

Chapter 6 PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

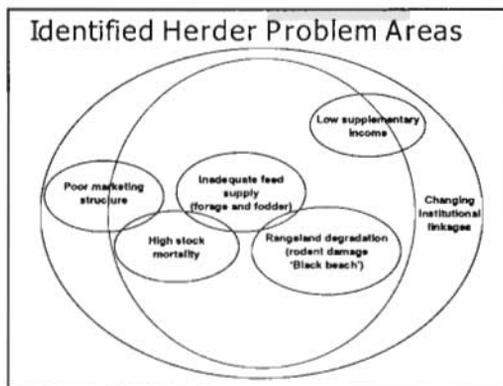
A summary of discussions of participants at the Concluding Seminar, reviewing past and future project work in the livestock sector of Qinghai Province

This summary follows slides used during the presentation and discussions.

6.1 Overview of Discussions

The 38 senior scientists, policy makers, and decision makers who participated in the concluding seminar represented the following organisations: at the national level, the Ministry of Foreign Technical Cooperation and the Delegation of the European Union; at the provincial level, the Provincial Government, the Bureau of Animal Husbandry (Leadership and various departments including the Academy, Finances, the Project Management Unit, the Grassland Station, Veterinary Station, and the School for Animal Husbandry), the Department of Foreign Technical Cooperation, and the EU team providing technical assistance; and at the prefecture level, the Prefecture Government and the Bureau of Animal Husbandry. This group was considered eminently suitable for such a task.

The meeting assumed that, with the growing interest in the West, the number of projects and programmes would grow. Both Government and foreign donors are mobilising funds for development of the rangeland ecological system. It is thus more than likely that development interventions in the area will continue and, in that context, the lessons learned from five years of QLDP work should play a role in the decision-making and planning of future efforts.



QLDP has been unique in that it has brought various specialist fields, which usually operate separately, under one umbrella. In this way, an integrated perspective can be taken of the basic issues at stake in the Qinghai Tibetan Plateau, allowing the problems observed to be placed in relation to each other. Any discussion about development options for the Southern Qinghai area will benefit greatly from this integrated perspective, because it makes it clear that the constraints are due to the interplay of many different factors.

Inadequate Feed Supply

Increasing fodder and forage production

- Select improved perennial fodder crops
- Develop appropriate techniques for herder sown pasture
- Develop farm level techniques for processing and storage of fodder
- Strengthen grassland monitoring system
- Evaluate appropriate stocking levels
- Train researchers in participatory techniques
- Support use of GIS and RS
- Strengthen extension packages on fodder production
- Incorporate new extension methods
- Involve herders in all aspects of trials
- Promote commercial oat and forage seed production

High Stock mortality

Improving Veterinary Support

- Develop standard treatment for control of stock diseases
- Develop standard treatment for control of stock parasites
- Investigate integrated control of stock diseases
- Investigate drug resistance in livestock disease control
- Train researchers in participatory techniques
- Strengthen extension packages on parasite and disease control
- Incorporate new extension methods
- Involve herders in all aspects of trials
- Strengthen system of veterinary medicine supply

Rangeland Degradation

Grassland Rehabilitation

- Establish monitoring system for rehabilitation of natural grassland
- Evaluate stocking levels
- Undertake study on indigenous knowledge skills
- Develop appropriate techniques for herder sown pasture
- Obtain and evaluate seed drill
- Train researchers in participatory techniques
- Support use of GIS and RS in monitoring and evaluation
- Establish area of rangeland improvement
- Incorporate new extension methods into field activities
- Involve herders in all aspects of trials
- Develop livestock and forage management techniques

Low Stock Offtake

Improving Marketing Systems

- Evaluate benefits of improved market structures
- Evaluate present access constraints and potential for improvements
- Support use of GIS in evaluation
- Develop system of market information
- Review potential for market incentives

Rangeland Degradation

Rodent Control

- Survey rodent distribution and abundance
- Evaluate impact of rodent grazing and links to rehabilitation
- Monitor population dynamics
- Train researchers in participatory techniques
- Develop linkages with overseas research organisations
- Support use of GIS and RS
- Select and screen control agents
- Develop cost effective methods of bait distribution
- Test attractants to improve bait uptake
- Develop technical manuals prepare discussion papers
- Technical in-country attachment
- Establish demonstration areas
- Develop new methods for field activities
- Involve herders in all aspects of trials
- In-service training for current extension staff
- Overseas and in country training

