

Publication

A vision for the future of pastoralism

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Pastoral regions are challenged by social and ecological changes. Yet, there is increasingly robust evidence that pastoralism is a viable and sustainable livelihood and that pastoralists play a role in attaining the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this issue of the Scientific and Technical Review of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the authors take a broad view of pastoralism and pastoral livestock production from a number of different perspectives, taking into account societal and ecological viewpoints as well as issues of animal and human health. Thematic reviews are complemented by regional perspectives from Central Asia, China, Europe, East, Central and West Africa, and Latin America. The broader issues of pastoral livestock production and its potential for improving and sustaining animal health are of great interest to the OIE. Summarising the diverse contributions, it appears that pastoral social ecological systems are hotspots of cultural and biological diversity. They are multifunctional in that they generate diversified sources of income and contribute to sustained natural resource management. Pastoral populations require favourable institutional and legal frameworks, so governance structures must be improved and reformed through effective participation and the empowerment of pastoralists. To sustain functional pastoral production systems, the key ingredients are decentralised governance of natural resources, better locally adapted social services, and high flexibility for maintaining mobility. Young people should be actively encouraged to engage in pastoral livelihoods, which should be supported by improved legal systems for land use by all interested parties. There is still untapped potential to optimise extensive livestock production through adapted genetic improvement and better transformation, stocking and marketing of animal-source food. Modern concepts of disease surveillance and response, combining human and animal health as 'One Health', are particularly suited to pastoral systems. The OIE's interest in pastoralism is highly justified given its economic and environmental importance and its significance for livelihoods. Sustainable improvements require understanding and discussion of diverse social and ecological interactions, and it is to this discussion which the authors and editors of this issue of the Review have endeavoured to contribute.

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