



**UNFSS Pre-Summit Affiliated Parallel Session
26 July 2021, 13:30–14:20 Rome time (CEST)**

Mobile pastoralism valuing rangeland variability: a game-changing idea for sustainable consumption and production from the livestock sector

Weblink to register: <https://bit.ly/3xvbQa2>

Four key messages

Pastoralists and farmers have co-existed for millennia. Modern agriculture, including livestock production, has been built on the assumption of a distinctive difference between humanity and nature, leading to attempts to emancipate food production from the variability of the natural environment. With global climate change upon us, there is little doubt that the separation from nature was just a fiction: a highly variable natural environment is the norm. Some of the most evident lessons for producing food by working with nature are found in traditional mobile pastoral systems, operated by about half a billion people who are users and stewards of rangeland systems (e.g. tundra, mountains, savannas, grassland and desert margins) that cover an estimated 54% of the world's land surface.

In the past, rangelands and grasslands were regarded by outsiders as degraded forests and/or wastelands. Not so by pastoralists, nor by recent science. Increasing evidence from vegetation science shows that such landscapes were shaped by large, mostly presently extinct wild herbivores during the whole Quaternary. Today it is recognized that the natural state of such landscapes depends upon herbivory, which maintains high levels of biodiversity, soil health and resilience and significant carbon sinks. Policies to convert rangelands and grasslands to forest or cropland are misguided.

Periodical movement of livestock (mobility) through rangelands maintains ecological processes and sustains production. An increase in consumption of meat and milk is associated with better nutrition for the undernourished, although not necessarily a benefit for those who are over-consuming. It is possible to live healthily without eating animal products, but they do provide nutritional benefits, particularly through micro-nutrients. High-value protein offered by nature-based livestock products improves the nutrition of the vast majority of people in the world.

Allowing pastoral systems to take their sustainable strategies into the future, rather than eradicating them only to call for scientists to 'discover' them again, will require a fundamental change in attitudes, perceptions and policies. Many governments have already done so: examples are the transhumance corridors of Spain, rangeland transhumance regulations in Mongolia and transhumance passports of West Africa.

There are also autonomous innovations, such as when ranchers in South Africa cooperate to open up fences. The key message is that the world cannot afford to leave pastoralists behind in the implementation of the SDGs.

Intended outcomes

1. UNFSS adopts a global initiative for mobile pastoralism valuing rangeland variability
2. Recognition of the world's rangelands/grasslands for sustainability and achievement of the SDGs
3. Bringing the global voices of pastoralists as stewards of rangelands to UNFSS

This session is about changing the paradigm. The idea rests on the broader principle of valuing and embracing variability in food systems as a necessary path to both sustainable agriculture (including aiming for higher productivity) and social justice in the face of climate change. Whether nature's variability is a problem or an asset for food production depends on the strategy of production. Mobile pastoral systems have intrinsic properties that make them an ideal entry point for supporting and scaling up nature-positive production and natural restoration and regeneration of ecosystems. Mobility remains their most effective strategy.

It is vital that this neglected issue be brought to the attention of the Pre-Summit gathering, so that governments have time to prepare relevant changes to policy documents prior to the Summit in September.

Program

During the 50 minutes of the session, the four key messages above will be delivered, stated by an eminent researcher, an eminent scientist, a pastoralist entrepreneur and a government representative, keeping a regional and gender balance. These statements will be substantiated and elaborated on by pastoralists and speakers from several other scientific organizations, UN representatives and NGOs. All speakers listed have been confirmed. Each speaker will have 3 minutes max. In parallel and on demand, participants can have access to a moderated Q&A board, relevant videos, statements and testimonies from pastoralists, maps and graphics that substantiate each key message.

The moderator is Jürgen Hoth (Vice President of FUNBA, Mexico). The Chat managers are Ann Waters-Bayer (CELEP) and Cynthia Mugo (ILRI).

Opening (2.5 minutes): *Animated film on mobile pastoralism valuing rangeland variability*, created by Cartoonbase and produced by CELEP (Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism), VSFB (Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium), MISEREOR Association of German Dioceses and the Belgian Government. The film is in support of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP).

Opening remarks (4 minutes): Antonio Rota, Lead Technical Specialist, Livestock Development, IFAD; and Jonathan Davies, Global Drylands Coordinator, IUCN

Statements on rangelands and grasslands (9 minutes):

Main speaker: Carlos Martorell, Professor, National Autonomous University of Mexico, on importance of livestock to rangelands and the fallacy of converting rangelands to forests

Elaborating speakers:

- Fiona Flintan, Senior Researcher, ILRI, on the recently launched Rangeland Atlas (54% of earth land mass), importance of rangelands for carbon sequestration and unsustainability of converting rangelands to irrigation
- Engin Yilmaz, Director of Yolda Initiative, on pastoral mobility favoring biodiversity; rangelands are not wastelands

Statements on mobile pastoralism (9 minutes):

Main speaker: Ian Scoones, Professor, PASTRES, Institute for Development Studies, UK, on pastoral mobility and valuing the variability of nature

Elaborating speakers:

- Hijaba Ykhanbai, Director, Environment and Development Association "JASIL", on pastoralism and the strength of local knowledge in Mongolia
- Ken Otieno, Director, Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE), on participatory rangeland management in Kenya and Tanzania

Statements on livestock consumption and production (9 minutes):

Main speaker: Ilse Koehler-Rollefson on sustainable production, Camel Charisma Pvt Ltd, India, and Recipient of Nari Shakti (Women's Power) Award by the President of India in 2017

Elaborating speakers:

- Sarah Frazee, Meat Naturally Pty, South Africa, on opportunities for value-chain approaches to drive sustainable production in Southern Africa
- Pablo Manzano, University of Helsinki, on sustainable consumption

Statements on policies and initiatives to support mobile pastoralism and value rangeland variability (9 minutes):

Main speaker: Damdindorj Batmunkh, Director General of the Policy and Coordination for Livestock Husbandry Department, Government of Mongolia, on government support to mobile pastoralism

Elaborating speakers:

- Concha Salguero, Coordinator of Projects, Transhumancia y Naturaleza, on a Spanish example of mobile pastoralism
- Igshaan Samuels, Rangeland Ecologist, Agricultural Research Council, South Africa, on a South African example of mobile pastoralism

Moderated chat/message discussions

Concluding remarks (1 minute):

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Vice Chair, International Support Group for IYRP

Concluding film:

- Italian pastoralism (5 minutes) – ILRI and partners