

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FORMATION OF
GRAZING ASSOCIATIONS IN LESOTHO**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID/Lesotho began its support for Range Management Areas (RMAs) in 1982, when staff of the Range Management Division (RMD) and the Land Conservation and Range Development (LCRD) project started organizing farmers in the Sehlabathebe area into a grazing association (GA). The RMA/GA concept became popular with the Government of Lesotho (GOL), and a second area, Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso, was brought under management in 1987. When LCRD merged with the Lesotho Agricultural Production and Institutional Support (LAPIS) project in 1988, the concept acquired the status of a program, and two more RMA/GAs were established in 1990 and 1991. The program has been operational for nine years. During this time a tremendous body of knowledge of the processes of RMA/GA organization and function has accumulated. This report synthesizes the political, social, technical, and administrative issues germane to the program into a set of lessons learned during the formation of GAs in Lesotho.

The GOL has laid the legal foundation for natural resource management and conservation. However, the land laws stipulate that the responsibility for land management rests with the Chieftainship. Yet, the Chieftainship has been, and remains, a major impediment to those community-based associations which are striving to effectively control land use and taking the steps to reverse the trends of natural resource degradation in their areas. Although chiefs sit on the management committees of GAs, rarely do they vigorously and expeditiously attend to their obligations of regulating land use. To their credit, GAs are slowly extending their spheres of action into the administrative voids left by an impotent Chieftainship.

In establishing RMA/GAs, a broad administrative base must be built with the district staffs of the Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperatives, and Marketing (MOA) and of the Ministry of Interior, Rural Development, and Chieftainship Affairs (MOI). In addition, field staff of these two ministries, located in the mountains, are key players in the organizational and operational efforts. Furthermore, attention must be paid to protocol, and the participation of chiefs at all levels must be solicited in the processes of establishing RMAs.

Once the chiefs have given their approval to the RMA in principle, a series of village meetings, or pitsos, must be convened to thoroughly explain the costs and benefits associated with its formation and with the cooperative, community-based style of management which will be required for the GA to function. When public opinion is supportive of the RMA/GA concept, the Principle Chief must declare, verbally and in writing, the establishment of the RMA/GA.

The RMA boundary is delimited on the basis of rangeland user patterns and the socio-economy of the prospective residents. Advisors then begin the process of organizing the villagers into a GA. This is the time when the farmers must set meaningful goals for the organization and when it is critical for the advisor to build a broad foundation

of trust and acceptance with local chiefs, within the communities at large, and with herders.

A management committee of village representatives is elected once the farmers have expressed the need for cooperative action to achieve their goals, and are willing to relinquish some decision-making authority to a coordinating body. Local chiefs are ex officio members of this group. The committee then begins the process of drafting the GA's constitution. This document must be developed with sufficient time for all residents to provide input. Its preamble should be a broad statement of the goals and objectives toward which the membership will strive, and its articles are the rules and regulations under which the GA will conduct its administrative affairs. A period of three years must be expected to elapse from the time of the initial explanatory meetings, where the RMA/GA concept is introduced, until the constitution is ratified by the membership and registered with the Registrar of Societies at the Law Office in Maseru.

The success of the GA's management rests upon the administrative ability of the management committee and its executive officers. In addition to drafting the constitution, these groups are responsible for: controlling land use, enforcing the provisions of the constitution, managing financial resources, facilitating extension and training, representing the association at official functions and at informal gatherings, developing open channels of communication throughout the membership, and coordinating selected activities the farmers find desirable, e.g., herd improvement, animal health services, and livestock marketing.

Technological and managerial innovations; such as culling and selective breeding, adhering to grazing plans, paying user fees (grazing and breeding) improvements in livestock marketing, training, and structural developments; have been introduced with the RMA/GA Program. The attempt should be made to retain traditional practices and to suggest refinements and updates where appropriate. Since the introduction of the RMA/GA Program, several components of the range-rural producer complex have either improved or are better than in the areas surrounding the RMAs, i.e., the ecological condition of the range and liveweights of cattle sold. Procedures for monitoring other parameters must be introduced to evaluate the Program's contribution to the farmers' quality of life. Training must be an on-going activity and must reach a broader audience than just the management committee. Herders are particularly important to focus upon. Infrastructure should be low-maintenance. In the final analysis, all activities which the GA will not finance must be liquidated or a way found to make them self-supporting.

Every effort should be made to coordinate the activities of the Department of Livestock Services in the field. Staff working in the divisions of Range Management, Animal Production, and Veterinary Services must complement one another. An intensive and broad-based training program, which will assist advisors in understanding the sociological and environmental factors relevant to rural organization development and management of communally-used natural resources, must be developed to effectively extend the RMA/GA Program throughout the nation.

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The LAPIS Project acknowledges the support of the many people whose contributions made this report possible. L. Chris Weaver, the Project's Chief of Party, and Robert Buzzard, the Project's Range Management Area (RMA) and Adjudication Specialist, co-authored the work. Buzzard's two years in the field, assisting with the organization of the Pelaneng/Bokong Grazing Association and advising on its operations, provided him with the background to synthesize the reflections, writing, and comments of many other workers into the lessons presented here. Weaver, who, with Mohale Sekoto, Senior Range Management Officer, developed the central framework for organizing associations while "pioneering" the establishment of the first RMA at Sehlabathebe, contributed significantly by drawing upon his eight years of experience with grazing association operations in Lesotho. Special thanks are extended to Khokho Ntsokoane, the advisor to the Pelaneng/Bokong Grazing Association who always took the time to reveal the subtle social and legal relationships which pervade the mountain communities. These are the forces which define the setting and which always must be reckoned with as development moves forward. The dedication of Phallang Lebesa, Sello Rasello, and Ntlale Ntlale, advisors to the grazing associations at Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso, Sehlabathebe, and Mokhotlong/Sanqebethu must be commended. Their leadership and persistence along with that of the other RMA advisory staff are the linchpins of further successes. The contribution of USAID/Lesotho is deeply appreciated not only for the mission's overall support but especially for sponsoring the numerous seminars, workshops, and conferences which are so crucial for the dissemination of new knowledge and to the refinement of techniques. Finally, the commitment of the grazing associations' management committees and their executive officers must be praised. It is these ladies and gentlemen who are leading the way, often swimming against the tide of their neighbors' opinions, toward sustainable natural resource management in Lesotho.

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FOREWORD

In 1982, the Range Management Division (RMD) of the Government of Lesotho, with assistance from the USAID-funded Land Conservation and Range Development (LCRD) project, initiated the Sehlabathebe Range Management Area (RMA). Prior to the conclusion of the LCRD project in 1988, a second RMA was established and two more were under development. Following termination of the LCRD project, USAID support of the RMA Program was continued with the Lesotho Agricultural Production and Institutional Support (LAPIS) project. Today, the RMA Program is firmly institutionalized within the Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperatives and Marketing.

The organization which is responsible for range and livestock management within an RMA is known as a grazing association. This is a cooperative body of livestock producers which sets the goals and objectives and enforces the policies and regulations required to manage the communal rangelands within the RMA.

Over the past nine years, a tremendous body of knowledge of the process of RMA/GA establishment and operation has accumulated in Lesotho. Much of this information has been documented in the forms of reports and workshop proceedings. Probably an even greater amount is unwritten and resides in the minds of LAPIS technical assistants and staff of the RMD.

With eight months remaining in the LAPIS project, USAID has requested the project's prime contractor, American Ag International (AAI), to summarize these diverse experiences into a concise synthesis of "Lessons Learned From The Formation Of Grazing Associations In Lesotho". AAI hopes this report will provide guidance to the RMD and to all other parties who will endeavor to improve the management of Lesotho's rangelands.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lesotho's mountain geo-climatic zone covers about 20,000 sq. km or nearly two-thirds of the nation's land area. Numerous reports have documented and described the ecological deterioration throughout this zone. Widespread soil erosion, the loss of plant and animal species diversity, rural poverty, and marginalized agriculture are distinctive features of the landscape and socio-economy of the mountain region.

Against this backdrop, the Government of Lesotho (GOL) and the USAID-sponsored Land Conservation and Range Development project (LCRD) began a cooperative effort to increase the productivity and income of rural livestock producers in one area of the country. The means for achieving these ends was to organize farmers into a collective producer group within an area over which they could exercise exclusive control of range management and livestock production. The area was termed a Range Management Area (RMA), the group became a grazing association (GA), and in 1983 an RMA/GA was established at Sehlabathebe.

