

MONGOLIAN SHEPHERDS BECOME LEADERS OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PASTURELANDS AT RISK OF DESERTIFICATION

In the Pavilion Zero at Expo 2015, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Mongolia presents the *Green Gold Project*, which identifies the shepherds as the leading actors of the preservation of the grazing lands at risk of desertification through an innovative approach.

This experience has been selected as *Best Sustainable Development Practice on Food Security* in the framework of the [Feeding Knowledge Program](#) launched by [CIHEAM-MAIB](#) (Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari) and METID (Politecnico of Milano) in collaboration with EXPO Milano 2015.



The Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Mongolia has acknowledged the shepherd families as the guarantors of sustainable use of their traditional pasturelands and the environmental protection of their lands. Working together for the conservation and care of their motherland, the pasture families have been able to restore their traditional organizational systems of collective pasture and stop the degradation.



The pasturelands in Mongolia were actually facing degradation. In order to fight against this phenomenon, the Ministry of Agriculture has designed and implemented a plan able to generate positive effects on food security. The plan involves over 140 000 farmers who inhabit the lands intended for grazing.



Due to the climate change and the absence of specific interventions, over 70% of this area is in a state of degradation where the survival of livestock cannot be ensured. With the involvement of the authorities and nomadic herders, the *Green Gold Project* has managed to give support to the grazing activities, which represent an important sector of national economy and ensure food security for the population.

Implemented successfully, the initiative includes several aspects like the grazing plan, which regarded the areas at risk of desertification; the interdiction of free movement of livestock in several specific periods of the year; the reduction of animal numbers in the herd; the economic support to the herder families who participate in the plan.



Through the application of this project, the shepherds have been able to better ensure herd management and increase the productivity, which have motivated more and more of them to participate in the initiative. In seven years, 66 Herders' Associations (pugs) have been established and they have got higher acknowledgement from the government. The aggregation of shepherds in associations is also a way to facilitate the granting of government aids to the families who are in need. Over 3 million hectares of lands have return to be available for grazing.

The *Green Gold Project* is extending its support to over 1,000 new groups of shepherds (PUGs), involving about 40,000 nomadic herder families. The cooperatives for livestock products marketing created by the PUGs are creating a production code of sustainable farms, with practices that provide an essential element in the maintenance of healthy grassland. It is expected that in the future shepherds will receive remuneration for their contribution in maintaining environmental integrity.

The Project is currently presenting its experience in other countries where ecological and social contexts are similar, such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These countries have expressed interest in working on the mobilization and strengthening of herder communities, as well, in order to ensure their participation in the sustainable management of grazing practices and the promotion of their role in environmental protection.

To know more

<http://magazine.expo2015.org/en/innovation/grazing-lands-at-risk-for-desertification--the-solution-in-mongolia>

<https://www.feedingknowledge.net/>

http://www.rangelands.org/internationalaffairs/2012_Symposia/pdf/Legal%20&%20Regulatory%20Framework.pdf

