

Livestock farming with nature

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Crucial role of pastoralists

Pastoralists and small-scale livestock keepers are crucial to conserving farm animal genetic resources.

Actions to support indigenous and local communities

- *Veterinary and extension services... micro-credit for women... access to natural resources and to the market, resolving land tenure issues... recognition of cultural practices and values... adding value to... products*
- *Dialogue among indigenous and rural communities and scientists and government officials... to integrate traditional knowledge with scientific approaches*
- *Development of niche markets for products derived from indigenous and local species and breeds.*

– FAO Global Plan of Action on Animal Genetic Resources,

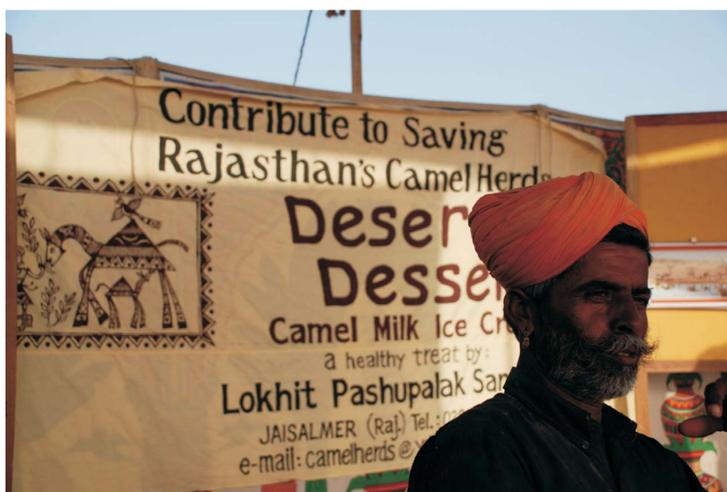


Camels can even exploit salt flats

Local breeds as basis for development

Local breeds form a better basis for livestock development than introduced or cross-bred animals.

- **Part of agro-ecosystems.** They are important links in the web of wild and domestic biodiversity. Local ecosystems depend on local breeds.
- **Efficient resource use.** They exploit natural vegetation and low-grade crop by-products. They do not need expensive concentrates. (High-performance breeds need imported commercial animal feeds that have a huge carbon footprint.)
- **Locally adapted.** They are adapted to local diseases and need less medicine than imported breeds. They are less prone to catastrophic losses.
- **Under local control.** Local people have managed breeding for many generations. (Unlike hybrid chickens and pigs, no need to buy new replacement stock.)
- **High-value products.** Local breeds produce tasty products, sought after by consumers. More high-value niche products are being developed from local breeds.



Educating pastoralists about the economic potential of their camels



Educating consumers about camel milk ice cream

Building Rajasthan herders' capacity and adding product value Example of the LIFE approach

Camels convert scattered vegetation of the Thar Desert into animal protein and energy. But with spreading irrigation and motor transport, farmers came to see camels as backward, and even as a threat. Rajasthan's camel population has dwindled by almost 50%.

Products and services from camels

- **Food from milk:** Milk, yoghurt, ice cream, sweets
- **Goods:** Rugs (hair), chairs (leather), jewellery, inlaid furniture (bones)
- **Services:** Transport, ploughing, romantic desert safaris...

LIFE member **Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan** helps camel breeders realise this economic potential. Current efforts focus on camel milk.

Camel milk

- Healthy alternative to cow and buffalo milk
- Traditional cure for tuberculosis and typhoid
- Contains enzymes with anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties
- Contains insulin-like substance that reduces blood sugar levels

Activities

- Consumer education on benefits of camel milk
- Demand for fresh camel milk by diabetes patients
- Promoting low-calorie ice cream to tourists



Chattar Singh, a pioneer in camel milk marketing

Conclusions

Local breeds have potential as basis for sustainable development. A paradigm shift is needed in livestock development to strengthen livestock keepers' organisations and support value addition and niche marketing.

Benefits of new approach

- Invigorated regional economies
- Reduced rural-urban migration
- Sustainable use of domestic and wild biodiversity
- Reduced problems of desertification
- Reduced need to transport animal feeds
- Lower impact on climate



LIFE Network

Local Livestock For Empowerment of Rural People

- Links conservation of local breeds with rural livelihoods
- Supports collective and community-based conservation of animal genetic resources
- Strengthens rural livelihoods by developing and valorising indigenous livestock

Main approaches

- **Document** indigenous livestock breeds
- **Lobby** for Livestock Keepers' Rights
- **Explore value-addition** and marketing

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Acknowledgements

HIVOS-Oxfam Novib Biodiversity Fund and **Misereor** for supporting the LIFE Network
Ford Foundation for supporting work with herders in Rajasthan