Concurrent with the operation of the Sehlabathebe RMA/GA, GOL adopted in 1987, the Livestock Policy Issues Paper as a working document to provide broad direction for reversing the decline in environmental quality and to commercialize the livestock sector in the mountain zone of the nation. One important objective of GOL agricultural policy was to restore the productive capacity of the mountains and to maintain the flow of livestock products, primarily wool and mohair as earners of foreign exchange, from the rangelands and villages of that region. To that end, the GOL supported and encouraged the formation of collective producer groups or associations as the conduits through which techniques of communal rangeland management and improvements in livestock production practices could be delivered to the mountains. In response to the desire of GOL, LCRD established a second RMA/GA in 1987.

In 1988, LCRD merged with another USAID-supported effort, the Lesotho Agricultural Production and Institutional Support project (LAPIS). Under LAPIS two additional RMA/GAs were developed in Lesotho and the project contributed significantly to extending and promoting the RMA/GA concept throughout the nation.

1.1 Background and Definition

Since the earliest days of the Basotho nation the responsibility for controlling and administering stock grazing has been vested in the hierarchy of chiefs. The customary laws governing grazing control were encoded in 1903, in the Laws of Lerotholi. By the late 1960's it was recognized that the chieftainship had become ineffective in regulating the use of communal grazing lands (Motsamai, 1991). Faced with the erosion of chiefly power, the notion that an alternative institution--a locally organized, officially recognized body of stockowners, acting in their own self-interest--could

provide leadership in resource management became popular within Government and among foreign assistance organizations (Lawry, 1988). As a result, GAs were organized and supported by a variety of donors: with assistance from the Senqu Project at Ongeluk's Nek (1975) and Matseng (1975), by the Canadians at Thaba Tseka (1978), and by the EEC at Mphaki (1981).

At present, four USAID-sponsored GAs are operational in Lesotho. The oldest of these, located at Sehlabathebe, was established in 1983. It was followed by a second association, also in Qacha's Nek District - "Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso" in 1987. In 1990, the "Pelaneng/Bokong Grazing Association" of Leribe District became registered and in April 1991, the farmers of the Mokhotlong and Sanqebethu watersheds in Mokhotlong District established the "Linots'ing, Mateanong, and Mechalleng Grazing Association". These four associations operate within areas set aside for "special agricultural development" known as the RMAs. The combined size of the four RMAs equals 130,000 ha. or about six percent of the nation's rangelands. Figure 1 shows the distribution and relative size of these RMAs within Lesotho.

The experiences gained during the formation and operation of each association have guided successive efforts. This paper documents the lessons learned over the nine years (1982-1991) of organizing and advising upon grazing association operations in Lesotho. It focuses upon the political, social, technical, and administrative issues germane to the establishment and sustainable operation of these groups.

2.0 LEGAL SETTING

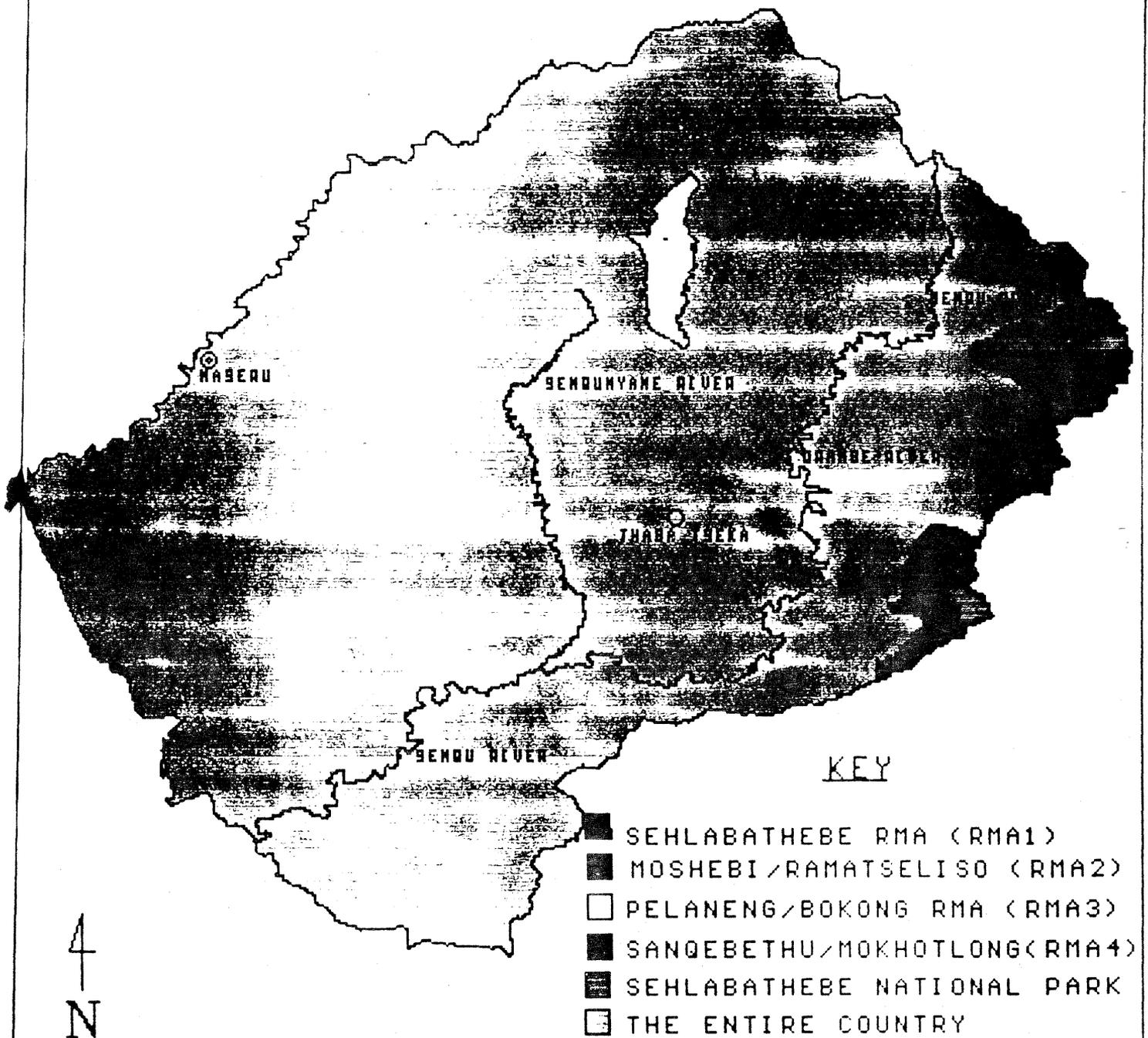
2.1 National Laws and Regulations

One of the key elements of national agricultural policy is government's encouragement of shifts from subsistence to commercialized farming. To facilitate this process it has been necessary to incorporate customary law or to often supersede it with new statutes of land tenure and land use.

The first land law of consequence enacted by parliament shortly after independence was the Land Husbandry Act 1969. The Act gave the Minister for Agriculture the authority to promulgate certain regulations covering soil conservation, range management, land use, protection of water resources, irrigation, and livestock reduction.

The Land Husbandry Act 1969 was followed by a number of other statutes (Land Act 1973, Land Regulations 1974, Land Act 1979). Of these the Land Act 1979 is most important since it supersedes and prevails where customary law is inconsistent with the Act. The Act provides for modifications to the most common form of land tenure in rural areas, the allocation, and introduces a new form of tenure--the lease.

FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF LESOTHO'S RANGE MANAGEMENT AREAS



Also the power of the chieftainship is diluted so that the authority to allocate land is delegated to a Land Allocation Committee, elected from the adults of each gazetted chief's jurisdiction, of which the chief is chairman ex officio.

By 1986, there was general disappointment with the implementation of the Land Act 1979 and a Land Policy Review Commission was appointed to receive public comment regarding its deficiencies and the improprieties of its application. This Commission published its recommendations in September 1987, and these have been presented to Law Office in the form of amended regulations which have yet to be promulgated. Several of the Commission's findings had bearing upon the RMA/GA Program. First, local authorities (chiefs and Land Allocation Committees) were derelict in regulating the rate of settlement and the rate of residential encroachment into arable lands and rangelands. This was, and remains, a serious problem at the Sehlabathebe and Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso RMAs where the chiefs refuse to limit immigration to the areas. To counter these problems the Commission recommended abolishing Land Allocation Committees and permitting Village Development Councils (VDCs) to replace them functionally. Chiefs would still chair the VDCs, but the councils would be a merger of "royal" power and "common" interests. Furthermore, the VDCs would be strengthened by agricultural officers serving as members in an advisory role. Second, the following measures were proposed for the management and protection of rangelands: grazing fees, re-organization of cattlepost tenure, prohibitions on lowland to mountain transhumance, establishment of grazing committees, and expansion of the RMA program. These tactics were further elaborated upon in the National Livestock Policy Issues Paper (1987), and have been adopted by Government. The RMAs/GAs are seen as the sites and the implementing bodies of these activities in the mountains.

