

Summary of the discussion of Session 1 sub-theme 2 (03.11.-16.11.2006) of the Alive/LEAD e-conference on Maintaining mobility and managing drought: Policy options for pastoral livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa



How many people can the pastoral production system sustain? Shall public policies facilitate the rehabilitation of destitute pastoralists or support diversification and exit strategies of pastoral people?

While the first sub-session was dedicated to discuss options to be better prepared to drought and to mitigate the impact of drought, the second session aims to discuss the options of rehabilitation after a drought.

The discussion of session 1 sub-theme 2 was launched on Friday (03 November) with the introduction of the keynote of Stephen Sandford "Too many people, too few livestock - the crisis affecting pastoralists in the Greater Horn of Africa".

The Discussion of the sub-theme evolved around the following 5 themes:

1. Is there any known technology to improve the productivity of rangelands

The controversial subject of this discussion between Stephen Sandford and Allan Savory and Colin Nott is whether the example of holistic management of the IRDNC in Namibia can be regarded as a known technology to improve the productivity of rangelands and consequently increase the number of livestock. Allan Savory suggests that rapid biological decay, essential to the health of grasslands in seasonal rainfall environments, can only be maintained high number of large herbivores and that the two things which lead to wide plant spacing and a high percentage of bare soil between plants are simply too few large herbivores (domestic or wild) wandering around. However Stephen Sandford wanders questions whether this approach would also be applicable in the non-equilibrium environments of East-Africa and under common property ownership. In response to the question of Mr. Sandford if this example would also be applicable in the context of the Horn of Africa, Colin Nott points out that the major component of the approach is the regeneration of perennial grasslands.

2. The need to support the continuing mobility of pastoral production systems

Jonathan Davies as well as Sabine Homann highlight the importance to look beyond the alternatives to pastoralism and explore ways to enhance the core livelihood activity of mobile livestock production. Several authors present options to support the continuing mobility of pastoral production systems in the rehabilitation phase such as restocking programmes (Emmanuelle Guerne-Bleich, Nikola Rass), investment in boreholes and range management activities, veterinary services, infrastructure for better market access etc. (Allan Savory, Colin Nott, Michele Nori, Abdi Y Guliye). Whereas Oruo Zime Babiou states that sedentarization of mobile pastoral people would be a progress for pastoral people and stresses the need to develop cereal production combined with forage production and livestock production as well as production of renewable energies.

3. The need to take into account the growing importance of alternative income generation to determine viable herd sizes

Stephen Devereux and Ian Scoones point out that for determining viable herdsizes one needs to take into account that pastoral livelihoods are more diversified and more integrated with the cash economy than ever before, with most households having access to one or more sources of income that are not derived from livestock production and marketing. This

argument is supported by Michel Nori who points out the important role of changes in the market exchange patterns of pastoral livelihoods. He states that the raising substitution rates between direct utilisation of animal products and consumption of cereals exchanged through markets has enabled consistent population growth on rangelands.

4. Examples or suggestions for increasing diversification of sources of income

There is wide agreement that although it is necessary to accept that pastoral livelihoods are changing it is necessary to do both a.) support the continuing mobility of pastoral production systems and b.) identify complimentary options for diversification of incomes such as processing of livestock products, trade or engagement in eco-tourism (Sabine Homann, Chi Lawrence, Mohamed M. Mirreh, Abdi Y Guliye, Daniel M. Komwihangilo). Stephen Devereux and Ian Scoones are of the opinion that the challenge is “to provide mechanisms to kick start pastoral economies and allow them to flourish, accepting differentiation as a motor of growth. This will require supporting new forms of commercial production, but only as linked to local growth opportunities in processing, trade and so on. With more money flowing through the economy, other opportunities will arise which in turn will be helped by investment in basic physical and social infrastructure (with roads and education being the top priorities).

