

The conservation of grasslands and rangeland by pastoralists : challenges and opportunities

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Introduction Pastoralists worldwide keep more than two dozen uniquely adapted livestock species on some 30 .0 million km² of the world land area (Steinfeld et al . , 1997) . The grasslands / rangelands are the base for sustainable livestock production systems and livelihoods of pastoralists (FAO , 2007a ; FAO , 2007b) . Most of them conserve their rangelands / grasslands through mobility , selective grazing , mixed herds , protection , nutrients recycling (Delgado et al . , 1999) and maintenance (FAO , 2007a) , continual selection and culling of livestock ; and harvesting various rangeland resources in a sustainable socio-economic-cum-ecological approach .

Challenges of the conservation of grasslands and rangelands by pastoralists Inappropriate policies on matters affecting pastoralists livelihoods , rampant poverty (Dixon et al . , 2001 ; FAO , 2007b) , competing use (Delgado et al . , 1999 ; FAO , 2007a) , human population pressure , over-exploitation of rangelands / grasslands resources , annual burning of stale pastures , over-grazing , meagre and unreliable rainfall , pollution of water sources , natural disaster and threats of climate change and global warming (Steinfeld et al . , 1997 ; Delgado et al . 1999 ; FAO , 2007b) .

Discussion , recommendations and conclusion Livestock Keepers Rights (what are these-this needs to be clarified) should be legally conferred upon the livestock keepers on their well-adapted breeds (FAO , 2007b) ; that will also enhance in-situ conservation of the grasslands and rangelands by pastoralists (FAO , 2007a) .

Pastoralists require policies that enhance adequate service delivery not only for productivity improvement , sustainable utilisation of their livestock breeds and rangeland resources , but also to maintain what ? conservation (Steinfeld et al . , 1997 ; FAO , 2007a) . Furthermore , industrialists should ensure less release of greenhouse gases for the benefit of livestock and grassland / rangelands conservation . (Unclear what is meant)

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