The Land Husbandry Act 1969 authorized the Minister for Agriculture to confer the power for executing the provisions of the Act upon chiefs, societies, cooperatives, and associations. Of these institutions, the Minister chose to place the authority for administering grazing in the hands of the Chieftainship through promulgation of the Range Management and Grazing Control Regulations 1980 (amended 1986). These regulations allow the chiefs to designate areas for special agricultural development, to grant exclusive use rights to these areas, and to delegate their authority for the administration of grazing to representatives. All of the Range Management Division's (RMD) efforts to organize GAs have capitalized upon these provisos.

Throughout the last 20 years, GOL has made significant progress in establishing the legal framework for governing land use and tenure. Government has shown the ability to respond to changing circumstances by reviewing and amending existing legislation. On the other hand, the implementation of statutes remains problematic. Specifically, in the case of the Range Management and Grazing Control Regulations, the three institutions with responsibility for their successful enforcement--the Chieftainship, the local courts, and the police--are either negligent in the performance of their duties or assign them such low priority as to make the Regulations ineffective. In the RMAs the

GAs and advisors are attempting to fill the "enforcement voids" by taking the following steps: Sesotho copies of the Range Management and Grazing Control Regulations have been widely distributed and specifically discussed with farmers, chiefs, and officers of the local courts; arrangements have been made with local police to participate on rides to check grazing permits and impound trespassing livestock; and range riders, elected from the member body, are paid from trespass fees and impoundment receipts to enforce the Regulations and grazing plans.

Lessons

1. Enforcement of grazing regulations is difficult given the apathy and disinterest of traditional local institutions. Hence, enforcement devolves to the GA and its elected riders. The best foundations for successful enforcement are GA policies which have been developed with a broad base of member participation. Members who are caught out of compliance can be held accountable to the very plans for which they have provided public input or support.
2. Enforcement actions are also necessary against non-members of the GA who will constantly test the integrity of the RMA boundary. Many of these individuals will be highly resentful of having been dispossessed of their grazing right within the RMA. They can be quite bellicose and it is the riders who must bear the brunt of their animosity. The diligence of the riders must be maintained by providing them with meaningful remuneration and active leadership.

2.2 Chieftainship

The Minister for Agriculture placed the authority for administering grazing in the hands of the Chieftainship. The RMD has respected the authority of the Principal Chiefs to permit the formation of associations and to allocate them land for RMAs. In return, the Principal Chiefs have signed written declarations which: 1) establish RMAs and designate their boundaries, 2) authorize the villagers within the RMAs to form grazing associations, 3) support the implementation of national livestock policies within the RMA, and 4) delegate to the associations' management committees the authority to administer grazing in the cattlepost and village grazing areas of the RMA (i.e., to act as the representatives of the Principal Chiefs).

The associations are permitted to act as the Principal Chiefs' representatives precisely because local chiefs have been included on their management committees. By naming associations as their representatives, the Principal Chiefs are actually delegating their authority for grazing control to the chiefs sitting on these committees, not to the common farmers. This is a mixed blessing. In cases where local chiefs take their responsibility for land management seriously and are supportive of the association, a strong alliance can be forged to halt and reverse the degradation of the nation's natural

resources, i.e., the association can become an extension of royal power. However, where chiefs are apathetic and not committed to controlling resource use, as is common throughout most of the country, the associations are frustrated. This is because although mountain Basotho may castigate and ignore individual chiefs whose behavior is unlawful, undignified, and reprehensible, they simultaneously respect the institution of the Chieftainship. They are desirous of active chiefs who are committed to a high quality of life for their people. Therefore, even when it is obvious their chiefs will not assume the responsibility the Regulations have conferred, people are extremely reluctant, and in many instances they refuse, to take actions which have traditionally been within the purview of the chiefs.

Two Principal Chiefs, closely involved with the RMA/GA Program, exhibit contrasting levels of backing. The Principal Chief of Qacha's Nek has been highly supportive of the Sehlabathebe and Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso RMAs/GAs. He was the first Principal Chief to proclaim an RMA and the first to delegate authority for rangeland management to a GA. Furthermore, he has publicly promoted the GAs on numerous occasions.

Conversely, the Principal Chief of Mokhotlong, while approving the formation of the Linot'sing, Mateanong, and Mechellang GA on paper, has never provided whole-hearted support to the association in public. Neither has he delegated true decision-making authority to the Acting Principal Chief of Mokhotlong during his long-term absences from the Ward. This has served to undermine the authority of the association, thereby leaving the viability of this particular GA in jeopardy.

Support from local chiefs and headmen is also necessary if grazing associations are to be effective management bodies. However, it is at this level that the weakness of the chieftainship's administrative authority is most apparent. Local chiefs/headmen are inadequately trained, poorly paid, and unmotivated. Their overall willingness to participate in enforcement activities is low. The limited participation on the parts of local chiefs/headmen has constrained the management effectiveness of all four GAs.

The current situation in the Pelaneng/Bokong RMA, where the processes of membership renewal and participatory management are deadlocked, exemplifies the statements above. The chiefs have not prosecuted association members who trespassed maboella (areas closed according to the grazing plan) and who subsequently prevented the range riders from impounding their stock. Other members see their neighbors breaking the law with impunity and wonder why they should submit to the Regulations and grazing plan. Some are even reluctant to renew their membership in the GA.

A number of steps have been initiated to overcome the problems associated with the Chieftainship: 1) Principal Chiefs have been asked to provide public and written declarations of support for the GAs; 2) Principal Chiefs have been the focus of training sessions, study tours, and annual seminars; 3) local chiefs/headmen have been

incorporated into the management committees of the GAs and have been asked to delegate the authority to enforce the Regulations to these committees; and 4) when impasses with local chiefs/headmen are reached, Principal Chiefs, District Secretaries (DS), and District Agricultural Officers (DAO) have been asked to hold pitsos (public meetings) in support of the GAs.

Lessons

1. Initiatives for organizing GAs and establishing RMAs should only be undertaken in wards where these processes have the unequivocal support of Principal Chiefs. Though attempts have been made to implement this procedure, the Mokhotlong situation has emerged. To reduce the chance of a similar occurrence, closer pre-development liaison and efforts to increase the exposure of Principal Chiefs to the RMA/GA concept must be undertaken.
2. The Principal Chief must verbally (traditionally at pitsos) and in writing declare the establishment of the RMA and the authority of its GA. Without these pronouncements, the RMA and association will receive neither popular recognition nor legal registration by the Law Office.
3. The participation of local chiefs must be provided for in the management structure of associations. Area chiefs and village headmen are automatically members of the four GAs established to date.
4. Even with the inclusion of the area chiefs/village headmen as per No. 3 above, an RMA advisor should be prepared for low levels of participation on the part of local chiefs. In these cases, organizational and extension efforts must operate on several fronts. Frequent, informal meetings must be held with the the chiefs to build the highest level of trust and acceptance between the association's management committee, the chiefs, and the advisor. Simultaneously, the committee and advisor must build a positive relationship with the Principal Chief, for they will very likely need to appeal to him to motivate his subordinate chiefs.

3.0 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RMA

Usufruct rights to grazing land are embodied in both statutory law (Range Management and Grazing Control Regulations 1980; amended 1986) and in the customary law (The Laws of Lerotoli) upon which the regulations were modelled (Huisman, 1983). The essence of grazing land use is that: 1) in village grazing areas it is under the control of local chiefs; 2) in cattlepost areas grazing is communal and controlled by Principal Chiefs who may restrict use rights to a particular group of

people; and 3) in both areas, chiefs may appoint representatives to administer grazing.

The establishment of the RMA hinges upon the second proviso above--that use rights may be restricted. Here a distinction must be made between the concept of exclusive tenure on one hand and the authority to exercise local control of grazing administration on the other. Obvious benefits flow to RMA residents when they are granted exclusive tenure. First, when non-residents relinquish their cattleposts, more forage becomes available to residents since livestock densities and the extent of overgrazing are normally reduced. Second, administration becomes easier since ideas, plans, and policies need only be discussed in detail with the relatively "captive" population of the RMA. On the negative side, the rights of tenancy to a particular area are extinguished for non-residents. To be equitable, the grazing rights of the dispossessed must be recognized through the allocation of new cattleposts elsewhere. This not only increases the stock density in areas surrounding the RMA, but leads to trespassing and conflict along the newly declared RMA boundary. See Dobb (1988), Lawry (1986, 1988), and Weaver (1986, 1990) for detailed treatments of this question.

