



## LIFE Network



### **National-Level LIFE Network Workshop 24-26 February, 2007**

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### **International Workshop**

*Livestock Keepers and the Management of Animal Genetic Resources: Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities*

**26-28 February, 2007**

**Workshop Documentation<sup>1</sup>**

The LIFE-Network supports collective and community-based conservation of animal genetic resources and seeks to strengthen rural livelihoods through the development of indigenous livestock breeds and species ([www.lifeinitiative.net](http://www.lifeinitiative.net)). It would like to acknowledge the support by HIVOS and the Dutch Biodiversity Fund that enables it to create linkages between diverse livestock keeping groups and bring them on a common platform with policy makers.

<sup>1</sup> Photos in this report are by Sheila Pareekh, Aghaghia Rahimzadeh, and LPPS. Cover photo shows pastoralists handing over their statement to Dr. D.K. Sadana, Director, National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources.

# I. National-Level LIFE-Network Workshop on *Pastoralists, Livestock Keepers Rights, and Animal Genetic Resources*

24-26 February, 2007

LIFE-Network India held a national-level meeting at the campus of Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan (LPPS) near Mammaji-ki-dhuni, Alsipura, Sadri in Pali District of Rajasthan from 24-26<sup>th</sup> February, 2007. It was attended by about 100 pastoralists, representing all corners of India, ranging from the North (Van Gujjar from Kashmir) to the east (West Bengal and Orissa) to the west (Gujjar, Raika and Rajput of Rajasthan, Maldhari from Gujarat), to the Deccan Plateau (Dhangar from Karnataka) to the south (Konar of Tamil Nadu). In addition, there were delegations from Mongolia, Iran, and the Philippines, as well as various observers, including from the National Commission on Nomadic, Semi-nomadic and De-notified Tribes, the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations), Government of Sri Lanka, LEAD (Livestock, Environment and Development) India, and the Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods. Participants were accommodated in tents on the LPPS campus.



## 24 February Inauguration

The workshop was inaugurated by lighting the lamp and conducting puja for Goddess Saraswati, with Shri Otaram Dewasi, Chairman of the Rajasthan Livestock Board, presiding. Shri Otamramji welcomed Dr. Irene Hoffmann, Chief of the FAO's Animal Production Unit in Rome, Shri Perumal Vivekanandan, Coordinator of LIFE-Network (India), Dr. Sunil Gamage, National Coordinator for Animal



Genetic Resources from Sri Lanka, Ms. Aghaghia Rahimzadeh, Coordinator of the World Association of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP), from Iran, and Dr. Ilse Köhler-Rollefson, Project Coordinator of the League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development, Germany. The opening speech was given by Shri Bagdi Ram Raika, President of the Rajasthan Pastoralist Development Association.

**From the speech by Bagdi Ramji Raika:** *My Raika community is associated with many of Rajasthan's famous and best breeds, for instance the camel, the Nari and Sanchoe cattle, the Marwari sheep, and the Sirohi goat. I have learnt that there is concern worldwide because many of our traditional breeds are becoming extinct and I have been told that an International Conference will be held in Switzerland later this year where governments will decide what to do about this.*



*I hope that the governments will realise that our traditional breeds will only survive if there are people like us who will look after them. We Raika have always looked at our animals – our camels, our sheep, our cattle - as our children. We never sold our female animals to anybody outside the community because they are both our heritage and our livelihood. For breeding, we used only the best male animals, while we try to preserve as many female lineages as possible. We have a long shared history with our animals whom we pass on from one generation to the next, trying to improve them on one hand, but also trying to conserve their diversity.*

*I am sorry to say that this old system has broken down in many places, and that even female camels are sold now, although I, with the help of Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan, have tried very hard since 2001 to prevent this. At the root of the change is that we have no place for grazing our animals. The land on which we sustained our herds has been turned into irrigated fields, into sanctuaries, national parks, shooting ranges, gaushalas or they are eaten up by the construction of houses and roads. Most of the time, our animals are starving, so we have no choice but to sell them.*

*Therefore I would like to appeal to governments and scientists: If you think it is important to conserve our breeds, then you must ensure that development leaves some space for our livestock. Give us grazing areas and we will continue nurturing our traditional breeds, be it camels, cattle, sheep, and goats!*

*Dear friends and brothers, I hope that this workshop will help to convince governments that livestock can not be saved by keeping some animals in a deep-frozen state. Our community, our animals, and the environment around us: we are all parts of the same system, and we can not survive in isolation. Without our animals we are losing our identity and our livelihoods, without us, who will take care of the animals, and without the animals, the environment will not remain the same.*

Then the joint organisers of the workshop, Sri Vivekanandan and Sri Hanwant Singh Rathore, director of LPPS, each extended a very warm welcome to all participants.

