

# THE LIVING PLATEAU

## Changing Lives of Herders in Qinghai

Concluding Seminar of the Qinghai Livestock Development Project



Editors

Nico van Wageningen

Sa Wenjun



**EU-CHINA**

Qinghai Livestock Development Project  
青海省畜牧业开发项目



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**Cover Plate**  
Dan Miller

**ISBN:** 92 9115 376 1

**Published by**  
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development  
GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal

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This publication was prepared with financial assistance from the Commission of the European Communities and the Government of the P.R. of China. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not represent any official view of the Commission or the Government of the P. R. of China. They are also not attributable to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and do not imply the expression of any opinion concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

# ACKNOWLEDGE FOREWORD

Rangeland ecosystems comprise more than seventy per cent of the land cover of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region, with the vast majority located in the alpine zone of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau of China. Most of this vast area is subject to very erratic environmental conditions in terms of climate and forage availability. Although relatively sparse in human population compared to areas where there is more rainfall and where elevations are lower, this area serves as an invaluable forage resource for millions of livestock; and livestock account for a relatively high percentage of the economic output of these regions. The Plateau region also provides important watershed functions and contains a diverse array of flora and fauna. Given the importance of rangelands in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) initiated the Regional Rangeland Programme in 1999 with the aim of improving understanding of rangeland ecosystems and pastoral production systems, to develop capacities in interdisciplinary and participatory approaches to pastoral development, and to build networks among those working in pastoral regions.

ICIMOD's first contact with the Qinghai Livestock Development Project (QLDP) funded by the European Union was in 1999 when our Rangeland Management Specialist visited the project site in Dari County. Since that time, we have maintained an on-going professional relationship for information exchange with staff of the project. The idea for this book to be published by ICIMOD arose out of our mutual desire to promote the work of the project. Their successes, and the challenges they have faced, are representative of the problems and potentials of the marginal environments of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau region. Their experiences provide valuable lessons for those professionals working in pastoral development, and serve as excellent 'fodder' for future innovation and policy.

The publication of this book has been generously funded by the European Union. Although primarily highlighting the outcomes of the QLDP, it also complements ICIMOD's ongoing programme related to rangelands and pastoral development. The lessons offered by the QLDP not only help us to adjust our own programmes, but also provide valuable guidance to our partner institutions that work in similar environments. For ICIMOD it is a great privilege to share these experiences with others in the region.

Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell  
Director General

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors would like to thank those who have written down their experiences and observations in more than 80 papers and 40 reports — they are mentioned in the lists of references; the colleagues who summarised these documents and inspired their systematic discussion in a three-day workshop; and the participants at the concluding seminar, including officials of institutions for development cooperation between P. R. China and the European Commission, for their critical contributions. And we would like to thank ICIMOD and in particular Camille Richard, Greta Rana, and Sushil Man Joshi for recognising the importance of informing others about this document and then ensuring its publication in a practical and professional way.

**The Living Plateau** is about interventions by a development project for the improvement of the livelihood of sheep and yak herders on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, near the source of China's three main rivers. Between 1995 and 2000, this project facilitated activities of researchers, of provincial, county, and township development officers, of herder representatives, and of teachers of a training institute, aimed at bringing about such improvements.

The outcome of these efforts was critically reviewed at the end of the project, in order to document and share with other projects and organisations, the findings and lessons learnt and the priorities conceived for future action.

The document first takes stock of rangeland and livestock resources and it describes the socioeconomic situation of herders in Guoluo Prefecture. It then summarises the outcome of field trials and technical interventions in the area of rangeland rehabilitation, the control of rodents, rangeland revegetation, seeded perennial forage and cereal fodders, the control of parasites in yak and sheep, and the control of young stock diseases. It further addresses the experiences of disseminating findings through extension services, and it reviews extension education and methodology development, including experiences with participatory rural appraisals. Finally it proposes priorities for future initiatives in research, extension, and general support to development.

project management unit

Qinghai Academy of Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine  
Qinghai Livestock Development Project

Ren Min Bi, the Chinese currency  
remote sensing

technical assistance

local unit of area: 15.15 mou = 1 hectare  
the largest unit of Chinese currency  
1 yuan = US\$ 8.26

# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BAH	Bureau of Animal Husbandry (Qinghai Province)
'Black Beach'	area of land where the topsoil has eroded and grass cover has disappeared leaving bare soil or only a few small herbs
CEU	Commission of the European Union
DOFTEC	Department of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (Qinghai Province)
FHH	female-headed household
FW	fresh weight (of plants)
GIS	geographic information system
HYSAH	Huang Yuan School of Animal Husbandry
MOFTEC	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (Central Government)
NDVI	normalised difference vegetation index
PMU	project management unit
QAASVM	Qinghai Academy of Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine
QLDP	Qinghai Livestock Development Project
RMB	Ren Min Bi, the Chinese currency
RS	remote sensing
TA	technical assistance
mu	local unit of area: 15.15 mu = 1 hectare
Yuan	the largest unit of Chinese currency 1 yuan = US\$ 8.26

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