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The XXI International Grassland Congress / VIII International Rangeland Congress took place in Hohhot, China from June 29 through July 5, 2008.

Proceedings edited by Organizing Committee of 2008 IGC/IRC Conference

Published by Guangdong People's Publishing House

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Community-based management is the basic way to realize sustainable use and achieve environmental protection for Grasslands on the Tibetan Plateau

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Key words : degradation , community-based management , environmental protection , Tibetan Plateau

Introduction There are many reasons for degradation of grasslands on the Tibetan Plateau in recent years . Various approaches have been used by national and local governments to slow this and some advancements have been made . However , in comparison with these great efforts , little lasting achievement has been realized , and degradation has continued to intensify . These strategies have made little improvement because many of them were just related to techniques for grassland use (eg . rodent control and over-sowing) - few were linked to community-based management . Lack of local resident participation has meant that degradation could not be effectively addressed .

Analysis Based on our past investigation , the rudiments of the group-based management have been adopted in some areas and yielded good results (survey of 529 households showed 70% acceptance) . Generally , three to ten households united voluntarily and co-managed their grassland .

There are many advantages of this grassland use mode . For example , according to their grassland capacity , each individual was allowed to breed a certain number livestock . If anyone exceeded this , other herders required the excess livestock to be dealt with as quickly as possible . Otherwise , a fine was levied for occupying other households' grassland resources . Other advantages of this management method included resource-sharing , helping those facing misfortune , and so on . Based on our investigation , we found that this group mode can disintegrate easily unless it is formalized in a larger community-based management pattern . For instance , about 100 or more households could group as one community , with each community electing a few representatives to deal with daily business , including the management of the projects that are introduced by government agencies or NGOs .

Only those who are directly connected to the grassland resources uses would become managers , and more sustainable use and protection of grassland resources and social harmony could be achieved .