

The Evaluations of the Code of Practice and Conformity Assessment for Pastureland in Herder Communities

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ABSTRACT

In Mongolia, the system to connect market chains among livestock products- national producers-global market, has been poorly developed in terms of accessibility and equity. To address this issue fully, it is critical to assess compliance of herder cooperatives and livestock productions with social and environmental standards, which was developed to align with the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling (ISEAL) international assurance code. The code of practices for animal husbandry and rangeland management are key to livestock products which basis of the supply chain. In this study, we aimed to examine if livestock products, especially goat cashmere, derived from traditional herding practice, meets international codes of good practices that was demanded by consumers and producers. External evaluations were carried out in 7 herder organizations (e.g., cooperatives and communities) in Lun soum of Tuv province, and Bayankhutag, Bayan-Ovoo, and Umnudelger soums of Khentii province, using the methodology developed by the Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA). We found that the herder communities surveyed approximately 50.0% of the requirements from the Animal Husbandry code of practice and 13.7% of Rangeland Stewardship codes of practices, respectively. These results indicate that the herders organizations somewhat qualifies the Animal Husbandry code of practice, however the requirements of the Rangeland Stewardship code of practice have not met yet. This is likely due to a lack of system that ensures the herders organizations comply with the codes of practice required from the buyers and producers. In summary, herders have not realized yet the requirements of the national and global markets.

Keywords: *Livestock, pastureland, code of practices, suitability, herder communities*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since Mongolia's transition to a market economy, the supply system for livestock raw materials has been disrupted [1], and livestock raw materials, especially cashmere, are traded through middleman, benefiting herders and destabilizing livestock prices. The issue of value-added livestock products on the world market, where supply and prices are volatile in the domestic market, remains unclear.

The climate and terrain of Mongolia are well adapted to Cashmere goat, and herders have traditional herding methods and high quality fine cashmere. Today, global brand companies are interested in Mongolian cashmere. This is because

these factories aim to produce environmentally friendly and responsible cashmere, and while pure cashmere from herder's hometown is in line with this trend, there are many issues to be addressed in international trade in this area [2].

The supply chain for livestock products goes through many stages, from the herder's town to the final product. Herders and herder organizations implement internationally accepted good practices required by producers and consumers to market their raw materials to the market, assessing the appropriateness of good practices in animal husbandry and pasture use, which are the basic steps or foundations of this supply chain. It is important to study and prove whether because in modern times,

consumer attitudes have changed, and when buying a product, in addition to quality, is its origin and production process friendly to humans and the environment? Note that. In other words, in order to compete and influence the world market properly, it is necessary to meet the needs of international buyers [3]. By producing high-quality cashmere, herders will be able to facilitate many complex tasks in the cashmere processing industry, prevent the fall in cashmere prices, and sell cashmere at a marginal cost.

In Mongolia, the system of connecting herders to national enterprises and national enterprises to the world market has not been developed fairly and comprehensively. The Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA), an international NGO, has been working since 2015 to make a real contribution to addressing this issue in a comprehensive manner. The organization conducts training, consulting and evaluation at every stage of the supply of cashmere to ordinary herders, from herding practices to cooperatives, processing, spinning, weaving and final products, and is certified by an international certificate of conformity.

The SFA' good practices currently introduces three types of good practices (animal husbandry, pasture use, and sustainable cashmere processing). These Good Practices consist of the requirements and conformity assessment criteria that cashmere producers must meet in order to obtain a CSR certification.

In 2019, an external evaluation team prepared by the SFA conducted a conformity assessment of 35 herder organizations in 26 soums of 10 aimags, of which 7 herder organizations in 4 soums of 2 aimags worked in 1 bagh. The conformity assessment was intended to demonstrate that traditional pastoral herding practices of herders are a good practice and to determine whether they meet the requirements proposed by the factories. Conformity assessment enables herders and herder organizations to run their livestock in a sustainable manner, to have a stable source of supply, to develop herder households into more efficient businesses, to increase employment, and to develop "collective marketing" by uniting producers and suppliers. It is important to identify opportunities, directions, ways, and concepts.

