



Role of livestock keepers in the conservation of farm animal diversity and implementation of the Global Plan of Action

Evelyn Mathias, League for Pastoral
Peoples and Endogenous Livestock
Development, Germany
evelyn@mamud.com



LEAGUE FOR
PASTORAL PEOPLES
AND ENDOGENOUS
LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT



Definition and abbreviations

Livestock keepers = farmers and herders

Pastoralists = mobile and nomadic
herders

GPA = Global Plan of Action

SPA = Strategic Priority Area



LEAGUE FOR
PASTORAL PEOPLES
AND ENDOGENOUS
LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT



Overview

- ✦ Introduction: no livestock keepers, no breeds
- ✦ What do livestock keepers have to offer for the Global Plan of Action ?
- ✦ Matching livestock keepers' knowledge and practices with the Global Plan of Action
- ✦ Strengthening livestock keepers' role in conserving farm animal diversity





No livestock keepers, no breeds

Past

- ✦ Livestock keepers have been crucial to breed development through
 - ◆ Using the animals
 - ◆ Exposing them to different environments
 - ◆ Purposive selection

Present

- ✦ Livestock keepers continue keeping and stewarding their breeds
- ✦ Their livelihoods especially in marginal areas often depend on these breeds





Introduction: no livestock keepers, no breeds

- ✦ Global Plan of Action recognises the key role of livestock keepers in breed development and maintenance

Future ?

What will be the future role of livestock keepers in farm animal diversity conservation and the implementation of the Global Plan of Action?



LEAGUE FOR
PASTORAL PEOPLES
AND ENDOGENOUS
LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT



What do livestock keepers have to offer for the GPA?

Livestock keepers

- ♦ interact with their animals every day
- ♦ they observe what and how the animals are doing
- ♦ they try new things and experiment

As the result they

- ♦ have a large body of knowledge and information on their animals
- ♦ developed many practices adapted to local conditions





What do livestock keepers have to offer for the GPA?

Livestock keepers have information on their breeds' characteristics such as

- ◆ Hardiness and ability to cope with environmental and climatic stress
- ◆ Production potential
- ◆ Management and feeding requirements
- ◆ Problems and diseases
- ◆ The surrounding environment





What do livestock keepers have to offer for the GPA?

Many livestock keepers are skilled breeders. For example,

- ◆ They select breeding animals based on sets of selection criteria that vary between breeds, societies, etc.
- ◆ They restrict male animals from breeding
- ◆ They have customs that further the exchange of breeding animals
- ◆ They have breeding institutions – e.g., keeping a village bull and changing it every three years (agropastoralists in Rajasthan)





What do livestock keepers have to offer for the GPA?

Livestock keepers

- ✦ **Contribute to wild biodiversity**
 - ♦ Example Spain: very rich in biodiversity; biodiversity especially high along the traditional pastoral routes of shepherds
 - ♦ Pastoralists in Iran hang little bags of seeds from preferred fodder plants around the neck of their sheep. During grazing the seeds drop out through little holes in the bags and are worked into to the ground by the hooves of the sheep
- ✦ **Have experience in using marginal areas unsuited for non-irrigated crops**





What do livestock keepers have to offer for the GPA?

Many societies have traditional institutions that regulate the use of natural resources and try to prevent overuse

Examples:

- ✦ Pastoral institutions regulating the mobile use of scarce resources
 - ✦ For sustainable use is grazing duration important, not only number of animals/area!
- ✦ Social fencing: e.g., holy forests, prohibiting areas close to villages for grazing during certain times, etc.





Matching livestock keepers' knowledge and practices and the GPA

Strategic Priority Areas:

- ✦ Characterization, inventory and monitoring
- ✦ Sustainable use and development
- ✦ Conservation
- ✦ Policies, institutions and capacity building



LEAGUE FOR
PASTORAL PEOPLES
AND ENDOGENOUS
LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT



Characterization, inventory and monitoring (SPA1)

Livestock keepers can provide inputs into

- ✦ Breed characterization and inventories
- ✦ Monitoring of trends and risks on the ground; involvement in early warning systems
- ✦ Selecting indicators and criteria for research on breeds and breed comparisons





Sustainable use and development (SPA2)

Livestock keepers can

- ✦ provide inputs into the development of breeding objectives and the valuation of local breeds
- ✦ (help) select animals for breeding schemes
- ✦ provide agro-ecosystem services
 - ◆ Europe: Landscape maintenance through grazing, for nature conservation and economic use
- ✦ Produce niche products from local breeds for niche markets





Conservation (SPA 3)

Livestock keepers can

- ✦ Provide inputs into priority setting for breeding programmes
- ✦ Share the information they have on their breeds
- ✦ (Help) select animals for breeding schemes
- ✦ Keep (continue keeping) local breeds
- ✦ Identify research needs that can facilitate the conservation
- ✦ Become partners in field research and in-situ trials





Policies, institutions and capacity-building (SPA 4)

Livestock keepers can point out

- ✦ Policies that further and hinder in-situ conservation
- ✦ Policies that enable them to continue stewarding a breed
- ✦ Research priorities relevant to their conditions





Policies, institutions and capacity-building (SPA 4)

Livestock keepers can share their information, experiences, and knowledge with livestock keepers from other regions

- ♦ E.g, livestock keepers from the North can help colleagues in the South to set up breeding organisations
- ♦ Livestock keepers in the South can inform on how to cope with droughts





Facilitating livestock keepers' role in conservation

- ✦ Why do livestock keepers keep local breeds?
 - ◆ They keep them because they always had them/have got them from their parents, etc.
 - ◆ Hobby, idealism, revival of tradition
 - ◆ Comparative advantages of the breed
 - ◆ Food, livelihood, income
 - ◆ Lifestyle





Facilitating livestock keepers' role in conservation

What can facilitate their role in conservation?