Changing Institutional Linkages

Enhancing institutional linkages to support planning at all levels

- Strengthen information system to support government decision making
- Enhance procedures for planning consultation processes
- Train government staff in rangeland and livestock production systems
- Establish system for improved use of meteorological data
- Support use of GIS in planning and evaluation
- Support extension planning

Low Supplementary Incomes

Weaving and alternative income activities

- Socio-economic research on alternative livelihoods
- Pilot project in commercial production of woven goods
- Incorporate new extension methods into field activities

Changing Institutional Linkages

Improved support to the extension service

- Investigate indigenous communications systems
- Socioeconomic research into extension delivery
- Develop extension training materials
- In-service training for current extension staff
- Develop new methods for field activities
- Overseas and in-country training for extension education staff

A discussion about priorities hence becomes both more complicated and more realistic. Being aware of the interconnectedness of the different constraining factors makes it more difficult to choose a single path for improvement. The findings from QLDP have only reinforced the conclusion that a development strategy for the Southern Qinghai region must be based on a multi-pronged approach where research, extension, and the facilitation of enabling activities collaborate to achieve a result. This was the challenge with which the Seminar participants were faced.

The discussion on Priorities for Future Interventions was started with an outline of the overall objective: Supporting the Herder. Within this objective, four separate elements can be recognised: the herder, local management, research, and extension.

At herder level, many problems have been identified (a slide was shown 'Identified Herder Problem Areas') some of which are situated at farm level and/or in the herding area, while others are situated wholly or partly outside the herding area. The various problems overlap.

For each of the six main problem areas identified at herder level, an analysis was made of how improvements could be achieved. These were listed on the eight slides given on the previous two pages.

The problem areas were thus studied and possible interventions identified. These included: for High Stock Mortality (Improving Veterinary Support); Inadequate Feed Supply (Increasing Fodder and Forage Production); Rangeland Degradation (Rodent Control and Grassland Rehabilitation); Low Offtake (Improving Market Systems); Low Incomes (Promoting Weaving and Other Alternative Income Sources); and Enhancing Institutional Performance and Linkages.

The result was a list of theoretically desirable interventions, altogether 50 in number, which was then subdivided into three focus areas: research, extension, and enabling activities (a slide was shown 'Integrated Interventions').

The Seminar participants were then asked to score each of the proposed interventions into one of three priority classes, A, B, or C, in which A stands for 'highest priority', B for 'medium priority', and C for 'less important'. Discussion with fellow participants was encouraged. It was interesting to observe how most Chinese finished their task quickly while the foreign TA group took a much longer time and lively discussion to complete their scoring. In the final analysis all answers were taken together without subdivision according to the participants' backgrounds.

The results, after weighting the As with a factor 4, the Bs with a factor 2, and the Cs with a factor 1, were as shown in the last table.

The following points have led to relatively long discussions.

- The high priority given to research into appropriate techniques for pasture management and disease control
- The high priority given to the role of research in support to decision-making, planning, and policy formulation (information systems, monitoring, planning procedures)