This work is based on practice and has the advantage that the results can be implemented immediately. This is because conformity assessment is nothing new and confirms herders' traditional and daily practices in conformity assessment through conformity assessment.

2. STUDY AREA

The survey was conducted in Lun soum of Tuv aimag, Bayankhutag, Bayan-Ovoo and Umnudelger soums of Khentii aimag (Figure 1). The surveyed region belongs to the Khangai region of our country and the central region by economic zone.



Figure 1. Survey Area

What is good practice?

According to the FAO, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) are: a set of principles that apply to agricultural production and post-production activities so that safe and healthy food production and non-food agricultural products are economically and socially viable, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

The GAP is based on four basic principles.

1. Produce adequate, healthy and nutritious food economically and efficiently.
2. Sustainability and enhancement of natural resources.
3. Ensure that organizations are viable and thus create a sustainable source of livelihood.
4. Meet socio-cultural and public needs.

These include animal husbandry practices:

- Livestock production should not adversely affect the environment, land conditions and livestock welfare;
- Biological, chemical and physical pollution of pastures, fodder, water and atmosphere;
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of herd structure, numbers and livestock conditions;

Also, Article 10.1.4 of the Food Law of Mongolia states: Introduce good practices in agricultural activities; Article 4.1.19 of the Law on Ensuring Food Safety states that "Good agricultural practices" means all the conditions and activities required to

ensure the safety of primary raw materials and products of animal and plant origin.

Conformity assessment and its significance

The SFA's Accreditation and Stewardship system or Good of Practices, is designed to comply with the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling (ISEAL) international assurance code and is an assessment of the performance of herder cooperatives and enterprises to ensure their social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Socio-economic significance of conformity assessment

- Household cooperation will improve and member participation will increase.
- Create conditions to pass on traditional herding techniques to future generations
- It will be possible to supply our products in accordance with the requirements of the factories.
- The source of household income will be secured and a source of sustainable livelihood will be created.
- The factory can attract customers by supplying quality cashmere at different price levels.
- Pasture use and implementation of pasture management plans will be improved.
- It is effective in developing the ability of livestock farmers to participate in the market and thus strengthen regional stability.
- Provide solutions to reduce instability in livestock and cashmere trade and production, and connect international buyers looking for a stable supply of cashmere with herder cooperatives and factories.
- Strengthening the domestic economy and expanding foreign markets will increase export earnings.
- Mongolia's cashmere processing industry is an eco-friendly industry at a time when the world is supporting environmentally friendly production.
- Provide solutions to reduce instability in livestock and cashmere trade and production, and connect international buyers looking for a stable supply of cashmere with herder cooperatives and factories.

3. METHODOLOGY

Conformity assessment of herder organizations in the soums surveyed was conducted as follows. The evaluation was conducted by a special team conducting an external evaluation based on the

following documents developed by SFA. These include:

- Livestock Management and Cashmere Practice Performance Sheet;
- Pasture Use Practice Performance Sheet;

The on-site assessment was conducted in accordance with the SFA's guidelines for external evaluation. The results of the evaluation were documented in the form of comments on the external evaluation of the performance of good practice indicators, recorded, edited and integrated into the database using pictures and images. The following methods were used in the assessment:

- Interview
- Review documents
- Indirect evidence
- Actual or observation

In developing the sampling plan for the assessment, a random sampling method was selected and evaluated in collaboration with the management of the herder organization, taking into account the location of the herders, the age of the herders, and the number of animals. The assessment target groups are grouped as follows:

- Local decision maker
- Management of herder communities (PUGs, groups, partnerships, heads of cooperatives)
- Sample herder

These interviews provided background information on how herders organize and maintain their traditional herding and pasture use at the household and herder level. The results of the survey tried to answer the following questions. These include:

1. Is the conformity assessment consistent with herders' current herding practices?
2. Is the conformity assessment consistent with the current pasture management practices of herders?
3. Do you think that the herder communities is the shortest way to connect its products directly to the market by complying with the best practices required by the market?
4. Do you see conformity assessment as a condition for reducing trade barriers in the market, supplying directly to the factory, and dominating the price agreement?

