

CELEBRATING THE 2026 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS WORLDWIDE

July 2026

[Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly at its 76th session \(Resolution A/RES/76/253\)](#), the IYRP 2026 aims to raise global awareness of the vital roles that rangelands and pastoralists play in food security, climate adaptation and mitigation, ecosystem health, and sustainable rural livelihoods. FAO has been designated as the lead agency for the observance and coordination of the International Year.



The IYRP is supported by the [IYRP Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists](#), a coalition of pastoralist and supporting organizations, governments and individuals who worked for many years to support the nomination, preparation and now the celebration of the IYRP. Launched in January 2026, the International Year is developing its activities in collaboration with 102 Countries and [430 supporting organizations around the world](#).

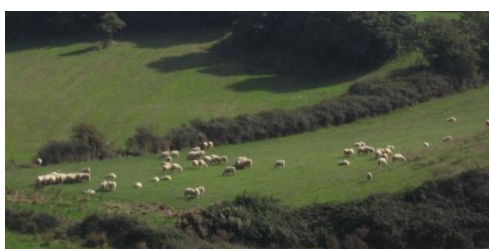
[The IYRP official website managed by FAO presents the activities and events that are being organized worldwide](#) to promote the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

The website also invites pastoralists, researchers, governments, private business, NGO, journalists, civil society organizations, academic institutions, or individual, to take advantage of the opportunity for action offered by the IYRP. There are many ways to promote rangelands and pastoralists. [The Take Action section of the website presents a set of actions to support rangelands and pastoralists](#) proposed for Governments and policy makers, for NGOs, cooperatives and civil society, for development partners; for researches and academic institutions; for the general public and for the pastoralists.

Among the in dept stories presented by the website, the FAO article [Seven reasons why pastoralism supports a better future](#) resumes the key role of pastoralism. "Pastoralism, a traditional and extensive form of raising livestock, employs more than 200 million people in 100 countries. Pastoralists guide and feed their animals through diverse landscapes such as prairies, savannas or tundra. Employing different species of local breeds that adapt to variable environments, pastoralism is critical to reducing poverty and providing food security in these areas.

By working with nature, it champions productivity, sustainability and animal welfare. The article presents seven reasons why pastoralism plays a key role for a better future:

1. It diversifies food production. In a world where the availability of natural resources and climate patterns are increasingly variable, meeting demand for milk and meat through different methods, including pastoralism, spreads the risk of production failures. Pastoralism provides affordable, high-quality proteins and nutrients to meet local demand and can help reduce a country's reliance on imports. And



because herders travel with their livestock and work knowledgeably with nature to access water and forage, production inputs are low relative to outputs.

2. It acts against climate change. Research shows that pastoral landscapes have the potential to achieve a neutral carbon balance, as grazing can offset carbon levels by stimulating plant growth, which helps sequester carbon in soil. In pastoral systems, livestock can also be moved to fallow lands and fields to make use of crop residues for feed and to distribute animal manure as fertilizer – recycling nutrients as part of a circular bioeconomy. By moving livestock around, pastoralism diversifies strategies for adapting to a changing climate. For example, in Mongolia, pastoralists make use of "otor" – reserved areas that can be used in times of crisis, such as the late arrival of rains thereby preserving other rangeland areas from overgrazing. Pastoralists also effectively manage natural resources, helping preserve biodiversity in all kinds of environments, from deserts to wetlands and forests. Thus, respecting and incorporating pastoralists' knowledge and practices can help protect these ecosystems.

3. It functions as an early warning system for pandemics. The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that dealing with health challenges requires paying attention to the health of animals, the environment, and humans. The [One Health approach](#) helps countries better monitor and control zoonotic diseases (those that pass between humans and animals). Pastoralists play an essential role in this, providing early warnings of new infectious disease threats in wildlife populations. Improving access to veterinary services and prevention measures, including affordable quality vaccines, will help meet production needs while reducing the risk of disease transmission.

4. It strengthens the labour force and offers employment opportunities. Pastoralism secures the livelihood of millions of people in 75 percent of the world's countries, but has been neglected for years by policies and investments. Boosting pastoralists' access to education, training, information, markets, veterinary and animal production support, health and finances and facilitating transboundary movement can yield substantial economic and social benefits.

5. It reduces feed-food competition. Consumer demand for naturally raised and grass-fed animal sourced foods continues to expand the retail market of these products, presenting new opportunities for exports and profitability. It is estimated that up to 811 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020. Grazing systems can help reduce food insecurity by reducing the competition for cereals between livestock feed and food for human consumption.

6. It protects animal diversity. Pastoral herds and flocks have been bred for thousands of years, resulting in some of the highest levels of genetic diversity and resilience of any breeding population. This diversity of local breeds stems from a close interdependency between the environment, pastoralists and livestock. Through genetic selection and local ecological knowledge, herders continuously improve their animals' breed, allowing them to adapt to environmental changes, diseases and changing market preferences. The need to interact and work with other herds also allows for greater genetic diversity.

7. It helps forests grow. Pastoralism and forests are interdependent. In some areas, riparian forests (those close to a body of water) are a significant grazing resource for livestock during dry seasons. In exchange, pastoralism helps maintain and renew these lands. For example, ruminants facilitate the germination of acacia tree seeds in dryland forests by digesting them, allowing water and air through the weakened outer seed coating. Pastoralists in Europe remove blackberries that prevent the regrowth of larger trees. Herders also play a role in preventing wildfires, as their animals remove biomass in forests"

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and has been organizing national, regional and global events to enhance pastoralists' voices. The Global Alliance strives to build coalitions and promote policy change and responsible investment in 2026 and beyond. The IYRP.info website implemented by the Global Alliance to launch the Initiative [will continue to be an instrument to inform about the 2026 IYRP International Year](#), involving all the partners already mobilized.

To know more

[IYRP Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026 in FAO.org About](#)

[IYRP Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026 in FAO.org Events](#)

[FAO Pastoralists Knowledge Hub](#)

[FAO Pastoralist Knowledge Hub Publications](#)

[IYRP.info Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists](#)

[IYRP Resolution 2022](#)

[IYRP 2026 FAO Photos and Videos](#)