One way of quelling some of the hostility associated with displacement is for the Principal Chief to delegate his authority for grazing control to the GA management committee instead of making a blanket pronouncement of exclusive use. This paves the way for the association to enact its own policies for controlling access to RMA grazing lands. It also affords the GA the opportunity to participate in the implementation of the National Livestock Policy elements of cattlepost adjudication and restrictions on transhumance in their own fashion and at a rate acceptable to the community. In the end, displacement of non-residents will probably occur and a state of *de facto* exclusive use will be achieved, but hopefully without the animosity and dissatisfaction which characterized the early days at Sehlabathebe and Mokhotlong/Sanqebethu RMAs.

3.1 Selecting and Defining the RMA

The process of organizing the grazing association starts with establishing the RMA. At this early stage of selecting and defining the RMA, it is important to build a broad base of support among the headquarters and district staffs of the two ministries most directly involved--the Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperatives and Marketing (MOA); and the Ministry of Interior, Rural Development, and Chieftainship Affairs (MOI). The RMA/GA Program is well entrenched in the operational plans of MOA, Department of Livestock Services (DLS) in Maseru. However, greater support and cooperation is required from MOI.

The selection of the Sehlabathebe RMA involved only staff from MOA, and it was not until after the area was chosen that support from the Principal Chief of Qacha's Nek was requested. MOA learned not to repeat such an oversight, and when the Ha

Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso RMA was under consideration the Ministry sought the advice and support of the Principal Chief from the onset. When the RMA/GA Program expanded into Leribe and Mokhotlong Districts the respective Principal Chiefs were invited to participate in selecting the areas which became the Pelaneng/Bokong and the Mokhotlong/Sanqebethu RMAs.

Similarly, at the district level, little advice or input was solicited for identification of the first two RMAs. However, as district agricultural staffs became more autonomous and were granted greater responsibility through MOA decentralization, they contributed significantly to the identification of the Pelaneng/Bokong and Mokhotlong/Sanqebethu RMAs.

3.1.1 Ranking and Recommendation Versus Expansion of RMAs

In 1981, a procedure was devised to objectively evaluate and prioritize prospective areas for development. As a result, the Sehlabathebe area was chosen as the site for establishing an RMA. During the next five years, the popularity of the RMA/GA concept increased and in 1986, an adjacent area was slated for development. Rather than following a detailed selection process, this second RMA, Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso, was established by extending the Sehlabathebe concept to neighboring villages.

By 1987, the RMA/GA Program was evolving and the search began for prospective sites for expansion. The ranking and recommendation procedure, initiated at Sehlabathebe, was further refined, and resource assessments were performed in nine locations. Of these, four were recommended for development and were subsequently amalgamated into the Pelaneng/Bokong and the Mokhotlong/Sanqebethu RMAs. This selection process and rating criteria are explained in Appendix 1.

Lessons

1. Within MOA it is important to establish linkages with the DAO and his staff in livestock production, range management, and extension. On the MOI side, discussions should be held with the DS and his subordinate staff in planning and rural development. The time taken to build strong personal relationships with the district staff will have been well spent as one moves further afield and attempts to organize, strengthen, and advise the groups which are responsible for implementing national policy within the RMA - the VDC, an MOI construction and the GA, a child of MOA.
2. After MOA and MOI, the third important player in the district administration is the Principal Chief and protocol dictates that he be consulted through the highest levels, the DAO and DS. His support is necessary as advisors begin consultations with the area chiefs in the potential RMA.

3. Visitations and consultations with MOA and MOI staff resident within the proposed RMA (livestock attendants, grazing control supervisors, woolshed supervisors) are integral to establishing the RMA. These government employees are the source of valuable insights concerning local politics, strengths and weaknesses of local leadership, and some of the more subtle and hidden relationships among the farmers. Local staff are also of assistance in making contacts with the chiefs, VDCs, and Land Allocation Committees within the proposed RMA.
4. Once ties have been established with local leadership, the area chiefs should call a series of pitsos where advisors can spread public awareness, explain the benefits and costs of development, acquire an understanding of the farmers' goals, objectives, and priorities, and canvass public opinion whether development of the RMA should proceed.
5. Concurrent with these early extension efforts, a rapid assessment of the physical and cultural resources of the proposed area should be made. Jurisdictional boundaries of chiefs and courts, the density of basic infrastructure (roads, schools, post offices, police, woolsheds, livestock improvement centers), and boundaries of cattlepost and village grazing areas should be discussed and mapped. An inventory of forage density and potential production, water distribution, watershed stability, grazing patterns, and livestock productivity should be made as well.

3.2 RMA Resource Inventories

Once areas have been selected for development, detailed inventories should be undertaken to further define the RMA and to characterize the resident population. Of greatest significance to the formation of the GA are cattlepost inventories and socio-economic surveys.

3.2.1 Cattlepost Inventory

Traditionally, one must live within the jurisdiction of and bear allegiance to a particular Principal Chief to exercise grazing rights in the high summer ranges (the cattlepost areas) of that chief's ward. In fact, this custom is adhered to quite strongly. However, other patterns of use are evident as well. First, several wards have no cattlepost areas, and some farmers in these wards have permission to graze in the cattlepost areas of other Principal Chiefs. Second, mafisa relationships exist under which a stockowner living outside a particular ward establishes a stock caretaking relationship with a relative or friend who has a cattlepost allocation within that ward. Third, trespassing across ward boundaries is common, and some farmers have established themselves in cattlepost areas to which they have no entitlement.

Cattlepost inventories were not undertaken prior to selection and establishment of the Sehlabathebe RMA. Had such an inventory been conducted, the current boundaries of this particular RMA might now be different. It was not until the initiation of the Pelaneng/Bokong RMA that a detailed cattlepost inventory was used to assist in determining an RMA's boundaries. This inventory, documented by Dobb (1988), led to an increase in the size of the RMA and the inclusion of twelve additional villages. In this instance, the procedure clearly reduced the potential for controversy over the establishment of the RMA's boundaries.

The RMD has adopted and refined Dobb's procedures as it implements the National Cattlepost Adjudication Program. To date, the RMD has completed assessments of user patterns in about one-third of the nation's cattlepost areas. These data reside on computer diskettes at Headquarters, Maseru, and they will facilitate the establishment of future RMAs.

Lessons

1. Cattlepost ownership patterns and user relationships must be documented and mapped, for they figure significantly in establishing the RMA boundary and in defining the population within which the association will be organized.
2. Where inventories have been completed it will be necessary to superimpose the proposed RMA boundary over the surveyed area to define the population of cattlepost users. Analysis of user patterns within the newly defined area may then commence. Once a clear picture has emerged from the analysis, the RMA advisor should sortie to the cattleposts accompanied by local government staff to "ground truth" the data, to introduce himself to herders, and to familiarize himself more fully with local issues. A broad base of trust and acceptance must be built with the herders as their cooperation is vital for successful grazing management. This foundation can only be laid through the advisor's exposure in the cattleposts.
3. Where surveys have not been completed it will be necessary for the advisor to initiate the process himself. Contact should be made with RMD's Inventory Section for assistance. However, the section's work plan may prevent its participation, and the advisor should be prepared to organize the survey. In either event, the advisor must lead the effort and make his presence well known in the cattleposts.
4. The advisor must expect the population of cattleposts users and their areas of operation to be too large for either the practical operation of a GA or the effective management of an RMA.

3.2.2 Social/Economic Survey

After the user patterns of the cattleposts have become clear and a "first approximation" of the RMA boundary has been delimited, a socio-economic census of the residents should be undertaken. This survey should provide information on the following: the important elements contributing to the residents' quality of life; the mix of economic enterprises contributing to household wealth; land use patterns, rights of tenure, demography, and social affiliations; agricultural practices (cropping & stock management); and constraints to agricultural production. Not only will these data assist advisors in understanding the communities in which they will have to work, but they will provide baseline levels which should change as people begin achieving their goals.

The baseline social survey should complement the cattlepost inventory in the process of determining the RMA's final boundary. On one hand, the cattlepost survey will have helped identify the resident population of the RMA, and hopefully, any glaring omissions will have been discovered. On the other, the social survey will reveal information which is independent of the cattlepost data, and its results may suggest realigning the boundary.