- ✦ Genuine recognition of the role of livestock keepers as creators and custodians of breeds – livestock keepers should be viewed and involved as active partners and key players, not merely as action targets!





Facilitating livestock keepers' role in conservation

- ✦ Support for livestock keepers to combine conservation with sustainable use through supporting the development of niche markets
- ✦ Access to appropriate services
- ✦ Training and capacity-building
- ✦ Involvement as partners in decision-making on
 - ◆ Strategies and development plans
 - ◆ Policies
 - ◆ Research





Facilitating livestock keepers' role in conservation

- ✦ Incentives for conservation through
 - ♦ paying for the services livestock keepers provide (e.g., breed conservation, landscape management and nature conservation)
 - ♦ Policies that support the conservation of the respective ecosystems
- ✦ Support to livestock keepers to make their breeds known
 - ♦ E.g., facilitate participation in exhibitions like “Grüne Woche” in Berlin





Facilitating livestock keepers' role in conservation

- ✦ Special measures for endangered populations during the control of epidemics (vaccinations, quarantine, etc)
- ✦ Special conservation breeding programmes for endangered populations – for example by widening the selection criteria for breeding animals

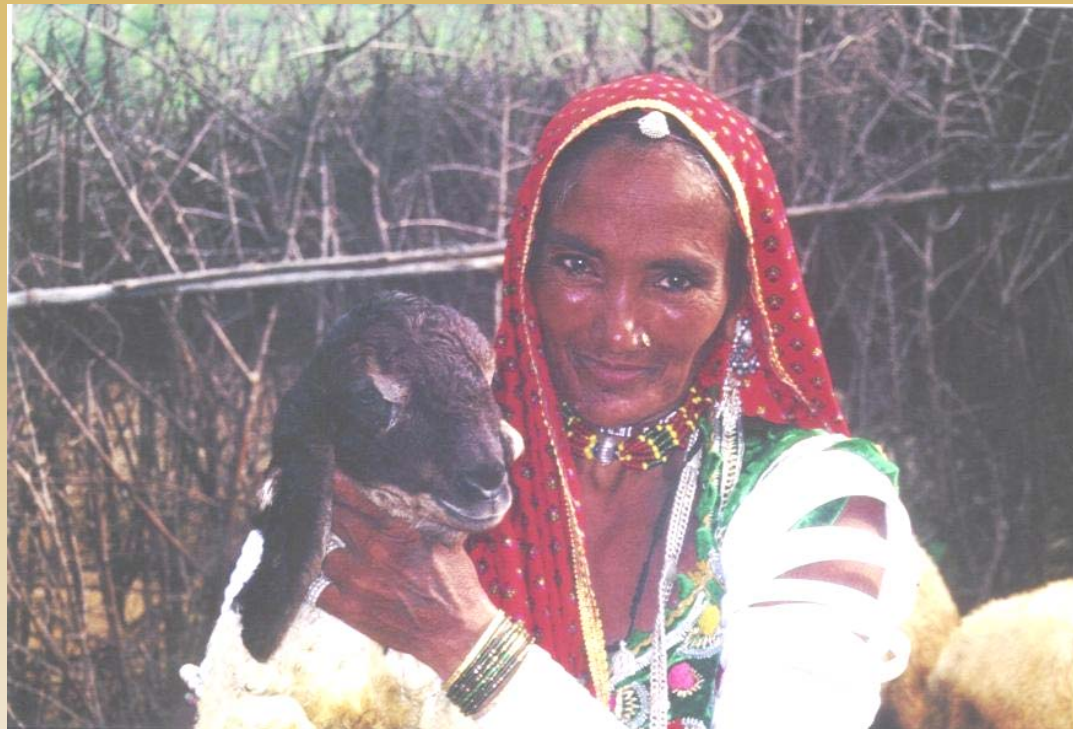




Conclusions

- ✦ Livestock keepers act as custodians of breeds and provide many services to society
- ✦ They are key to successful widespread in-situ conservation
- ✦ The “how” of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action will make the difference: Livestock keepers should be partners in conservation, not targets of programmes





Thanks to

- * ERF and the HIVOS-Oxfam Novib Biodiversity Fund, Misereor and Swedbio for financial support
- * Ilse Koehler-Rollefson and Antje Feldmann for inputs
- * www.pastoralpeoples.org, www.lifeinitiative.net



LEAGUE FOR
PASTORAL PEOPLES
AND ENDOGENOUS
LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT