

Factors related to marketing successes for fibre producers in Middle Asia

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Introduction Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the economic well-being of livestock producers of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan declined dramatically (see Kerven 2003; Kerven *et al.*, 2003). Like the economies in general, the livestock economies are slowly recovering and restructuring. Livestock producers have been encouraged by international market prices to raise sheep, goats, camels, and animals producing specialty fibre. Fine-fibre sheep and goats remain in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, but marketing of fibres from the region is not ideal. As examples, sheep pelts are not sorted and graded, which is expected by international buyers, and cashmere is shorn and sold in bulk. Lastly, marketing opportunities are limited, technology, transportation infrastructure, and market information is lacking, and the bargaining power of individual fibre producers is weak. Under support from the U.S. AID Global Livestock-Collaborative Research Support Program (GL-CRSP) project, “Developing institutions and capacity for sheep and fibre marketing in Central Asia,” we seek to understand the spatial relationships that can help determine success in fibre marketing.

Methods We have gathered data on marketing success and marketing opportunities for livestock producers in the Zhanakurgan region of Kyzyl Orda Oblast, Kazakhstan. In cooperation with the Kyrgyz Sheep Breeders Association, similar data have been gathered within Chui, Talas, and Naryn Regions of Kyrgyzstan. Interviews were carried-out that quantified activities, costs, and incomes for producers. Interviews continue, with data from 25-30 livestock producers in each study site our goal, citing, for instance, transportation costs, decision-making, and knowledge of markets. Spatial data are being extracted from moderate resolution topographic maps and satellite images, combined with data from informants and the literature. Modelling will be used to measure the benefit of transporting fibre to larger markets, versus the costs associated with transport.

Results and Discussion Some interviews have been conducted in Zhanakurgan, quantifying marketing access and prices. Interviews are ongoing in the Talas, Bishkek, and Naryn regions of Kyrgyzstan. Spatial data that will be used to calculate distances travelled have been gathered for Zhanakurgan, Kazakhstan (e.g., Figure 1). The topographic maps were scanned, georectified, and merged to create spatial imagery from which distances can be measured accurately. Regional and national maps have been collected. From the spatial data, the distances to livestock markets, for instance, will be measured. Our analyses are ongoing, but spatial data appear adequate. Data from the Soviet era are ample, and our collaborators inform us that much of the data remain up-to-date.

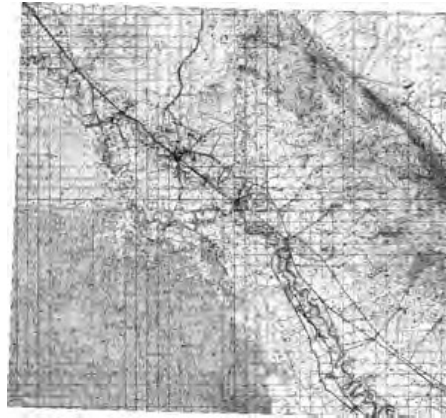


Figure 1 Four 1:200,000 scale topographic maps incorporating Zhanakurgan were merged and positioned geographically, representing an area 160 km wide

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