5. Examples of and suggestions to support exit strategies

In addition to examples of income diversification some argue that, similar to the situation in Europe and the US where usually only one child is taking over the farm and the other family members find opportunities in other professions, also pastoral people (at least some of the families' offspring) need to be helped to exit the pastoral production system (Tjaart W. Schillhorn van Veen, Mohammed, M. Mirreh).

6. The need to consider increasing conflict

Philip Koysan proposes to include banditry and insecurity in the ten legs theses of Stephen Sandford. In response to this, Stephen Sandford illustrates the discrepancy between the problem perception of this between pastoral people and other organizations and asks for an explanation.

At the end of this debate there seems to be a wide agreement that it is important to do follow two complementary strategies:

a.) support the continuing mobility of pastoral production systems (Sabine Homann) through restocking programmes (Emmanuelle Guerne-Bleich, Nikola Rass) combined with investment in boreholes and range management activities, veterinary services, infrastructure for better market access etc. (Allan Savory, Colin Nott, Michele Nori, Abdi Y Guliye) and

b.) at the same time strengthen options for diversification of incomes such as processing of livestock products, trade or engagement in eco-tourism (Sabine Homann, Chi Lawrence, Mohamed M. Mirreh, Abdi Y Guliye, Daniel M. Komwihangilo, Moffatt Ngugi) as well as options to exit the system (Tjaart W. Schillhorn van Veen, Mohammed, M. Mirreh).

It has been highlighted that the reason for pastoralism performing so far below its potential in the first place not an issue of technology, but one of equity and rights and that it is important to empower pastoral people to express their own view (Jonathan Davies, Ahmed Mey Eltayeb, Babacar Sene, Patrice Bigombo, Michele Nori) and to claim their rights (Moffatt Ngugi).

Résumé de la discussion de session 1 sous-thème 2 (03.11.-16.11.2006):

Combien de personnes peuvent vivre grâce aux systèmes de production pastoraux en Afrique sub-saharienne? Les politiques publiques doivent-elles faciliter la réhabilitation des pasteurs ou soutenir les stratégies de diversification et de sortie du secteur?

La discussion a traité les sujets suivants :

1. Existe-t- il une technologie connue et testée pour améliorer la productivité des parcours ?
2. La nécessité d'appuyer la maintien de la mobilité des système pastorales
3. La nécessité de tenir compte de l'importance croissante des revenus alternatifs pour déterminer la taille maximale du cheptel
4. Exemples et suggestions pour augmenter la diversification des sources de revenus
5. Exemples et suggestions pour soutenir les stratégies de sortie du secteur de l'élevage
6. La nécessité de considérer que les conflits violents sont en augmentation

À la fin de cette seconde discussion il semble émerger un consensus sur l'importance de mettre en œuvre deux stratégies complémentaires :

a.) Soutenir la mobilité des systèmes de production pastoraux (Sabine Homann) par des programmes de repeuplement des cheptels (Emmanuelle Guerne-Bleich, Nikola Rass) en association avec des programmes d'investissement dans la gestion de parcours et du fourrage, les services vétérinaires, l'infrastructure pour un meilleur accès aux marchés etc.... (Allan SAVory, Colin Nott, Michele Nori, Abdi Y Guliye) et

b.) Soutenir la diversification des sources de revenus (transformation des produits animaux (cuirs...), développement de l'éco-tourisme) (Sabine Homann, Chi Lawrence, Mohamed M. Mirreh, Abdi Y Guliye, Daniel M. Komwihangilo, Moffatt Ngugi) ou la sortie du secteur de l'élevage (Tjaart W. Schillhorn van Veen, Mohammed, M. Mirreh).

Il a été souligné que la raison principale pour laquelle le pastoralisme restait au-dessous de son potentiel de production n'était pas liée à une déficience technologique mais était plus liée à un manque de capitaux propres et de droits. Il est donc nécessaire de permettre aux populations pastorales d'exprimer leurs opinions (Jonathan Davies, Ahmed Mey Eltayeb, Babacar Sene, Patrice Bigombo, Michele Nori) et de revendiquer leurs droits (Moffatt Ngugi).