4. RESULTS

The evaluation was conducted in 7 herder organizations in 4 soums of 2 aimag and evaluated good practice of livestock breeding and cashmere preparation and good practice of pasture use by 2 groups of criteria.

1. Good Practices in animal husbandry and cashmere production

Within this group, 73 indicators with 10 groups were evaluated according to the criteria. The results are tabulated for each group (Table 1). According to the evaluation (representing the herder organizations by the sampled herder households), the minimum score for the herder organization was 148, and the herder organizations were rated with a minimum of 82 points and a maximum of 88 points, or an average of 85.6 points. In other words, the herder communities provide 57.8 percent of good herding practices (Figure 2).

Table 1. Good Practices in animal husbandry and cashmere production

№	Requirements for the action plan measures	List of the Province, soum, herder communities evaluations								Points to be earned	Percentage
		Khentii									
		Ummudelger soum		Bayan-Ovoo soum		Bayankhuta g soum		Tuv Lum soum			
		Yavin Bulag	Enkh Bum	Javkhlan Gurem	Bunsk ant	Machidin ev negdel	Adun chubun BAKH	Enkh BAKH			
1	Forage and water supply	13	14	13	14	14	14	14	22	63.4	
2	Suitable herding environment	24	24	23	24	21	23	21	30	76.1	
3	Livestock care and health	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	8	37.5	
4	Goat herding care and herding	8	7	8	7	7	8	8	12	62.5	
5	Postpartum and offspring care	15	13	15	12	13	12	14	24	55.8	
6	Combing goats and preparing cashmere	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	51.0	
7	Transportation and shipping care	10	10	10	11	10	13	10	14	75.5	
8	Butcher /goats/	9	7	8	6	7	8	8	10	75.0	
9	Risk and preparedness plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	
10	Follow good animal husbandry and cashmere production practices	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	14	12.1	
Total score		88	85	87	84	82	88	85	148	57.8	

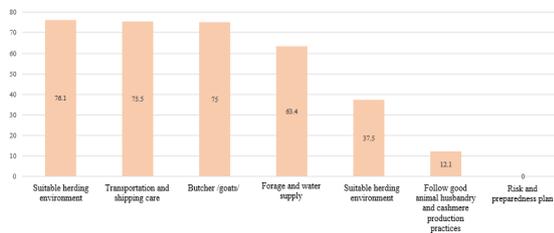


Figure 2. Requirements for the Action plan measures

Proper animal husbandry conditions (76.1%), Care during transportation and transportation (75.5%), Goat slaughter (75.0%), Feed and water supply (63.4%) provide 50 percent or more, but less than 50%. The indicators provided are Animal Care and Health (37.5%), Good Livestock Management and Cashmere Preparation (12.1%), Risk and

Readiness Plan is not implemented in herder communities or 0 percent.

2. Good practices in pastureland management

Within the framework of pasture management practices, 30 groups of 30 questions were assessed according to the criteria (Table 2).

Table 2. Good practices in pastureland management

Requirements for the action plan measures	List of the Province, soum, herder communities evaluations							Points to be earned	Percentage	
	Khentii									
	Ummudelger soum		Bayan-Ovoo soum		Bayankhuta g soum		Tuv Lum soum			
	Yavin Bulag	Enkh Bum	Javkhlan Gurem	Bunsk ant	Machidin ev negdel	Adun chubun BAKH	Enkh BAKH			
Rational use of pastures and pastureland	6	6	4	6	5	8	8	10	61.4	
Pasture and wildlife resource research	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	16	18.7	
Pastureland management plan (PMP)	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	26	34.6	
PMP implementation Monitoring and Evaluation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	
Total score		6	6	4	15	5	11	8	60	13.1

Out of a total of 60 points to be scored in the evaluation of good practices in pastureland management practices, herder communities were rated a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 11 points, or an average of 7.8 points. In other words, according to the conformity assessment conducted by the herder communities, if the provision on proper pasture use practices is considered to be 100 percent, this provision is met by 13.7 percent (Figure 3).

