

**REPORT ON CIMMYT WORKSHOP ON DRAUGHT POWER AND ANIMAL FEEDING IN
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA, EZULWINI, SWAZILAND OCTOBER 4-6, 1983**

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INTRODUCTION

The first workshop on draft power in East and Southern Africa was held in Swaziland in October 1983 by CIMMYT. It was felt that a report on the workshop proceedings, methodology and results would be useful for the participants in this West African workshop.

NEED FOR NETWORKING

Formal and informal networks exist worldwide as a response to peoples' needs to communicate and exchange ideas. In a field such as on-farm research, the need for networking is great because:

1. Researchers are few and scattered;
2. Formal links do not exist; and
3. Development of sound methodologies requires much trial-and-error which may be repeated time and again by researchers unknown to each other, especially across a region but also even within a country.

NETWORKING MODES

Once agreed that networking is important, the question arises as to what is the best mode to facilitate networking. Newsletters are an obvious way of communicating. CIMMYT, FSSP and ILCA, to name a few, publish newsletters on a routine basis. However, newsletters are a passive means of communication in that everyone likes to receive them but few contribute.

A second mode of networking suggested by Michael Collinson, CIMMYT, Nairobi, Kenya, is the identification of a specific area of concern in a region and inventorying two aspects of that area of concern. The first aspect would be to describe the characteristics of local specific systems, see how the problem manifests itself under different agroclimatic, economic and social conditions, and inventory the ways in which farmers manage the problem under different conditions. The second aspect would be to list past and ongoing research and to generate a directory of researchers.

The CIMMYT workshop therefore dealt with the first inventorying task—descriptions of systems where access to draft power had been diagnosed as important—and reports on experimental work that addressed the problem through animal feeding or reduction in draft requirements. The second inventorying task—reports on research in an area—started with a report entitled "Draught Power Problems and Related Research in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland" is available on request from the CIMMYT office in Swaziland (c/o Allen Low, CIMMYT, P.O. Box 1473, Mbabane, Swaziland).

INVENTORY OF CROSS-COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

East and Southern Africa have a history of domestic animals and use of animals for draft. This does not mean that the problems are lessened, only that in some cases they are different from draft animal problems in West Africa. For example, animals in these regions are often available but too weak to use, whereas in West Africa animals may not be available and farmers may have no history of animal ownership.

Workshop participants were asked to prepare a paper in advance about their work and send it to Swaziland so that all papers could be copied and ready when the workshop started. It became obvious early on that the systems were very different, yet some similarities existed across countries. Systems calendars were devised as a means to discuss these similarities. Participants broke into groups by country to prepare systems calendars which were to include a graph by year of rainfall, feed availability, and timing of agricultural labor and problem points (land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, marketing, labor bottlenecks and feed scarcity). Some country participants (e.g., Kenya) had to prepare more than one systems calendar because of wide agroclimatic variability. These calendars were hung around the room and provided an excellent backdrop to discussions of experimental programs.

Discussions of experimental programs included interventions thought to be appropriate in the local farming systems described by the participants. Interventions fell into two broad categories:

1. Interventions aimed at improving the capacity of animals to generate more draft power, e.g. feeding management (forage crops, crop residues, selective feeding) and animal management; and
2. Interventions aimed at reducing the demand for draft, e.g. minimum tillage, farmer training.

Further discussions occurred as participants commented on work from other countries and the appropriateness to their own particular areas. Examples included:

1. Work in Kenya on crop residues was thought to be relevant to Western Sudan;
2. Selective feeding of animals in Kenya and Lesotho was of interest to Malawi, where animals given to farmers died from poor feed management; and
3. Minimum tillage and herbicide work in Zimbabwe was thought to be relevant in Botswana but not in Kenya, where mixed cropping of cereals and legumes precludes such activities.

NETWORKSHOP ASSESSMENT

An overall consensus was that papers and systems calendars should have been prepared well in advance. Given the mail system, this proved difficult even for preliminary communications. Alternatively, the workshop

could have been longer. As it was, participants worked every night on their presentations and saw little, if anything, of Swaziland.

Interestingly enough, participants felt that either too much or too little time was spent on presentations and that presentations were too limited or too general to obtain useful information from them. The prescribed formats were felt to be good but could have been organized in a different fashion.