Socio-economic studies were not initiated prior to the development of either the Sehlabathebe or the Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso RMAs. The absence of these studies inhibited an initial understanding of the issues pertinent to the establishment of these GAs. Indeed, this oversight resulted in the absence of baseline data against which RMA-associated impacts could be monitored. Fortunately, steps were taken to overcome this shortcoming. From 1984-86, a study of the Sehlabathebe social setting was undertaken and reported by Lawry (1988). Lawry's work was followed by that of Shoup (1988) who conducted similar investigations in the Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso RMA.

When the Pelaneng/Bokong and Mokhotlong/Sanqebethu RMAs were in their early stages of development, socio-economic surveys were completed prior to the initiation of any management-related activities. Furthermore, the LAPIS project Social Scientist has been studying changes in a number of sociological parameters which are pertinent to the management of the Sehlabathebe and Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso GAs (Artz 1990, 1991).

Lessons

1. Socio-economic studies provide important details about the local environment in which RMA residents live and offer insights to their priorities and thoughts. This information is useful for setting goals and objectives, for identifying potential constraints to the implementation of GA activities, and for monitoring the effectiveness of the association's management.

2. Establishing the RMA boundary will require thoughtful reflection upon the results of both the cattlepost and socio-economic surveys, and will invariably require trials and adjustments.

3.3 The RMA's Physical Boundaries

The process of drawing the RMA boundary line requires careful thought but past experience has provided the following guidelines:

- a) do not include villages from the foothills/lowlands in the RMA when transhumance from these regions exists;
- b) other topographic and physical features, such as major rivers and escarpments, which present obstacles to communication are useful as boundaries;
- c) the RMA should have year-round grazing resources;
- d) somewhere between 20,000 - 35,000 ha with 10 - 15 villages (700 - 900 households) comprise a manageable unit;
- e) keep the RMA within the jurisdiction of one Principal Chief and two - three area chiefs;
- f) include all villages under the jurisdiction of a participating area chief in the RMA - failure to do so places the chief in an unfavorable political setting;
- g) roads, a post office, and shops are helpful;
- h) keep the RMA within the jurisdiction of one - two local courts;
- i) existing DLS infrastructure and staff are very important (livestock improvement centers, woolsheds, diptanks) for furthering the extension effort;

Lessons

1. Failure to adhere to the above guidelines may hamper the viability of the GA. Guidelines d) and e) have proven to be especially meaningful.
2. Local livestock producers (potential grazing association members) and local chiefs must actively participate in determining the RMA boundaries. Their involvement will reduce future conflicts with neighboring communities and provides them with a sense of ownership of the effort.

4.0 ORGANIZING GRAZING ASSOCIATIONS

4.1 Facilitation vs. Administration - A Contrast In Roles

It must be remembered that the national laws of Lesotho do not empower government with the responsibility for resource management. This power rests with the King, as head of state, and with the institution of the Chieftainship through which the King's obligation is diffused to the local level. Local authority exists by right of birth in over 1,000 locations across the nation where chiefs are gazetted. For the most part these fires of authority are dying embers, although a few vigorous flames can be found.

Government wishes to halt and reverse the deterioration of the nation's natural resources, yet it will not remove the onus for managing these resources from an impotent Chieftainship. Thus, its only recourse is to create institutions, user associations, which can assume much of the authority of chiefs, but none of their responsibility. Under this scenario, the roles of government and any expatriate organizations which may be cooperating with it must be those of facilitators, with the chief-association coalition serving as administrator.

As government moves to develop a specific area, an RMA in this case, it finds an administrative void. Therefore, the tasks of training, planning, and organizing are nearly 100 percent in the hands of government during the establishment phase of the association prior to the ratification and registration of its constitution. Once established, however, the association must perform these administrative functions plus take on a new task, the implementation of its constitution and any national regulations which may pertain.

Obviously, this is a tall order for any institution, and government and donor assistance agencies must resist the temptation to jump in and "fix" things or to assume the administrative functions. Instead, government and donors must constantly work to create the climate for empowerment. More specifically, the tasks of government are to:

- a) spread public awareness of pressing resource issues;
- b) "paint" a vision of future possibilities;
- c) develop and enlarge upon the farmers' ideas and support traditional practices where they are appropriate;
- d) expose farmers to new ideas and techniques;
- e) provide training in planning, organization, and implementation;

- f) establish reference points for monitoring ecological, economic, and social change; and
- g) influence laws and regulations and pass enabling legislation.

On the other hand, the GA must undertake a broad range of administrative activities to bring effective resource management to the land. These are discussed by Buzzard (1991) in a report on the operational status of the two newer GAs - Pelaneng/Bokong and Mokhotlong/Sanqebethu.

4.2 The Cooperative As An Institution

The Government of Lesotho has adopted a decentralized approach to natural resource management and sees its role as one of empowering, training, and advising local people in the control and management of the resources they use in common. The institution and process which makes management theoretically possible with this decentralized model is the community-based association of users working toward their goals.

Throughout Lesotho one finds associations and committees which aid in the management of local affairs. Some of the more common are those which assist with burials, village water supply, and land allocation. Two additional institutions are noteworthy in their extent of national recognition--the Wool and Mohair Growers Associations (WMGA) and the VDCs. Given the existence of these groups, advisors might be lulled into assumptions that rural people are experienced in the collaborative processes which drive well-running cooperatives, and that managing a GA is an extension of what they already know. In fact, successful, efficient, and responsible associations are difficult to find in the rural areas. As with most other rural associations, GAs do not evolve endogenously from the local community of users. Outside assistance is necessary for their organization, and they will require nurturing for many years to come.

Lessons

1. People participate in cooperative efforts in the belief that they will receive certain benefits through collective action which would not accrue to them as individuals. Within a community there is a wide range of individual ability to derive benefit from the surrounding natural resources and an equally broad range of opinion as to how involved one should become in cooperative action. Advisors should not assume that the "benefits", which have in general been conceived by government and presented to the people as propositions, are readily apparent to the farmer.

2. The extent of control and force necessary to sustain an activity or program is a measure of its relevancy to the members.

4.3 The Process of Organization

In organizing community-based associations, advisors must be aware that these institutions are socially complex and theories on the process and evolution of community participation and control are constantly being refined and modified. Nevertheless, three elements characterize the theories as they have developed in Lesotho and increase the likelihood that an association will be successful: 1) the association must be broad-based, 2) the people involved must have clearly stated their goals and widely subscribe to them, and 3) the members, not government, must be the managers of the GA.

4.3.1 The Constitution

To obtain official recognition by the GOL, a GA must register its constitution with the Registrar of Societies in accordance with The Societies Act 1966. The constitution must serve two functions. First, it must lay down the rules and regulations for governing the GA. Second, it must state the broad mission or goals of the group and the reasons for which the members organized. These goals, while not cast in concrete, must be of sufficient permanence and command the breadth of support to furnish the GA with a sense of purpose. In a sense, the goals serve to anchor the GA as it begins the turbulent task of management.

The approach to organizing GAs and developing their constitutions has been refined over time. The Sehlabathebe GA was initiated with the underlying goal of improving rangeland condition in the RMA, and many of the GA's activities were precast by a relatively inflexible Project Paper. This particular GA's objectives were, to a certain extent, preconceived by government and the donor.

When the Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso GA was organized, the approach was slightly modified to incorporate greater inputs from the residents. This was a positive step forward, since stockowners acquired a greater sense of "ownership" of the association's constitution. However, the GA's objectives were still basically those as conceived by government and the Project staff.

In the case of the Pelaneng/Bokong GA, greater emphasis was placed on having the livestock producers determine the objectives of their association. The RMA advisor was a facilitator of the process, rather than an active decision maker. This approach stimulated increased participation and an even greater sense of commitment.

In the cases presented above, the emphasis of organization shifted from imposing government's predetermined objectives to encouraging the association to develop its

own. During the process, the stockowners' levels of participation have increased. Nevertheless, the base of support for association activities, exhibited by the communities at large (stockowners and non-stockowners) remains weak. Also, the depth of commitment of many association members is shallow. For the most part, high levels of individual participation in new programs have not evolved in the two older RMAs (Artz, 1991) nor is there a broad understanding of how certain interventions, even though successful (i.e., improving range condition) will benefit the individual's long-term welfare (Artz, 1990). One could infer from these results that enough time has not elapsed under existing extension scenarios for the benefits to pervade the community and thereby promote increased participation. However, the fact that levels of farmer participation in selected RMA program activities at Sehlabathebe (now eight years old) were not remarkably higher than those of Ramatseliso (a younger RMA and association by five years), leads one to believe that time alone will not suffice and that refinements in implementation are necessary.

