Mountain Farming Systems

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Management of Pastoral Systems in the Mountains

EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS FROM WEST SICHUAN, CHINA

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INTRODUCTION

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Environmental and Climate Change

RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT

Arboreal Canopy in Subtropical Forest

Zone A: The Tall and Dense Zone

Zone B: Open and Tall Zone

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IMPACTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLIMATE CHANGES ON WET SOILS

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Climate Change

Adaptability

Physical Features

The Subtropical Forest

Adaptability

Physical Features

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Physical Features

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Adaptability

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Management

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PREFACE

In order to fulfill its mandate, e.g., the promotion of ecologically sound and economically viable development of mountain areas and improvement of the living conditions of mountain people, ICIMOD undertakes several activities in collaboration with agencies from the countries of the HKH Region.

The exchange of development experiences between different countries in order to facilitate replication of successful initiatives from one location or country to others is one among these activities.

As a part of its work programme during 1991-1993, the Mountain Farming Systems' Programme of ICIMOD identified various success stories for replication elsewhere. The Chinese approach to management of highland pastoral systems is one such case and has considerably enhanced the productivity of the system in recent decades.

This paper documents experiences in West Sichuan (China). The key features of the Chinese approach, which could be profitably adopted by other high mountain pastoral areas, are: focus on diverse local animals and local grazing plant species. Unlike conventional development interventions that focus on new introductions, China through public interventions attempts to better manage and improve environmentally well-adapted local (animal and grazing) resources by ameliorating deficits through evolving local resource-based options. This has helped maintain the biodiversity and has enhanced the economic gains of local communities.

Besides providing a glimpse of the diverse animals and grazing resources that exist in West Sichuan, the paper establishes a need for replication of the Chinese approach elsewhere in the HKH Region. The paper documents a way in which high mountain 'niche' can be identified and harnessed on a sustained basis without undue disruptions associated with external interventions.