

ethnically based regional government structures continued to provide reduced statutory power. After independence, traditional leaders, no longer with legal or institutional support, gradually lost control over the process of communal range enclosure. As a result, access to communal land for small-scale herders has in general become more limited and less secure.

Few data existed on the extent of fencing and on its implications in terms of land management, and field survey techniques were developed to address this gap and provide an objective estimate of fencing distribution. Comparison of survey results with earlier information from 1994 emphasised the rapid changes that were taking place within the study area. Also, enclosure was generally restricted to uninhabited areas, and accessibility was a major determinant of fence distribution.

Farmers fencing large areas of common land were found to be embarking on a different form of livestock management, related to a change in commercial orientation. There is a higher rate of capital investment associated with a transition to privatised ranching. Outputs change from multiple use – milk, meat, draught power – to a single commodity – meat. These and the lower stocking rates and other changes related to the changed management all tend to lower the output per unit area when compared to traditional open-range pastoral systems. Thus, privatised commercial ranching is a profitable but less productive use of the land. The benefits will accrue only to a few,

whilst many former producers will be forced to find alternative livelihoods.

Uptake

The work is expected to contribute towards Namibian land tenure reform, to debates on rangeland privatisation in southern Africa, and to improved theories of community resource management.

Linkages

A follow-up study was recommended in view of the project findings concerning trade-offs between profitability and productivity and the many unanswered questions on long-term effects of rangeland grazing. The aims of this study, to be designed in consultation with all local stakeholders, are to compare the biological and economic returns from the three main forms of livestock rearing practised in northern Namibia – mobile open-range, newly commercialised enclosures, and established commercial land south of the veterinary cordon fence.

Relevance to sustainable livelihoods

A number of constraints affecting both small- and large-scale livestock farmers were identified. These include: a) poor distribution and seasonality of water sources; b) veterinary inputs rarely reach small-scale farmers; c) inadequate local knowledge of animal health problems; d) marketing outlets are not targeted at small-scale farmers; e) an inability to raise capital without secure land tenure; and f) small-scale farmers are presumed by officials to be uninterested in selling higher quality livestock and receive

little or no support from outside agencies which might assist them to commercialise. Action to address these points can be expected to contribute to sustainable livelihoods.

The most effective way of tackling the causes of poverty among the residents of the area may be to support livestock marketing and livestock health, to enable people to raise their own cash. Linked, in a development sense, is the need for improved social services. Communities settled round boreholes or traditional wells lack facilities normally supported by the Government. With limited education, transport and communications, the settlers lack the means to confront authorities about expropriation of their land and water points. Similarly, they do not receive visits from government health, veterinary or education workers.

It was recommended that DFID and other projects in northern Namibia consider what support for basic services could be extended to the people in this and other remote regions.

Selected project publications

- Cox, J., Kerven, C., Werner, W. and Behnke, R. (1998) *Privatisation of Rangeland Resources in Namibia: Enclosure in Eastern Oshikoto*. Overseas Development Institute, London, UK.

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