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International Grassland Congress Proceedings

XXI International Grassland Congress / VIII  
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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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## Changes in policy and new challenges for pastoral activities insights from the french experience

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**Key words** : agri-environment, rangelands, public policy, livestock systems, France

Following the important rural crisis of the 1960s, the development of livestock farming in some mountain and rangelands areas of France is mainly based on five driving forces : 1) Man, his will, his know-how and his organizational capacity through collective initiatives with both economic and local rural development goals ; 2) specific assets for local development, including animal resources, a product of rural history and local culture ; 3) public policies support and grants ; 4) local added value through quality of origin labelled products ; 5) partnership of researchers with local stakeholders, including agricultural extension agents, in an interdisciplinary approach .

While French and European Agricultural Policy (CAP) helped modernization of livestock farming in these areas, the environmental stakes came to the fore and the pastoral activities were faced with public policies that spread out in a very complexified framework (including also regional development-concerned). However, environmental concerns emerged as a result of the evolutions of CAP the main driving force of which being the will of UK to get its money back (1980's), then the need to stop the growth of agricultural support expenses (1992), and the World Trade Organization (2003). After the historical division between areas dedicated to production and areas dedicated to nature conservation, CAP increasingly promoted "ecologization" of farmlands and "agriculturalization" of protected areas (by contracts between farmers and the State), implementing a switch of the funding from market support to rural development and natural resources conservation (ex. extensive grazing areas funded by 70% more in 2003), while turning from compulsory practices to an obligation for results. New ecological assessment criteria are tested, for ex. meadows rich in species" (more than 4 defined flower species as habitat descriptors) in northern Alps .

At present, french rangelands are faced with contrasting issues which can be focused on five leading sets of stakes :

1) The acknowledgement-quite recent-of man as a "producer of ecosystems" that are both suppliers of food as well as of "viable, liveable and reproducible" natural surroundings .

2) The face-to-face contact of livestock farming with the society as a whole, its diversified expectations, its economy, its territories ; society witnesses its involvement and quite logically wants to enter the debate through various portals .

3) Technical innovation is not a sufficient condition for ecological redesigning of livestock systems characterized by willingness to move, risks management, adaptability and leading role devoted to internal regulations and to "immaterial engineering" of these systems, taking into account long term, ... Innovations first concern organizational aspects, such as the implementation of innovative legal tools (agri-environmental schemes, ...), partnership-based new approaches (including with local communities), new models for control of rangelands areas, improvement of accessibility and parcelling up, building shelters or transit accommodation ...

The involvement of natural resources managers (parks, ...) is another condition. Technical innovations support these approaches : improvement of rangeland areas (scrub clearing, sowing, ...) ; new facilities for milking or cheese processing in mountain ranges, introduction of defence dogs ; land management for production of biodiversity ; etc ...

4) The need to depart from the rules of the classical standardised or industrialized approaches of the animal feeding on the one hand, of the assessment of animals' qualities and of their breeding improvement on the other hand (ex. stirring browsing intake by herding practices ; proportion of concentrates feeding ; "multipurpose" cow producing both origin labelled cheese and landscapes ; ...) . Such re-designed livestock systems undoubtedly become more complex. The animal becomes a multifunctional tool in support of enlarged aims for the farmer as well as for the society .

5) The direct contact of pastoralists, through their practices, with other various users of rangelands areas ... but also with predators (wolves, bears, ...) and with their protectors, in times where deep ecology as well as wild-scope tourism question the legitimacy of pastoralism for its present occupation of territories. For example, the wolves came back in the French Alps in 1992 ; in 2003, the territory of wolves covered more than 400 000 ha occupied by more than 300 000 sheep (Legéard, 2006) . This situation causes a high increase in work for shepherds (about 50 hours per week in mountain grazing areas) . Thus, pastoral areas become abruptly and durably hazard areas : from accidental (stray dogs, lightning, ...) the hazard turns to be continuous, "structural" in the livestock farming systems .

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