

Project Update: May 2013

There is strong un-met demand for meat, milk and other agricultural products in the country's largest cities, peri-urban land is close to the urban markets, approximately 15 % of gross domestic product comes from agriculture, and the sector employs 33 % of the total labour force. Mongolia lost approximately 20 % of its livestock during the 2009-2010 *dzud*, hence meat prices doubled. Although it was devastating for herders, Mongolia's livestock had been overpopulated for many years, and the reduced herd size due to the *dzud* has led to more sustainable levels in terms of carrying capacity, pasture management and even the environment.

Many donor projects aimed to resolve these issues by introducing a system of long-term leasing rangelands to herder groups in lieu of open access to rangeland, and provide infrastructure and training so herders may improve livestock management, boost productivity, and increase their incomes. Creation of herder groups, community managed areas and leasing of lands approaches are unique innovations for current situation; however it can also lead to unique challenges within the Mongolia context.

The adaptation of pastureland new management regulation and Argali wild sheep habitat protection at the community area project is small scale project but the general concept, methodology and approaches are similar with other bigger scale donor projects implementing and practicing in Mongolia.

The project organised planned training workshop/seminars and within the framework of these activities introduced a system of leasing pastureland practices in Mongolia too.

The Wild Heritage Association during the last 5 years coordinated many capacity building activities with other government and non-government organisations and supported training of herder groups to improve their skills in pasture land management, herd productivity, business and marketing including stock density management, monitoring pasture land carrying capacity, well operation and maintenance, capturing precipitation run-off, and fodder/feed storage techniques. Also, local authorities and environmental specialists received training within their related responsibilities.

Several of field trips were taken to herder's community area within the scope of the project to implement the planned project activities effectively. During the harsh winter the project team only two times visited the site but the community member representatives several times visited the Ulaanbaatar and participated in different trainings. The project activities are nearly to complete in a recent time.