	Number of participants scoring this activity's importance as ...			Weighted score (n*factor)
	High (factor=4)	Medium (factor=2)	Low (factor=1)	
Research activities				
Develop appropriate techniques for herder-sown pastures	18	5	7	89
Investigate mutual integration of control methods for treatment of livestock diseases	13	13	4	82
Strengthen information systems in support of government decision making	13	12	5	81
Enhance procedures for planning consultation processes	14	9	6	80
Monitor stocking levels	15	6	8	80
Carry out socioeconomic research on alternative livelihoods	14	7	9	79
Evaluate present market access constraints and the potential for improvement	9	15	5	71
Establish a monitoring system specifically for the occurrence of 'black beach'	10	10	10	70
Develop a standard integrated treatment for control of common intestinal parasites	8	14	8	68
Establish a monitoring system of quality changes of grassland	9	9	12	66
Investigate breed improvement	10	6	9	61
Investigate occurrence of pathogen resistance against currently used drugs	4	17	9	59
Carry out socioeconomic research into extension delivery	5	15	9	59
Develop a standard integrated treatment for control of common stock diseases	3	17	10	56
Investigate re-sowing techniques and technologies	7	5	18	56
Obtain and test the appropriateness of a seed drill (for direct sowing)	7	6	16	56
Survey spatial distribution of rodent populations	4	13	13	55
Select and screen rodenticides and other control agents	6	8	15	55
Evaluate impact of rodent grazing and links to rehabilitation of rangeland	5	10	14	54
Analyse the benefits of an improved market structure	5	11	12	54
Improve the monitoring system of the dynamics of rodent populations	4	12	13	53
Investigate indigenous communication systems	4	10	16	52
Test attractants to improve bait uptake	2	12	15	47
Undertake studies on indigenous knowledge in livestock management and disease control	2	10	18	46
Develop cost-effective methods of bait distribution	3	8	18	46
Extension Activities				
Strengthen extension packages on parasite and disease control	15	13	2	88
Establish rangeland rehabilitation demonstration areas	16	9	4	86
Strengthen extension packages on fodder production	13	13	4	82
Develop a market information dissemination system	13	11	6	80
Establish rodent control demonstration areas	12	13	5	79
Incorporate new extension methods	9	17	4	74
Develop livestock and forage management techniques	8	17	5	71
In-service training for current extension staff	8	17	5	71
Involve herders in all aspects of trials	10	10	9	69
Support extension planning	9	10	11	67

	Number of participants scoring this activity's importance as . . .			Weighted score
	High (factor=4)	Medium (factor=2)	Low (factor=1)	(n*factor)
Carry out a pilot project in commercial production of woven goods	3	13	14	52
Develop new methods for field activities	3	12	14	50
Other Support Activities				
Train researchers in participatory techniques	16	10	4	88
Support the use of GIS/RS as part of a Decision Support System for research and planning	14	13	3	85
Provide technical in-country attachment	12	11	7	77
Train government staff in rangeland and livestock production systems	9	16	5	73
Develop training material based on existing knowledge/findings	9	14	7	71
Promote commercial oats and fodder seed production	10	10	10	70
Provide overseas and in-country training	9	12	9	69
Strengthen the system of veterinary drug supply	9	12	9	69
Develop linkages with overseas' research organisations	8	13	9	67
Establish a system for improved use of meteorological data	6	15	8	62
Develop technical manuals and discussion papers on rodent control	5	14	11	59

- The high priority given to investigating economic aspects (alternative livelihoods, marketing potential)
- The high priority given to the technical side of extension (improving packages for disease and parasite control, fodder production, establishing demonstrations for rangeland rehabilitation and rodent control) over the methodological side
- The relative importance attached to training and networking as support activities
- The low interest in research into indigenous knowledge and indigenous communication
- The low priority given to research on rodent control (is this an indicator of distrust in the technology, or a conviction that nothing more can be done ?)
- The low priority given to the methodological and participatory aspects of extension and to extension planning
- The apparent lack of insight into the importance of support activities, or the lack of understanding of the place and purpose of such activities because the listing in this category is rather incoherent

6.2 Future Project Implementation

The seminar participants agreed that, within any future project, management systems should be developed that emphasise the following.

- A firm research basis with links to a wide range of provincial institutions and direction towards research paper production, presentation, and publication nationally and internationally within the objectives of the project.
- A strong capacity building base, including training using a wide range of techniques
 - professional updating through attendance at in-country and overseas' personal development training activities;
 - career development through in-country and overseas' M.Sc. programmes;

- direct management and administrative experience through shadowing experienced staff in relevant organisations; and
- direct hands-on skill training and improvement through shadowing experienced staff in relevant organisations
- Strengthening of counterpart skills in the use of planning, monitoring, and evaluation techniques
- The involvement of a parallel organisation in poverty alleviation at the earliest opportunity
- Development of acceptable alternative structures through which the extension component can be delivered

6.3 Future Livestock Project Components

The weighted prioritised activity list produced by the seminar group in the area of research provided a useful basis on which to develop a set of immediate objectives.

In the area of research the emphasis within the first ten proposals concentrates on four areas.

- Grassland rehabilitation
- Livestock production and disease control
- Strengthening information and planning systems
- Alternative livelihoods

In the area of extension, the emphasis within the first five proposals concentrates on three areas.

- Strengthening of extension packages
- Establishment of practical demonstration areas
- Development of a market information system.

In the area of support activities, the emphasis within the first five proposals concentrates on two areas.

- Staff training activities
- The use of GIS