### **Introductory Session**

In an introductory session, each pastoralist delegation had the opportunity to introduce itself briefly, providing information about its geographical area and the types of animals kept.

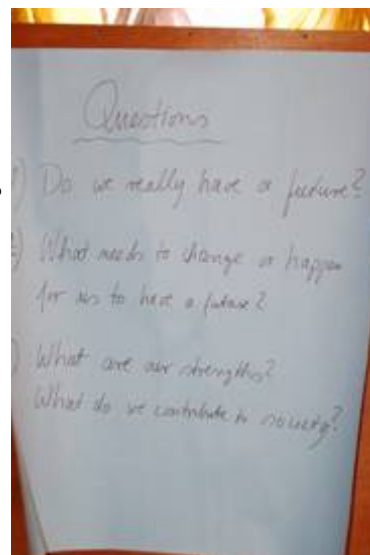
P. Vivekanandan gave an introduction about the goals and activities of the LIFE-Network., entitled "LIFE Network, Livestock Keepers Rights and Conservation of Local Livestock Breeds".

### **Working groups**

After lunch, the participants split up into three working groups to discuss about their visions for the future. In particular, they were asked to consider whether, in view of all the difficulties and hardships that they are facing, there is really a future for them. What changes are needed for us to have a viable future? Furthermore, they were asked to reflect on what their strengths were and what they were contributing to society at large. All three groups came to the conclusion that there definitely would be a future and that there is a vast economic and ecological potential for indigenous breeds. - both economically and ecologically. Pastoralists contribute food, manure and renewable energy to society. But the commonly made equation of livestock keepers being uneducated and backwards needs to change. Instead, in order to avail themselves of the opportunities provided by local livestock, the livestock keeper can no longer afford to be uneducated. He or

she needs to be **aware, educated, and organised!**

In the evening, there was a thunderstorm with lots of rain. While this interrupted the proceedings, it was also regarded as an auspicious omen for the cause of pastoralists and the workshop!



## 25<sup>th</sup> February

### Field Visit



In the early morning, the participants visited a camel herd from the village of Mundara and had discussions with the herdsmen, besides sampling some camel milk and learning how to use the leaves of the *aak*



plant as cups.

### Presentations

The delegation from Mongolia gave a presentation on their project on nature conservation in the Gobi Desert.



This was followed by a paper by Jaime Cabarles from MASIPAG about native chicken gene pools in the Philippines.

Dr. Balam Sahu spoke about the livestock breeds in Orissa, while Dr. Sandip Banerjee gave a presentation about the breeds in West Bengal and the Northeast.

### Commission on Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic and De-Notified Tribes

In the afternoon, a delegation from the Commission on Nomadic, Semi-nomadic and Denotified tribes, including its Hon. Chairman, Sri Balarakrishna Renke, and Jagdish Jadav joined the discussions.



**Working Groups** Participants then divided into working groups in order to discuss the following questions:

1. What are our experiences with organisations (including traditional ones) – identify failures, success stories and

lessons learnt!

2. Do we need new ways of organising?

3. What is the role of the LIFE-Network?

## They arrived at the following conclusions:

### Question 1:

**Success stories:** Nomadic cooperatives in Iran, occupation of land in Gujarat given to corporate farming, camel milk marketing.

**Failures:** Forest land still not free from grazing, encroachment of pastureland in Gujarat by dominant communities, no water facilities available to animals, there is robbery problem, wool rates very low, no medicines provided

### Question 2: Do we need new organisations?

**YES!**

- There should be new organisations, especially those that help us making our products more marketable.
- We need to look into profitability and sustainability of our livestock keeping
- We need a synthesis of traditional knowledge and formal technology
- Linking with media and outside-world should be better, i.e. global movement.

### Question 3: Suggested Goals and Activities of the LIFE-Network

- To empower, inform, and educate the pastoralists, by providing training that increases and diversifies our productivity and enhances our processing of products, so we can remain competitive.
- To provide regular update on policies that affect livestock keepers
- To coordinate the different groups
- To link and liaise with the outside-world
- To enable livestock keepers to better market their products, through training, capacity-building, and development of niche-markets.
- To register unregistered breeds and ensure that IPR rest with communities

### Organisation of Pastoralist Forum at National Level

In a separate session, the participants discussed about how to organise themselves. They agreed that they should first organise at grassroots level. Later these pastoralists groups could then come together in a national level forum which would be registered formally.

Activities to be focussed on:

- Training to pastoralists
- Micro-credit
- Value addition to animal products
- Sharing knowledge/innovation
- Education to younger generation
- Sustainable management of land, water and forest/grazing land.



