

Progress Report of the East Asia Group

From July to Oct 2023

By Prof. Ruijun Long, Lanzhou University

1. On August 24, 2023, Professor Long Ruijun, Lanzhou University, the co-chair of the East Asia Group, the IYRP was invited to attend the Yak Pastoralism Development Conference in Aba Prefecture, Sichuan, and he delivered a keynote speech titled " Potential of the High Quality and Sustainable Development and its Path in Aba Prefecture". In his speech, Prof. Long emphasized the relevant activities and significance of the IYRP. More than 500 representatives from Sichuan, Qinghai, Yunnan, Gansu, and Xizang attended the meeting.



Prof. Long delivered a keynote speech

2. In the evening of August 24, Prof. Long attended the opening ceremony of the 12th Yak Culture Festival (YCF) in Hongyuan County, Aba Prefecture. The YCF lasted for 3 days. Its activities included a series of competitions such as herdsman performances, herdsman weight-bearing competitions, yak running competitions, the best bull selection,

the best yak dairy cow selection, yak training competitions, and children riding calves.



The opening ceremony of the 12th Yak Culture Festival



A yak with the best milking potential

was selected which gave 3.5kg of milk in a 20 min duration.



Calf riding by children



Yak racing competitions



Herders performances:
traditional costume show



Yak training competition



The best cow (left) and the best bull (right)



Herders weight-bearing competitions

3. During the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation from 25 to 27 Sept.2023 in Rome, Prof. Long's team contributed a success story "From a household initiative to a cooperative model: Empowering Tibetan families in China" A total of 12 selected stories were presented during the conference (<https://www.fao.org/3/cc7951en/cc7951en.pdf>). Prof. Long attended the FAO GC-SLT and the details of the story are as follows:

From a household initiative to a cooperative model: Empowering Tibetan families in China

CHINA PRESENTER: MR. RUIJUN LONG, PROFESSOR, LANZHOU UNIVERSITY

On the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, where 95 percent of the yak population lives, yaks are vital for milk, meat, wool, fuel, and transport. Yet, challenges like grassland degradation, decreasing yak performance, and youth moving away from pastoralism impede yak production. With numerous livestock but limited land, the joint-stock cooperative model has gained traction as it allows effective grassland, livestock, and labour management. In 2014, locals formed the Laoerdu Cooperative, involving Lanzhou University and the local government. They blended scientific with traditional knowledge for a better utilization of the rangelands under transhumance systems in order to boost yak production and ecosystem management. This cooperative initiative increased yak milk output by 50 percent and average household incomes from 6,000 up to 18,500 RMB in 2022. Furthermore, the cooperative restored >1,600 ha of rangelands and refined the practice of culling bulls at 4-5 years and cows at 9-10 years, hence curbing methane emissions by over 10 percent. Additionally, it eased the labour burden for women, as 60 percent of milking duties shifted to men.

4. From 5 to 6 Oct 2023, Prof, Long attended the “Regional Consultation Workshop on Multi-stakeholder Collaboration to Strengthen Sustainability and Resilience of Livestock Systems in South and Southeast Asia” at ICIMOD, Kathmandu, Nepal. He delivered a keynote speech on “Multi-stakeholder collaboration to strengthen sustainability and resilience of the Asian Highlands’ pastoralism: Principal & practice in the Tibetan yak farming”. Later, he also introduced the IYRP to participants.
5. On 13 Oct 2023, Prof. Long delivered a speech on “Attention to the Environment of Pastoral Areas of the UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists” at the Workshop on Developing Environmental Cooperation Platform in Northeast Asia for Joint

Prevention and Control of Sandstorm under the '3+X' Cooperation Model. The event was hosted by the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Science, in Beijing.

6. Future activities

- 1) Discussions with officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration will be held to plan budgets and some IYRP activities such as the Asian Highlands Pastoral Network/Forum in August 2024
- 2) Dialogue with governors of Hongyuan County to plan an International Yak Cultural Festival will also be conducted. Experts from the FAO, IYRP, and ICIMOD will be invited to join the event.