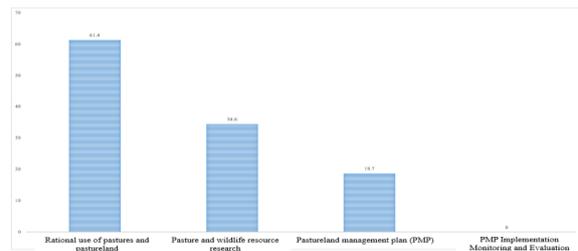


Figure 3. Requirements for the Action plan measures

Rational use of pasture and pastureland (61.4%) is more than 50 percent, less than 50 percent is pastureland management plan 34.6 percent, pastureland and wildlife resources survey is 18.7 percent, and pastureland management plan's monitoring and evaluation is 0. The pastureland management plan is not monitored or evaluated at all. This means that herders do not make risk plans, but prepare for the risk by preparing for the drought and DZUD by stockpiling hay and fodder for each household and making OTOR movements.

5. DISCUSSION

There is a lack of access to herder cooperatives to connect pastoralism to the market. In other words, herder issues need to be addressed at the organizational level. Wealth is created based on soum

and local development cooperatives. The Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA) Mongolia estimates that 10 out of 30 indicators have been met by herder organizations over the past three years, with more than 50 herder organizations, including herder communities and stakeholders, and they have been released the Mongolian Pasture Users Association, local NGO. This conclusion is in line with the results of this study. Therefore, there is a need for public regulation of the livestock sector, especially in pasture use.

6. CONCLUSIONS

1. The evaluation team was trained in accordance with the program developed by SFA for the external evaluation, and pre-trained researchers worked in the evaluation team.
2. Regarding the participation and activity of the herder communities involved in the conformity assessment: although they were interested in understanding and cooperating with the SFA's activities, they did not know how to meet the requirements of the good practice external evaluation, documentation and evidence required for the evaluation.
3. The assessment was conducted separately for pasture use and herding, and the results of the survey showed that although herders are doing well in their traditional herding, there is a general reluctance on pasture use. This is partly due to the fact that pastureland is public property and the number of livestock is increasing year by year nationwide.
4. It can be concluded that the assessed herder communities meet the conformity assessment of 50 percent of the best practices for herding and cashmere harvesting, while the conformity assessment of the best practices of pasture use provide 13.7 percent, and does not yet meet the requirements of practice.
5. According to the results of the conformity assessment, the current market demand has not decreased in the herder's hometown. This is because the implementation of this good practice is not enough to prove that the cashmere is being supplied responsibly as required by the factory and the buyers. In other words, herders do not know or understand the market requirements at all.
6. Herders have not abandoned the suicidal mentality of the past 30 years to market their products. Herders and herder organizations continue to participate in the market through intermediaries or changers because they do not know the requirements for industrial supply and do not understand the long-term sustainable supply system.
7. Cooperatives will be able to follow the two best practices implemented by the SFA in their daily activities and prepare high-quality cashmere, which will facilitate many complex tasks in the cashmere processing industry, prevent the fall in cashmere prices, and sell cashmere at a marginal cost. This could further stimulate the development of cooperatives to eliminate intermediaries and stabilize the supply chain.
8. In the future, we have the resources to establish a marketing network to supply high quality cashmere and cashmere products to the world market. It is only important that we adopt the notion of good practice in our traditional pastoral practices.

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