

Managing pastoral resources and land use: technical and socio-institutional aspects

Summary of the recommendations of the first working group

Comments

To apply pasture management techniques (such as controlling the carrying capacity) effectively, the rangeland should be owned by an individual or a fixed community. However, pasture quality varies with space and time, and this limits such techniques in the Sahelian context.

Recommendations to improve pasture management

- Adapt management techniques to the agro-ecological calendar of the rangelands and the production. For such techniques to ‘stick’, and work long term, the technical and institutional capabilities of the agro-pastoral communities will have to be improved.
- Analyse the technical, ecological, economical and social impact of management techniques related to improving the local ecology before applying them. The local capability to start and execute these measures and management techniques should be improved. In a more general way, the capability of the rural communities to control and manage their natural resources (formation, raising awareness, institution building) should be improved.
- Research the advantages and disadvantages of the various crop residues used within different farm management systems. Develop projects to highlight the various benefits of crop residues as soil additives and as fodder.
- Research the profitability of fodder crops in various production systems. Develop projects to improve the productivity, conservation and use of fodder crops.

Recommendations for development planning

- Combine efforts by local and (supra)national institutions to develop forecasting and planning tools for developing the livestock production chain. In particular, introduce geographical information systems and develop bio-economic simulation models to evaluate and test management approaches and development policies. On a regional level, development planning should include improvements to the production and marketing chains, such as safeguarding cattle passage corridors and rearranging/adjusting pastures used during tracking.
- Development planning should be partially decentralised and integrate livestock production on four levels: local (local codes), regional, national and international. Administrative and judiciary institutions should recognise pastoralism as a valuable means of production using common natural resources, and so provide equal rights for all populations to access common natural resources.
- A set of local codes for pasture management should be established.