The shift from pastoral to agro-pastoral livelihoods: current challenges and future research priorities

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BACKGROUND

- Somewhat dated data suggests that pastoralism supports livelihoods for approximately 200 million households worldwide (FAO, 2001);

- Evidence of a declining trend in pastoralism with a shift to sedentary agro-pastoral practices;

- Interest in understanding key drivers within this trend, implications for rangeland management, and areas of research interest
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS

Drylands within North Africa & Central-West-South Asia

Drawing on lessons from:

Afghanistan
India
Jordan
Kyrgyz Republic
Morocco
Syria
General challenges to Pastoral Livelihoods

- Overgrazing /uprooting of vegetation
- Spread of invasive species (*Prosopis*)
- Climate change/variability
- Globalization (positive and negative)
- Shifting land use paradigms (with and w/out policy support) and land tenure concerns
- Issues of equity, equality and efficiency
1. Rangelands can be sensitive areas for national security, with implications for both under and over utilization (policy element)

2. Subsidies and market incentives are pervasive, with potential for eradication of natural vegetation (economic element)

3. The role of female engagement in pastoral and agro-pastoral production systems is often not well researched nor well understood from a gendered perspective (social element)
Challenges/Pressures

AGRICULTURAL POLICY:
“STRATEGIC CROPS” & RESTRICTIONS ON CROP MIX CHOICES

SALAMIEH (HAMA), SYRIA

- Mono-cropping → elimination of perennial range species
- Micro-credit may potentially entrench mono-cropping
Competition for Land

Cropping within traditional rangeland areas, but often without appropriate land use planning ... how to foster better economic incentives for inclusive and sustainable forage production systems?
Challenges/Pressures

Supplementation (subsidized barely)
Disruption of conventional grazing systems:
Use of vehicles for transportation of water, as well as flocks to pasture, fosters prolonged grazing on rangelands and lack of effective control
Migration routes depend on availability of water and pasture land.

Distance traveled per day depend on spatial distribution of water resources.

Water from wells or water retention basins

Significant potential for conflict.
Cultural norms and historical practices

Kyrgyz Republic provides potential lessons learned for how to co-ordinate (seasonal) pastoral movements through strengthening sense of community and place.

Photo credit: Aga Khan Development Network
On access to “goods” and “services”...

Context matters

“Horizontal” equity vs. “Vertical” equity

Equality in access is about equal opportunity

Access is a question of supply

“Having” access versus “Gaining” access

Utilization is a question of both supply and demand
1. Paradigm shift away from enhancing productivity of national “strategic” crops (e.g., wheat, barley) towards uncovering “optimal” crop mix choices which include sustainable forage production systems;

2. To better understand the economic potential of rangelands and private incentives for maintenance, as opposed to research on regulatory measures to prevent degradation and overuse (what is the cost of inaction?);

3. A better understanding of intra-household tradeoffs from shifting gender roles as opposed to a sole focus on “empowerment” (issues of equity and equality in access)
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