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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS

NORTHERN RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

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FINAL REPORT

BY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Arrival at duty station was 26 November, 1984. Due to certain travel restrictions, many field trips could not take place as originally planned. Field trips were curtailed further, due to my former counterpart who could not communicate in English and also due to his unfamiliarity with the field and nomadic life.

I could not obtain a list of cooperative ranches, present and proposed reserves and also was not able to meet many officials who may be responsible for this field.

Familiarization, preparatory and survey trips have been made to Togdheer, Nugaal and Sanaag regions of the Northern Somalia, and produced "Ranch Management Plan" for Haberi-Heshay.

Due to certain financial difficulties, relating to further funding of the project, the technical assistance provided by FAO to the project, was terminated in June 1985.

II. PROGRES ACHIEVED

A. Haberi-Heshay Cooperative Ranch Management Plan

For data collection, preparatory and survey trips were made to the area and a map has been prepared, showing the basic features and the different vegetation units, using the 1952 areal photographs, a 1954 (British, 1:125,000) and a 1981 (RMR, 1:250,000) maps and ground checking. Meetings were held with the members of the cooperative and required information collected. Grazing capacity estimated (at 566 Somali Animal Units) and Management Plan has been prepared. Initial carrying capacity for Haberi-Heshay cooperative proposed by some committee members, was at 1250 A.U. and later in 1980, an FAO Expert (Richard S. Aro) proposed 800 A.U. as a first approximation and today's estimation is 566 A.U. (see Haberi-Heshay Cooperative Ranch Management Plan).

B. Burao Range Herbarium

Previously collected 66 Plants, from the Northern Somalia, have been identified mounted in duplicate to be incorporated in the Burao Range Herbarium, located at Burao Range Institute and National Range Herbarium. These specimens are to be used in teaching at the range institute, by students, as well as, the people in the field and to make possible identification of unknown specimens by comparison with known ones.

C. Production Plots

Meaningful production data can not be obtained, on cooperative ranches, reserves and alike in the Northern Somalia, in comparison to its potentiality under continuous grazing pattern at present time.

About 40 production plots of 25 M². and 400 M². (25M² on grassland and 400M² on shrubland unit) were planned on different vegetation units, in Sanaag (Erigavo and El-Wfwein districts) and Togdheer (Burao and Odwein districts) regions. These plots were needed to get some production data through clipping and weighing, in order to develop criteria for the establishment of the new grazing reserves and cooperative ranges, in regard to suitability, size, stocking capacity and demarcation. It was also planned to apply this criteria to already established reserves and cooperatives to determine their suitability for private use. These production plots were established with bush, to be replaced later with iron fence which we have already ordered from abroad. The number of such production plots should be increased as much as possible for the potential production and dietary value of grass, forbs and bush alike.

D. Field Trips

Preparatory trips have been made, as a part of the preliminary investigation, to reserves and cooperatives in Sanaag, Nugaal and Togdheer regions of the Northern Somalia to collect information on which to base future plans and for the collection of plant species for the Burao Range Herbarium.

E. Training

Constructive training has not been possible because, the first assigned counterpart did not speak English and had no any experience or interest in the field. He was replaced only recently and new counterpart worked only one month before taking leave and is still absent from work.

F. Range Institute

Taught at the institute, after the departure of FAO Range Training Expert and gave final exams and graded the examination papers.

G. Resource Management Seminar

The seminar was held in March 2-6, 1985 for nomadic elders to explain proper grazing management and health care for humans as well as animals. The participants were approximately 70 elders from the Togdheer regions.

I have prepared four presentations for the seminar, namely (1) Cooperative Ranches, Grazing and Draught Reserves, (2) Land clearing (3) Range Laws, (4) Nomadism. These presentations with follow up and recommendations have been produced for interested people in the field.

H. Other Terms of Reference

The development of criteria for establishing new grazing reserves and cooperatives has not been possible because of the project termination in June 1985.

III. Problems

A. Range Planning

Range planning is taking place with no implementation; initial grazing capacities chosen for these areas were high and the number of animals continues to increase with the time while carrying capacities continues to decrease more rapidly.

B. Cooperatives Ranches

Cooperative ranches set up with no capacity determined and no demarcation of boundaries. Cooperative and private enclosure owners have taken the best piece of the land, following a straight line (in some cases) rather than natural boundary.

