK, 2003.

www.passlivelihoods.org.uk/site_files%5Cfiles%5Creports%5Cproject_id_74%5CThe%20Organic%20Livestock%20Trade%20from%20Developing%20Countries%20Report_MA0044.pdf

Coming up

Systems development: Quality and safety of organic livestock products

Workshop organized by SAFO in Frick, Switzerland, 17–19 March 2005

Contact Michael Walkenhorst, michael.walkenhorst@fibl.org

www.safonetwork.org/workshops/ws4/index.html

IVth International Congress on Ethnobotany: Ethnobotany at the junction of the continents and disciplines

Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey, 21–26 August 2005

This congress will feature a panel on "Plant use of farmers and pastoralists". Deadline for submission of

abstracts is 31 March. Contact Z. Füsün Ertug, fertug@iceb2005.com

www.iceb2005.com

Fourth All Africa Conference on Animal Agriculture

Arusha International Conference Centre, Arusha, Tanzania, 23–26 September 2005

Theme: The role of biotechnology in animal agriculture to address poverty in Africa: Opportunities and challenges

Contact Rosalynn Murithi, r.murithi@cgiar.org

www.waap.it/all_africa_conference.htm

Links

ELDev

This new discussion group focuses on endogenous livestock development: the development of livestock production based on livestock keepers' initiatives, their own worldview, values, knowledge, institutions, and locally available plus suitable outside resources. To subscribe go to the link below, hit the "join the group" button, and then follow the instructions. Problems? Contact Katrien van't Hooft, katrien.hooft@etcnl.nl or Evelyn Mathias, evelyn@mamud.com

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ELDev/>

ELDIS Pastoralism Resource Guide

Valuable set of resources on pastoralism. Includes an email forum, list of publications, organizations, projects and websites.

www.eldis.org/pastoralism

Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine

This new e-journal on ethnobiology will be an open-access, peer-reviewed, online journal that aims to promote the exchange of original knowledge and research in any area of ethnobiology and ethnomedicine.

There is a charge of about €600 for each manuscript accepted for publication. Potential authors should contact the editor, A. Pieroni, JEE@ethnobotanica.de.

www.ethnobiomed.com

Livestock, Environment And Development Initiative (LEAD)

The LEAD Virtual Development Centre provides information, news, tools and links relating to livestock production, natural resource use and development. Site in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.

www.lead.virtualcentre.org/selector.htm

Online database on ethnoveterinary medicine

Plant remedies for horses, pets, pigs, poultry and ruminants used by herbalists, vets, farmers and others in British Columbia. Based on field research and a multi-disciplinary workshop, the database can be searched by animal species and disease name.

<http://bcics.uvic.ca/bcethnovet/>

Sustaining Animal Health and Food Safety in Organic Farming (SAFO)

Aims at improving food safety and animal health in organic livestock production systems through communication of research results.

www.safonetwork.org