The process of organization must evolve further - toward the establishment of meaningful goals. These goals should be those factors which contribute to the peoples' quality of life and which show the widest representation across the group. Once these sorts of goals are set, then constitutions can be developed to describe how the organization will govern itself. This approach may be the next logical step in the evolution of community-based resource management in Lesotho.

Lessons

1. Procedures utilized to assist community members to develop the association's constitution must be continually reviewed and modified, with the intent of increasing participation and enhancing broad-based support.
2. The process of drafting and approving the constitution within the association must proceed slowly. Although the topics which must be included in the document are straightforward and a checklist is available from the Law Office, numerous pitsos at each RMA village are necessary to pound out the specifics. It is during this process that the abilities and levels of commitment of the representatives and of the GA advisor are on display. The village representatives, guided by the advisor and the executive committee, must obtain a consensus among their constituencies with respect to the various articles of the constitution (e.g., goals and overall mission of the association, membership criteria and fees, benefits of membership, terms of office, and the duties, election and recall procedures of officers). In addition, it is necessary to explain the various national laws and regulations which will be enforced, such as the Grazing Regulations, once the association is registered and management begins. A period of 3 years from the initial meetings to explain the RMA/GA concept to the final approval of the constitution should be expected.

3. When developing a constitution to establish a new GA, participants should not be able to refer to the constitutions of existing associations. Instead, participants should be encouraged to determine their own needs, goals, and management objectives. This is an important learning process, which contributes strongly to program ownership and to the level of commitment.

4.3.2 The Management Committee

The role of the management committee is to coordinate the actions which will enable the association to achieve its goals and objectives. These steps include: drafting and enforcing the rules and procedures for governing the association, controlling land use, managing financial resources, facilitating extension and training, representing the association at conferences, pitsos, meetings, and on tours, developing and maintaining efficient and open channels of communication throughout the membership, and coordinating the operation of selected programs the farmers find desirable, e.g., herd improvement, livestock marketing, retail sale of fodder. The following points should be considered when organizing the management committee:

- a) VDCs will probably exist in the villages, but will vary in their ability and performance. Care must be taken to build the association as a complement to the VDCs. The role of the management committee must be well explained throughout the villages through an intensive period of public meetings.
- b) The committee should be composed of elected representatives from each village. Villagers might select two to five representatives depending upon the population size. The committee should have a conspicuous proportion of women and must include chiefs.
- c) The management committee is coordinated by a group of executive officers, including a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, and advisors. These officers are nominated and elected by the management committee. Experience has shown that there is little understanding of officer roles, and it is possible that unqualified candidates will be elected.
- d) Subsequent steps such as training to develop the administrative capacity of the committee, tours to other areas involved in cooperative management, and details on the election of the executive committee are explained by Weaver (1990) and must not be overlooked.

Lessons

1. Management committees require training in the procedures and processes of conducting formal meetings, group decision making, record keeping, the roles

and duties of executive officers. This training must be initiated prior to developing the constitution.

2. A wide range of talent and capability will be exhibited by the members of the management committee. Matching these with the skills required for specific officer positions will facilitate the development of the constitution and improve the management of the GA. Therefore, the process of electing the executive should not be rushed. Instead, ample time must be provided to allow committee members to familiarize themselves with one another's abilities and depths of commitment.

5.0 GRAZING ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATION

The effectiveness of the GA depends upon the ability of the executive officers and management committee to coordinate association activities. A number of factors are influential in this regard.

The commitment shown by executive officers, especially the chairman, has a noticeable impact on the activity of the management committee. To date, the chairmanship of the Sehlabathebe GA has changed four times. Over the past eight years, levels of participation in the activities of this GA have been directly related to the dynamism and dedication of its chairmen.

The level of commitment has also been influenced by conflicts between personal responsibilities and the duties of association management. Many executive officers have been elected by virtue of their wealth and stature in the community. Often they own large herds and flocks and have croplands to cultivate. As a result, they tend to be engaged with their own enterprises, and have limited amounts of time available for the obligations of association management. Discussions have been held with regards to paying these key officers. However, none of the GAs have adopted such a policy.

Management committee members and officers have short terms of office. This tends to disrupt the continuity of their administrative efforts. Currently, committee members/officers serve two year terms, after which a general election is held. In some cases, this has resulted in a nearly complete replacement of the management committee. Since the committees are the focus of intensive training and extension, the election of a significant number of new members tends to dilute the training efforts, and does not permit knowledge to build over a period of years. Also, momentum is lost while a new committee becomes familiar with its roles and duties.

Poor communication has also reduced administrative effectiveness. One of the duties of village representatives is to inform village residents of the association's on-going activities and to transmit members' opinion back to management. Often the

representatives are remiss in these responsibilities and large percentages of GA members are unaware of current events and management is not receiving crucial feedback.

Another issue affecting the administrative capacity and the long-term direction of the GA is the absence of periodic sessions to take stock and redefine goals and objectives or to report significant progress. Goals and specific objectives change over time. Therefore, it is important to re-evaluate policies and plans so that community support for the association's management effort will remain broad.

These evaluations must be accompanied by increased monitoring of key activities and comprehensive reports of findings to GA members. The following activities have been monitored for several years in the Sehlabathebe and Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso RMAs: livestock numbers, cattle weights, cattle sale prices, livestock sold, livestock bred with improved sires, association membership, numbers of pitsos and important decisions, numbers and contents of training sessions, changes in vegetal composition, and rangeland condition.

During the first fiscal year of the Pelaneng/Bokong GA, which ended in April 1991, many of the same statistics were recorded. In addition, wool and mohair production, the amount of grazing fees collected, and the number of grazing permits issued and inspected during range rides were monitored.

All of these are indicators of the association's activity and of benefits flowing to the members at large. However, few attempts have been made to report this information to the membership. This is unfortunate, for the farmers must be kept abreast of both positive and negative changes. Diligent reporting can contribute to a sense of accomplishment and increase the momentum of the association. Awareness could be further stimulated if association members were afforded the opportunity and were encouraged to participate in monitoring programs.

Lessons

1. Committee members, especially officers, are busy and have limited amounts of time for GA administrative affairs. Means of securing greater commitment to duties must be pursued.
2. Training of GA management committees must be continual and must build upon the contents of previous training sessions.
3. The short tenure of committee members and the absence of staggered terms of office reduces the administrative effectiveness of the GA. Modifications of this situation are necessary.

4. Committee members must be reminded to keep their constituencies informed of the GA's activities, and efforts must be made to improve communication between the management committee and GA members.
5. Currently, the definition of goals and objectives is a one-time event. Consequently, a loss of focus occurs when management committee members change. This approach should be modified so that goals/objectives are continually clarified and updated.
6. Results from monitoring ecological, animal productivity, and economic parameters should be routinely reported to the association so members can appreciate subtle progress in less tangible areas (e.g., range condition, wool/mohair weights and proportional changes in classes, stock liveweights at sales, weaning percentages). Events such as feasts, annual general meetings, and "intra-mural" stock shows should be organized to evaluate progress, promote spirit, and exchange ideas.
7. The authority of a newly established GA to enforce regulations and policies must be tied to the traditional power of the Chieftainship. Hence, it is essential to involve local chiefs in the committee's administrative duties.
8. Administration is enhanced if the advisor and the association establish links with other producer groups and institutions in the RMA. These include WMGAs, VDCs, the police, and the local courts. The GA repeatedly requires the assistance of these other institutions. Therefore, an effort must be made to include them, when appropriate, in the association's plans, training sessions, and activities.
9. The management committee must be financially accountable to the membership.
10. Women in rural Lesotho tend to be better educated than men. Furthermore, they do not generally move from the RMA in pursuit of work. The presence of women on the management committee enhances its stability and administrative capability.

6.0 TECHNOLOGY

The adoption of new or improved techniques is generally regarded as necessary for the commercialization of rural economies, and the RMA, with its organized and "captive" audience, provides a focal point for introducing scientific agriculture, modern structural developments, and specialized training.

To date, a number of technical innovations have been presented to rural producers through the RMA/GA Program. Some of have been popular, while others have failed. A brief discussion of the more important technologies follows.

6.1 Livestock Breeding Program

One of the most popular innovations has been the breeding program, whereby GA members pay a fee to breed their individually owned livestock with improved sires purchased by the GA. GA members are initially hesitant to participate in this program. For example, at the onset of the Sehlabathebe breeding program, eleven bulls were purchased. During the first breeding season only 53 cows were placed with the bulls. This was successively followed by placement of 106, 158, 210, and 256 cows with the bulls in years 2,3,4, and 5. A similar pattern has been noted for the Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso GA.