The problem of influential people by-passing district range authorities, and therefore there are no real and complete records on the number and location of cooperatives, reserves and private enclosures in the Northern Somalia. It seems that the people in the field with responsibility, have no power to act and to control this situation.

C. Deterioration of The Rangelands

Deterioration of rangelands, caused by too many livestock grazing with no control eventhough the law states that "cooperative members can not have more animals than carrying capacity of the land". Cooperative members are taking out their animals to the communal land 3-4 months/year, in order to meet the demand of these steadily increasing animals. Again, the law clearly states that "cooperative members have no right to graze communal land rather than allocated specific unit of land for their use". This seasonal shift puts further pressure on this already depleted communal land.

D. Nomadic Problem

The communal land of the nomadic people is open and free to the cooperative members and private enclosure owners while the cooperative ranches, reserves and private enclosures are closed to the nomads.

And a nomad is being looked upon as an intruder and unwanted element of the society and being accused of the cause of the land deterioration which is the other way around: the movement of nomads, as we witness today, have been much better, if not the best, in the case of range management than today's cooperative and private enclosure establishment, because of the year-long concentration near to the water source, where ever it is possible. Drilling of water holes have been a further incentive for the year-long concentration of too many animals without any grazing system, according to the soil, climate and vegetational conditions.

Many cooperative members think and believe that the only development is to drill water holes, without any consideration or awareness to the limits of the nature. The infiltration of rainfall is reduced if not stopped, because of the depletion of vegetative cover and trampling which causes accelerated erosion at alarming rate, creating huge, unreparable gullies, in some cases valleys, especially on fine textured soils. Therefore, the level of ground water table continuously decreasing.

E. Infrastructure and Administration

N.R.D.P. covers too large an area and not able to administer it properly, because of fuel shortage and security, in addition to the lack of infrastructure and enough well trained personnel, in northern Somalia, the integrated control over livestock, vegetation

and other sources on the cooperative ranches, reserves, communal land private enclosures and alike, has not been established and even established fences are broken down completely, in a very short time.

F. Counterparts

The counterparts assigned do not speak English and have neither experience and interest in the field nor nomadic life experience. Salaries are very low and not paid regularly and traveling allowances which is amounting almost to nothing, are not paid at all. There are no incentives, at all, for motivation. So, meaningful training is not possible under these circumstances, in addition to communication problem. Therefore, more care is obvious in selecting counterparts.

G. Work Hours of National Staff

Offices are not attended regularly during working hours; 8 o'clock in the morning, is too early and 10 o'clock is too late to find somebody in the office. Interest in the field and cooperation is lacking.

H. Labour

It has been difficult to get labours to help with fence construction, even though they are paid with WFP rations.

I. Land Clearing And Cultivation

It is known and has been proved again and again that intensive cultivation is not possible under this erratic and low rainfall

pattern and efforts toward this type of development has been very expensive and results are dissapointing. Production may be possible only in one-out of 3-4 years and then, the land is left open to the year-round grazing-trampling and soil becomes very fragile to be washed away very easily and this erosion causing distruction, even to the undisturbed areas beneath it.

There are cases where, more than one cooperative ranch(up to 3) has been established, by some individuals at different times and at diffrent places: The land is cleared up and cultivated and then left idle(under continuous grazing) at the end of failure to start a new one, ^oto reape^t the same mistake all over.

Rather extensive land clearing, without any control, has started for intensive cultivation and bunding(without compaction), with establishment of the cooperatives, reserves and private enclosure ownership.

J. Adjustment of Living To The Realities of Life And Nature

New socio-economic changes in the last century are irreversiblc. Continuing reliance on a wholly wasteful high-protein milk and meat diet is not a choice but necessity. Permenant settlement as well as nomadic life, requires all possible integrated services, in order to cope with the fact of life and conditions. Otherwise, range development programs will not be applied as today. The continuing increase of human, and domastic animal populations and uncoordina - ted land use has necessiated alternatives and solutions to the prob - lem, long time ago. Complimentary and other activities, which may reduce overstocking, and make better living in the country side, are not surveyed and there are no plan or program toward this goal.

The rural population are aware of the fact that they can not depend only on animals, under this steadily declining natural resources. These people are willing changes but are helpless without guidance in all related aspects of the life.

Basic education system, veterinery and medical care services are not established for even permenantly settled large communities. A very basic sanitary requirements are not met. Forexample, Habari-Heshay cooperative ranch, which is located 12 km. south of Ainabo town, has more than 100 school aged children without schooling. Medicine for livestock and people are not available.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Range Management Plans

Already prepared range management plans must be implemented to cooperative ranches and reserves, before planning others. Ecological principles should guide land management planning.

