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## Sustainable Grassland Management--A Case-Based Analysis of 3 Tibetan Villages in Sichuan, China

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## **Sustainable grassland management —a case-based analysis of 3 Tibetan Villages in Sichuan , China**

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**Key words** : community management , participatory Indicator development , co-management principles

**Introduction** Herders in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan have a rich experience in community management of grasslands . However , it is important to inform government grassland policy developers by condensing this information and presenting it as processes and indicators of performance , that implementing officials can recognize and understand . This would help to gain greater government recognition for the positive role that these traditional perspectives play in maintaining good grassland management .

**Materials and methods** The study utilized Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods in three Tibetan villages to understand how herders conceived of key concepts in sustainable grassland management . Participatory mapping , village transects , small group and individual interviews were used to obtain triangulated information which described the processes and indicators of village sustainable grassland management and effective policy implementation .

**Results** The study identified a framework and series of key concepts which villagers considered were important in realizing sustainable grassland management . The first thematic area was community grassland management . This involved understanding (1) herder standards and indicators for pasture and definitions of "good grassland" ; (2) the process of allocating grassland user rights ; (3) herder livestock strategies ; (4) community processes for rotational grazing ( methods , relocation processes , selection of main homestead site , grassland contracting ) ; (5) fencing and group grazing ; (6) grassland co-management ; (7) strategies for overcoming problems with over-wintering ; and (8) conflict resolution . The poor understanding of these concepts is one important source of policy bias .

The second thematic area was the effectiveness of community management . This involved understanding (1) the key content and methods of grassland community management ; (2) key groups and their roles in community management ; (3) principles of community grassland management ; and (4) the relationship between community management and sustainable grassland management .

**Conclusions** The community members have their own view and experience for their grassland , the grassland policies makers should pay enough attention to understand the local herders . This would facilitate the policy implementation process . A good community management plan is the basis of grassland sustainable development . The community management factors should be one of key parts of a criteria and indicator system of grassland sustainable development .