It is believed that the program's popularity is based upon the following factors: 1) the breeding costs have been subsidized by the GA, and are cheap as a result; 2) breeding cows are placed under the supervision of GA-paid herdsmen, thereby reducing the management responsibility of individual owners; 3) breeding cows are kept with the bulls in lush pastures for a three-month period--at no additional cost to the owner; and 4) participants receive personal, tangible benefits in the form of offspring.

Lessons

1. New technologies often require time to be accepted. Judgements should not be made with regard to their effectiveness until a trial period has elapsed.
2. User fees must be assessed for certain activities such as breeding or livestock health and must be set high enough to allow for replacement.
3. Farmers support programs and activities to the extent their goals are met and tangible benefits are returned;
4. Association members are unwilling to incur high costs and/or risks, hence new practices must have a relatively immediate payoff.

6.2 Grazing Management Plan

A grazing plan is of paramount importance to the long-term sustainability of livestock production in the RMA. Farmers view changes in their individual management practices with mixed feelings. Individuals owning large numbers of animals tend to be supportive of improved grazing management. These farmers have the resources to make the changes and also reap greater financial benefits as a result. Conversely, smallholders of livestock often do not have the resources (financial or manpower) to

implement the required modifications and they may feel changes in management are hardships.

In general, both classes of stockowners recognize the need to modify the existing "free-for-all" grazing patterns which characterize Lesotho's communally-used rangeland resources. Even so, the popularity of a grazing plan is often diminished in the opinion of the individual whose animals are impounded when he is forced to pay trespass fees.

Over the years, attempts have been made to ensure greater input on the part of GA members in the design and implementation of the grazing plan. This process has evolved from the project and government staff designing the plan, and then seeking endorsement from the GA (Sehlabathebe), to close liaison with the GA members as project and government staff design the plan (Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso), to the current approach in which the GA members design their own plan with advice from project and government staff (Pelaneng/Bokong). As in the case of setting goals, the objective is greater involvement of the stockowners in the planning and development process.

Lessons

1. Farmers should be encouraged to develop their own grazing plan, using traditional cattlepost and village grazing areas as management units. The advisor's role should be to provide insights on technical matters (i.e. carrying capacity, plant recovery periods, timing of livestock moves) related to the plan.
2. Issues of equity should be considered in the design of grazing plans. The increased costs of removing animals to distant grazing areas may be too high for individuals to bear. They may have to negotiate unfavorable herding arrangements or reduce their herds. These points are discussed in detail by Artz (1990, 1991).
3. Grazing plans introduce new practices and costs that require repeated explanations and patience before the community at large can absorb them. The effectiveness of a plan cannot be judged for several years after its introduction. Effective plans will receive increased support with the passage of each year. Ineffective plans will require continual enforcement, with participation declining over time.
4. The design of a grazing management plan is not a one-time event. The plan must be monitored closely and the need for annual adjustments should be expected. Plans must be operationally flexible.

5. Grazing plans which are followed can result in desirable successional change (Weaver and Sekoto, 1991) and the need for a good ecological baseline is paramount.

6.3 Fodder Production Program

The Sehlabathebe and Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso GAs' fodder program failed. The shortage of supplemental winter feed was identified as a major problem in both RMAs. Therefore, tractors were purchased and the GA members were assessed fees for plowing and planting services. The program was popular with farmers, however, problems were encountered. It was difficult to: 1) protect fodder crops from trespassing livestock, 2) collect fees, 3) find skilled local people to operate the tractors, and 4) maintain the tractors and ancillary equipment. This program was not sustainable, and it was terminated.

Lessons

1. Activities in remote mountain areas which are dependant upon mechanized equipment and skilled local labor are doomed to failure. These programs should never be initiated.

6.4 Infrastructural Developments

The development of an RMA and provision of services to its associated GA requires the construction of facilities at a headquarters site. The number and types of facilities constructed have varied with each RMA. The Sehlabathebe RMA, being a prototype demonstration area, has extensive infrastructure, including: a woolshed, workshop/office/bunkhouse facility, diptank, livestock saleyard/handling facility, three rondavels and a house for staff, and now, an elaborate training center. This amount of infrastructure is costly to develop and maintain, and it is unlikely that the Sehlabathebe GA will be able to support it financially.

In the more recent construction of RMA headquarters, the number of structures have been reduced and low-maintenance designs have been employed. Furthermore, attempts have been made to incorporate these headquarters with existing livestock improvement centers where possible (Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso and Mokhotlong/Sanqebethu RMAs).

Lessons

1. Keep structures simple and use durable materials. Use low-maintenance materials. Housing should be as energy efficient as possible with attention paid to siting, passive solar opportunities, and insulation.

2. If appropriate, expand upon or upgrade existing infrastructure. Avoid overlap and duplication of function.
3. DLS has very little money for site maintenance and inputs. To be truly sustainable, all activities which the association will not finance must be liquidated or a way found to make them self-supporting.

6.5 Training Program

Farmers appreciate the transfer of new technology through training courses, and this has been a major focus of GA development activities in Lesotho. Instruction in the basics of herd management and animal health, grazing/forage management, fodder production, and livestock marketing have been focused directly on the management committee, and in some cases, the stockowners at large.

More recently, herders have been the recipients of some of this basic knowledge. These young men are critical to the success of grazing management and livestock improvement programs. Many have a deep knowledge of local ecology and management practice which should be incorporated into training sessions. Leadership potential in this group must be recognized and developed. Additionally, these men could facilitate enforcement of GA regulations by forming effective anti-trespassing and anti-stock theft units.

Some attempts have been made to extend training and extension to local school children (Sehlabathebe and Pelaneng/Bokong RMAs). These attempts have been sporadic, and as a result, probably ineffective. However, this is an audience that cannot be ignored if long-term sustainability of the GA is to be achieved. Today's children will be tomorrow's resource managers. They will inherit the results of current management--poor or sound. Exposure of these children to the issues will better prepare them for determining the solutions.

Lessons

1. Training farmers must be an on-going process, and it must continually build upon previous training exercises.
2. Current training efforts must be expanded to reach a wider audience. This will require recurrent village-by-village campaigns.
3. Funds expended in support of farmer training are well spent. However, training would be even more meaningful if the GAs and/or individual farmers were required to pay for a percentage of the training costs.

4. Training should continue to be one of the primary activities focused on GA members.

7.0 MOA INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

The formation and long-term guidance of GAs have been facilitated by the RMD. At the onset of the RMA Program the RMD was less than three years old, and at that time it was more closely associated with the MOA Conservation Division than with the DLS. As the RMA Program developed, the RMD assumed an identity within the Ministry. In 1986, the RMD was absorbed into the Department of Livestock Services as a counterpart Division to the Animal Production Division and Veterinary Services.

7.1 Headquarters Level

As the RMA/GA program began to develop, the RMD assumed an identity within the MOA. However, many of the practices associated with implementing the RMA Program competed with activities; herd improvement, animal health, and livestock culling; which traditionally had been conducted by the DLS Animal Production Division and Veterinary Services. A rivalry developed and this begged the question of whether Range or Livestock would be responsible for supervising these tasks.

In 1987, the MOA identified national livestock policy issues and collaborated on an implementation plan. This process, incorporating inputs from all DLS divisions, served to more closely unite DLS staff at the Headquarters level, but has done little to cement relationships in the districts.

The DLS believes a means of enhancing cooperation may be to combine the RMA/GA program with the services offered at livestock improvement centers (LICs). This would be a suitable marriage. The LIC, with its associated staff, would continue to provide services and the infrastructure for RMA headquarters; while, the GA would contribute the livestock and rangeland management capacity.

The adequacy of RMD budgets for supporting the RMA/GA program is another area of critical concern within the institutional framework. Until now, financial support to the GAs has been provided mainly with donor funds through the LCRD and LAPIS projects. However, when the Sehlabathebe and Ha Moshebi/Ha Ramatseliso RMAs were transferred to the MOA in June, 1990, support for most of the recurrent costs became the responsibility of the RMD. Following this turnover, two major problems arose:

While supported by the Projects, payments to private vendors were made in an efficient and timely manner. Following RMA handover, government payment

procedures, the vagaries of the postal system, plus the logistics of communicating between the RMA and RMD Headquarters, have combined to reduce the timeliness and efficiency of transactions. Many vendors complained, and they may ultimately refuse to do business with RMD.