Obstacles to be overcome in getting organised are the participation of women and language difficulties.

### Summary of points raised during the meeting:

1. Pastoralists should be formally recognised as custodians of animal genetic resources
2. In order to protect the livelihoods of pastoralists, their customary practices and systems of mobile animal keeping need to be protected.

3. Livestock keepers strongly request the right to participate in national level policy making processes
4. The pastoralists' customary rights to access to natural resources, including forestlands, need to be protected.
5. The allotment of common lands that represent customary grazing areas, such as oran, gochar, and wasteland, for corporate farming and commercial plantation, etc. needs to be stopped.
6. Pastoralists' mobile animal husbandry should be accepted as indigenous tool for ecosystem management in semi-arid desert regions and be recognised as pastoral heritage system rich in knowledge and survival strategies.

## II. International Meeting

### *Livestock Keepers and the Management of Animal Genetic Resources: Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities* 26-28 February

#### Background

The purpose of this workshop was to clarify the concept of **Livestock Keepers' Rights** that has been developed over a process spanning several years by the LIFE-Network. This conceptual framework basically represents a bundle of rights and recommendations for strengthening the role of livestock keepers in animal genetic resource management. Unfortunately, governments so far have not supported the concept and it has also not been included in the Draft Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources. Delegates from 11 countries, including Mongolia, China, Thailand, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Iran, Vietnam, Germany, UK, Sudan, a team from the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (Incl. Director, Dr. D.K. Sadana) and a representative of FAO, Rome had followed the invitation of the LIFE-Network to further discuss and elaborate on Livestock Keepers' Rights.



#### 26th February

#### Field Visit

At the invitation of the Raika shepherds from Latada, the delegates visited their village and involved in an in-depth dialogue of the issues; in particular they learnt how the closure of the Kumbalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary had forced about one third of livestock-keeping families to give up their herds.



### Inauguration and Welcoming of Participants

In an inauguration ceremony presided over by Shri Ragnathji Maharaj, Mehant, Akhil Bharatiya Ram Raika Mandir, Pushkar, representatives of the Raika community and LPPS director, Hanwant Singh, welcomed the international participants and the national experts on animal genetic resources.



### Statement by Livestock Keepers

Ultra Kothari, Ph.D. and Vice-President of LPPS, then presented a statement on behalf of the Livestock Keepers

Small and marginal farmers and pastoralists rely on livestock for their living. Their cattle and sheep, pigs, goats, chickens and camel produce milk, wool, meat, milk and eggs and provide leather, pull ploughs and carts – they are a major source of income and maintain the food sovereignty in arid and semi-arid hot and cold ecological settings. Small scale farmers and pastoralists constitute by far the majority of rural populations, but because of the rapid rate of population growth, small scale producers are obliged to produce their energy, food, fodder and income from decreasing amounts of land. Their livestock graze on dry land, steep hills, mountains and roadsides which otherwise go waste. As custodians of animal genetic resources they act as a saving bank of native breeds. As breeders, herders keep the vital base pool of biodiversity. As we have learnt, livestock keepers have developed over 7000 breeds but today many traditional native breeds are endangered. Pastoralists select breeding stock that can survive and produce in their specific area. Their animals may not be the highest producers but have a



high range of resistance against pest and disease. The herders are attached to their animals and they are very aware of the need to preserve their animal genetic resources wisely.

As we talk about Livestock Keepers Rights we find that customary rights are under threat. Pastoralists are in danger of losing the right to breed in time to come. The grazing lands are being categorized as nature reserves and the pastoralists who have lived there for centuries are being pushed out. Present policies support sedentary animal husbandry rather than mobile pastoralism. Drought/conflicts and wars contribute their share in forcing them to give up their livelihoods. Then their breeds also become extinct. That loss is not only to pastoralists themselves, but it is a great loss to humanity because of the destruction of animal genetic resources.

Under present circumstances, their space of livelihood is under threat and food security is one of the greatest challenges in these regions. So this needs immediate attention at our national and at the international level policy making level that deals with the sustainability of small communities and nature conservation. At the same time, the Intellectual Property Rights and the right to survive in a diversified world must be save-guarded.

A delegation of Livestock Keepers then handed over the statement to Dr. D. K. Sadana, Director of the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources



### Presentations

- Dr. D. K. Sadana, Director, National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources: AnGR for Rural Livelihoods & Role of Livestock Keepers
- Dr. Irene Hoffmann, Chief, AGAP, FAO, Rome: The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources and an overview of the Interlaken Process

Dr. Ramesha also presented about the yak-breeders of India and Vidya Ramesha about the LEAD-India platform.

