



*Mountain Farming Systems*

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# **Urea Molasses Block A Feed Supplement for Mountain Areas**

THE BHUTANESE EXPERIENCE AND ITS REPLICATION POSSIBILITIES

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## PREFACE

To fulfill its mandate, namely, the promotion of ecologically sound and economically viable development of mountain areas and improvement in the living conditions of mountain people, ICIMOD undertakes several activities in close collaboration with the agencies and experts from countries within the HKH Region.

One of the key activities, in the above context, implemented by the Farming Systems' Programme during 1991-1992, is the identification of successful development experiences relevant to mountain areas and facilitation of their replication in different parts of the HKH Region. This involves identification and assessment of preconditions for the success of a given initiative. Associated activities include documentation and dissemination; location of suitable areas for replication; interaction with agencies which can undertake demonstration and implement the activity; training of the concerned people; and other necessary support facilities.

Mountain Farming Systems' Programme work along these lines in the beginning of 1991, and has since then a diverse process across its work. This work is mainly supported by the Asian Development Bank.

The present report documents experience in the use of Urea Molasses Block as winter feed supplement for ruminants in the mountain area of Bhutan. The report, after highlighting the major problems of winter

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development and winter use of UMB. Empirical evidence from laboratory, government farm, and village experiences are presented to show the value of UMB as a winter feed supplement.

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Mountain Farming Systems commenced work along these lines in the beginning of 1991, and has more than a dozen success stories to its credit. This work is mainly supported by the Asian Development Bank.

The present report documents experiences in the use of Urea Molasses Block as winter feed supplement for ruminants in the mountain areas of Bhutan. The report, after highlighting the major problems of winter feeding in mountain areas, establishes that UMB is an important low-cost, local resource-based option which provides high economic gains through increased animal productivity. This is more so where other options are not available.

In addition to describing the simple technology, the report discusses the preconditions required for the development and wider use of UMB. Empirical evidence from laboratory, government farm, and village experiences are presented to show the value of UMB as a winter feed supplement.

Since the purpose of documenting Bhutan's successful experiences with UMB was to explore the possibility of its replication elsewhere, prospects for its development and use in Nepal were explored, based on the livestock situation, winter feed problems, farmers' conditions, and the status of required raw materials for UMB.

Well before the report was finalised, its results were shared with potential promoters of UMB. An enterprising industrial firm, engaged in the production of animal feed, experimented with UMB and the initial results encouraged them to adopt UMB as one of their products. The necessary groundwork for commercial production of UMB to satisfy the winter feed requirements of ruminants in Nepal has already been completed. Thus, in the present case the follow up action to ICIMOD's initiative has taken place much quicker than expected.

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