Further compounding the problem is the RMD budget. Though RMD budgeted for RMA operation and maintenance costs, its annual allocation from the MOA is inadequate to absorb them. Also, within RMD's budget there is no distinct "line item" for RMA support. Consequently, funds are constantly being shuffled to cover emergencies and the normal expenses of the division, and frequently the RMA staff are left short.

Lessons

- 1) The Range Management Division has met resistance from within the DLS in the implementation of the RMA program. Weak coordination within the MOA and an overlap of activities are some of the reasons. These must be overcome with improved planning and greater involvement in the RMA/GA program by all of the DLS.
- 2) The inclusion of RMA operation and maintenance costs within the general RMD budget allocation has contributed to a shortage of RMA support funds. The RMA budget should be separated from the general RMD budget.

7.2 District Level

Development and support to the GAs has come directly from RMD Headquarters, with the lead being taken by an RMA advisor and a technical assistant counterpart. For the most part, assistance has been directly to the GA and, district staff have been by-passed. There are two reasons for this:

First, range management is a relatively new concept in Lesotho... Therefore, most of the District Agricultural Officers (DAOs) have worked their way up through an MOA system which has not given high priority to range conservation.

And second, district staff lack the resources to perform their field duties. It is not uncommon to find only one vehicle assigned to the District Agricultural Office and transport constraints hinder the involvement of district Range and Livestock staff in the RMA/GA development process.

In recent years, as the RMA/GA program has become accepted and has expanded, DAOs have begun to develop an appreciation for the GA and the roles it can play. This has increased the cooperative atmosphere in which RMA advisors work with District Agricultural staff, but has not substantially increased the level of support the

the RMA advisor receives. Nor does it appear this situation will improve until the MOA addresses the broader issue of providing the resources necessary for the district staff to perform their duties. Hence, it seems that direct Headquarters support to GAs will be required for many years to come.

Lessons

- 1) MOA district staff have few resources to participate in the RMA/GA development and support effort. Hence, the RMA advisor and other MOA staff, resident in the RMA, will remain the primary extension agents. However, the development effort should be closely coordinated with district staff, and the DAO must be kept regularly informed of GA activities. Failure in this regard will result in a lack of his support during critical development stages.
- 2) Given the shortage of MOA resources and manpower, GA development should emphasize self-help and seek to keep the GA as independent from government assistance as possible.

8.0 ROLE OF ADVISOR

Critical to the success and sustainability of the GA is the establishment of meaningful goals and objectives. Assisting the stockowners in this process is the fundamental role of the RMA advisor during the developmental stages of the GA.

Once the GA has determined its goal(s) and objectives, it begins developing its constitution--the principles and framework with which the organization governs itself. Here, again, the advisor must be proactive, and must lead the stockowners through an unfamiliar process. Simultaneously, he must encourage them to learn and to further commit themselves.

Finally, a stage is reached when it is appropriate to design and implement management plans. At this point, the advisor must provide insights and guidance to such technical considerations as: carrying capacity estimates, pasture management practices, livestock marketing, animal husbandry and further training. At the same time, he must extract the knowledge of traditional practices from the group on hand, and blend them with pertinent modern technology.

The RMA advisor is a special individual. He must have social organizational skills, be a good facilitator, have broad technical knowledgeable, and the ability to access resources outside the group. Furthermore, he must be responsible and dedicated to the job.

When the RMA Program commenced in 1982, the major strength of the RMA advisor was his technical knowledge. With the evolution of the program, a greater appreciation has developed for the complexities of rural communities, and of the requirement for specialized skills in human resources management. These skills have only been acquired to a limited extent, and more specialized training is necessary.

Lessons

- 1) RMA advisors require specialized formal training. It should be broad and cover the fields of biology/botany, ecology, rural sociology and development, extension methods, animal science, and business management. Field training should include an "apprenticeship" under experienced and competent staff, and the most able advisors should be sent to new locations. In-service training and professional development are critical and should include in-country as well as international tours, conferences, workshops, and seminars. Advisors should be encouraged to report upon their work and unique situations.
- 2) Many of the processes discussed in the preceding pages hinge on the advisor. He must be a generalist who, like the conductor of a symphony, hears and sees the entire score of people and land. The ability to conceptualize and operate within the "wholes" which comprise rural ecosystems (people and their land) can be learned. This, then, is a major component of sustainability - sensitive, competent, and visionary advisors.

9.0 CONCLUSION

The RMA program was began in 1982, and has undergone nine years of growth and development. This has been a dynamic process involving institutions in the Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperatives and Marketing and the Ministry of Interior, Rural Development and Chieftainship Affairs. More specifically, it has centered around the cooperative efforts of the DLS Range Management Division staff, expatriate advisors from the USAID-funded LCRD and LAPIS projects, innovative members of the Chieftainship, and stockowners of the remote mountain areas of Lesotho.

So far, the GAs established under the program have taken the first steps to organize local stockowners. Through collaborative action these farmers will manage the natural resources of their surroundings and will improve their standards of living. Much of this success can be credited to the ability and willingness of the program to study itself and improve upon its methods of operation.

Yet, even after nine years of development, this program is still in its infancy. Weaknesses will emerge but they will be overcome if the program remains dynamic, continues to adapt, and incorporates new approaches and techniques which further the sustainability of rural communities and enhance the biodiversity upon which their survival depends.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: RMA SELECTION PROCESS

In 1987, a committee composed of RMD and LCRD project staff was organized to select four RMAs to be developed under LCRD and LAPIS. The committee developed a list of criteria, which included both physical and social characteristics, and a scoring system to objectively evaluate and select potential RMAs. The variables which were considered in the scoring system are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative Site Selection Criteria

PHYSICAL (25 POINTS)	
Accessibility by road	Maximum 10 points
Distribution of villages, courts, POs, political boundaries	" 5 "
Livestock services (w/in 10 km)	" 5 "
Range management services (w/in 10 km)	" 5 "
GRAZING (50 POINTS)	
Existing summer grazing area	Maximum 10 points
Existing winter grazing area	" 10 "
Arable land area	" 5 "
Summer stock water availability	" 5 "
Winter " " "	" 5 "
Arable land " "	" 5 "
Rangeland potential (excellent to poor)	" 10 "
ANIMALS (MINUS 10 POINTS)	
Transhumance (inward movement)	max. minus 5 pts
Transhumance (outward movement)	max. " 5 "
SOCIAL (20 POINTS)	
Interest in coop. range management	maximum 10 points
Observed coop. between villages, farmers/chief	" 10 "
TOTAL	MAXIMUM 95 POINTS

Data collected during site visitations to prospective areas provided the necessary information for evaluation. These area visits took place over a four month period beginning in September and ending in December 1987. Considerable effort was made in planning these visits to coincide with the work schedules of appropriate district MOA staff and chiefs. Pitsos were organized at each site to discuss and answer

questions about the RMA concept. Inspections of the rangeland and area boundaries were made on horseback with local farmers, chiefs, and headmen.

Areas and communities vary widely in their potential to be incorporated successfully into area-based range management efforts. The scoring system is designed to reflect these differences so that those areas showing the highest potential (high score) will be selected over those with lower potential (low score). However, additional factors which can not be appropriately included in the site selection scoring system must be considered in the final ranking of potential RMAs. These factors relate primarily to the feasibility and practicality of initiating development activities in each area given the availability of trained technical personnel, financial resources, and long-term LCRD/LAPIS project goals and covenants.

The impact of future developments and projects also have to be considered in the final evaluation of proposed RMAs. Of significance is the Lesotho Highlands Water project (LHW) and its associated activities which will permanently alter the physical and social characteristics in mountain areas. The development of RMAs must be compatible with these anticipated changes. At the same time, RMA/GAs provide the opportunity to achieve current livestock policy objectives while protecting the watersheds that will supply water to the reservoirs of the LHW project. One aspect of the livestock policy which will be clearly supported by the RMAs in these areas is the elimination or marked reduction of transhumance of animals from villages in the lowlands to mountain cattleposts.

The establishment of new RMAs will provide opportunities for extending livestock policy initiatives. First, once an RMA is established, it will be logical to examine the potential for establishing additional RMAs, or expanding the existing RMA, into adjoining areas. Second, other tactics for implementing the livestock policy such as culling schemes, adjudication of cattlepost use rights, and collection of grazing fees can be employed in adjacent areas as well. The advantage of this approach is that it will maximize the use of infrastructure and technical personnel that may already be in place in the original RMA. In this way a considerably larger area might be brought under effective management with lower cost than might be possible if efforts are scattered and isolated in various parts of the country.

LAPIS EVALUATION REPORT

ANNEX 06