### Screening of Film about India's Pastoralists and their Breeds

A "first cut" of the new Film "Keepers of Genes" produced by Moving Images and League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development with support from the FAO was screened for the information of the participants. The film illustrates how India's pastoralists act as stewards of AnGR, but are exposed to numerous pressures threatening the continuity of these systems.

### Cultural Programme





27th February

### Visit to Camel Herd owned by Bhanwar Lal Raika

Delegates visited the camel herd owned by a young Raika, Mr. Bhanwar Lal



### Presentations

- Dr. Ilse Köhler-Rollefson on the “Livestock Keepers’ Rights” concept.

The Livestock Keepers’ Rights (LKR) concept that has been developed over a period of almost seven years in a series of livestock keepers’ and pastoralists’ meeting that were held in Rome, Karen (Kenya), Bellagio and Yabello (Ethiopia) was presented to the delegates for their comments. The LKR cornerstones include:

- ✳ Recognition of livestock keepers as creators of breeds and custodians of AnGRFA
  - ✳ Recognition of the dependency of the sustainable use of traditional breeds on the conservation of their respective eco-systems
  - ✳ Recognition of traditional breeds as collective property, products of indigenous knowledge and cultural expression.
  - ✳ The right of the livestock keepers to make breeding decisions
  - ✳ Right of livestock keepers to participate in policy making processes on AnGRFA issues
  - ✳ Support for training and capacity-building of livestock keepers in the provision of services along the food chain.
- Dr. Sunil Gamage: Transforming of pastoralism and implications for the indigenous livestock and poultry population in Sri Lanka

### Discussion on Strategic Priorities for Action

The delegates then went through the Draft “Strategic Priorities for Action” that are to be agreed upon at the Interlaken Conference and discussed where the individual cornerstones could be accommodated.

#### Issues discussed

##### 1. Loss of grazing land and traditional knowledge leads to erosion of animal genetic resources

In India some of the best breeds of livestock, for instance the camel, Nari cattle, Marwari sheep, Toda and Chilikula buffalo maintained by traditional communities are under threat due to their access to grazing land and forests being restricted by government policies. Traditional communities are forced to abandon their profession and the younger generation migrates to the cities.

##### 2. Intensive, industrial food production systems suffer from high vulnerability while narrowing animal genetic diversity.

In order to address short term food security, government policies encourage intensive food production systems. This provides large amounts of animal products to meet urban

demands. But these systems are extremely vulnerable, and, in case of Avian Flu, the local systems are sacrificed for their protection.

### **3. Threat to right to breed**

Corporates such as Monsanto are trying to obtain patents on breeding processes which may pose threat to traditional breeding adopted by local communities. Therefore it is necessary to protect the rights of communities to breed. For many years, some governments have tried to impose Artificial Insemination on farmers, without providing information on the origin of the semen. For instance, in Rajasthan, government has pushed A.I. with exotic breeds since 30 years, without any positive impact.

### **4. Livestock Keepers' Rights not included in the State of the World Report on Animal Genetic Resources**

This report that is a compilation of reports from 169 countries will be released at the FAO's Conference in September 2007 in Interlaken. Although livestock keepers are requesting recognition of their rights, and have developed a set of "cornerstones" in a process spanning more than six years, the Livestock Keepers' Rights were not included in the SOW Report, because no government has been supporting them.

### **5. Training and Capacity Building of Livestock Keepers**

Livestock keepers maintaining best breeds in the country are not at all included or consulted while making policies. Decision-making authorities are only involving scientists and officials and the voice of pastoralists is not incorporated in their statements. In order to strengthen the role of livestock keepers in maintaining native breeds at community level or acknowledging their environmental services, a capacity building process is urgent.

## **Evening Programme**

The evening programme included a shopping excursion to the Sadri-market and the performance of a Pabuji parh by Bhopa Tolaramji around the campfire.

## **28th February**

On this last morning, the delegates discussed and strategized how the bundle of Livestock Keepers' Rights could become more universally accepted and There was a call for forming the LIFE-Network to expand its activities in other countries and become "LIFE-International". The organizers proposed a vote of thanks to the participants who also expressed their appreciation for the workshop.

### **Big Thank you!**

The LIFE-Network, including Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan, SEVA, and the League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development, would like to thank all participants for their willingness to engage with pastoralists, for listening to livestock keepers' problems, and for sharing their expertise. They also gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance by HIVOS, Ford Foundation, WISP (World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism) that made this workshop possible, as well as programmatic support by Misereor and Swedbio.

### **For more information, contact**

P. Vivekanandan, Coordinator, LIFE- India, numvali@sancharnet.in  
 Hanwant Singh Rathore, Director, LPPS, camelherds@yahoo.co.in  
 Ilse Köhler-Rollefson, League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development  
 ilse@pastoralpeoples.org