B. Grazing Capacity Determination And Demarcation

Grazing capacity determination and demarcation of already established ranches should be complited. Range authorities should be the only decision makers and empowered to do so. They should be responsible to control it. Range laws should be applied equally to everyone.

C. Nomadism Vs. Ranches

The planning should include all segments of the society, including allocated resources, their needs and views without any favoritism toward any group in expense of natural resources. Any improvement in range resources, as a result of actions by a few must be shared with the as many as possible, keeping the land alive for the betterment of life for all. Carefully planned and well executed extension programs are vital. Extension should provide the vital link between research, planning and administration and those who live and work directly on the land.

D. Infrastructure and Administration

differing local conditions, requirements and opinions should be taken into serious consideration. Development of the natural and human resources are only possible with improvements in communication transportation, health and educational schemes: a working mass information media, well trained personnel as well as institutional support which is active, responsible, persuasive, demonstrative and above all, committed. NRDP should cover less area, than today, and then gained experience can be applied in other regions.

E. Counterparts

There is an urgent need to develop selection criteria for range counterparts, in order to be able to employ qualified personnel. One solution may be to select counterparts among college graduates

with a good background and interest in the field. A sound salary and incentives are vital for the the motivation.

F. Land Clearing and Cultivation.

Any kind of land clearing must be stopped. Tree like vegetation is the only safeguard against accelerated erosion. It is the only survival in this low rainfall area, under today's continuous - overstocked grazing system. It is the only fodder source, under dry season. Even, fencing with bush must not be continued. Other ways of fencing must be found. The forest source of this Country can not effort even the posts required for fencing the range area. Therefore, other ways should be found. For example, betong posts can be a solution.

Appropriate ways and methods of charcoal making must be found and today's sporadic patches of charcoal making all over the land must be ended. Even, there is a urgent need for an appropriate simple; light, small and a cheap stove made of tin or metal must be incorporated into the lifes of settled people and of nomads alike.

G. Dietary Changes As A Means Of Relieving Stocking Pressure.

1. Sale Of Stock.For Food.

An important point is to change the dietary habit. Milk and Meat is the staple food of Soamli people today, but it is an expensive and wastefull diet. A shift away from heavy reliance on protein - rich foods toward a more balanced diet with more use of cereals, vegetables root crops and fruits. For example, a sheep or goat can be consumed only in a day or two by one average size family. But with the price of a sheep or goat, this average size family can buy 100 kg of flour which lasts for a few months .

2. Currency Changes

Currency change as a means of Relieving Stocking Pressure. Any shift away from dependence on livestock as a form of currency towards the greater use of cash, must involve the sale of animals.

H. Health.

There is a need for a primary health care for humans as well as animals. Diseases and its effects will diminish very greatly, only with the instalment of hand pumps or windmills and water filtered through a piece of cloth. These practical primary health care precaution measures, do not need huge development plans and programmes. Tiles made from clay can be used to pump water to appropriate points.

Solutions such as the provision of mobile education, veterinary and medical units for the rural population is essential.

I. Complimentary Activities.

Complimentary ways of increasing income on the ranch and in the country side alike, should be surveyed. Awareness of a better use of animal products is an urgent need.

1. Cheese.

Milk production is being consumed on the ranch because of the lack of a market (lack of transportation and long distance to the market). But this milk can be converted to cheese and conserved in a very simple way and then can be sold on market or used on the ranch and in rural area when there is a shortage of milk.

2. Poultry.

Poultry production for the family consumption (egg and meat) will reduce the heavy reliance on livestock. These animals can graze the surroundings which are rich in many kinds of insects and are not competitive but complimentary to the livestock.

3. Bee Keeping.

Even, one bee hive can produce enough honey for the yearly consumption of a family. It costs almost nothing and requires little effort.

4. Other Complimentary Activities.

Other complimentary activities, such as hand craft, small vegetable colonies, fruit trees, carpentry, pottery and others should be tried.

In a summary, if land kept alive or used properly under correct grazing capacity, with complimentary activities and basic sanitary precaution measures makes better living and land will give better and more forage which makes animals healthier and a healthy animal produces more. More production, in the long run, is not a result of more animals but it is the result of healthier animals. Health is also a safeguard against many diseases.