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AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

PREVENTION OF LIVESTOCK DISEASES AS A HERDER RESPONSIBILITY

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PREVENTION OF LIVESTOCK DISEASES AS A HERDER\* RESPONSIBILITY  
(ISSUED BY THE LIVESTOCK PROGRAM, S&T/AGR, USAID-WASHINGTON)

Herder of livestock flocks and herds serves as the major factor in prevention of diseases. The following common sense management practices describe the various ways of protection against serious disease losses in all domestic livestock:

1. Malnutrition of livestock makes animals more susceptible to infectious diseases. (a) Malnutrition may result from inadequate feed to meet animal needs, particularly in "dry seasons" when plant growth ceases. Efforts must be made to balance available feeds against the number of animals in the herd or flock. (b) At some seasons, standing forages, (pastures or rangelands) may be seriously deficient in protein content. This deficiency can be predicated, and corrective action taken. (c) The available feeds may be notably deficient in available essential minerals for livestock health. These deficiencies are generally common in a region and may be predicted by studies by livestock specialists of the region who offer recommendations on mineral supplements.
2. Seasonal husbandry practices should adjust to the most favorable times for mating, so that calves and kids will be borne when forage is adequate to sustain milk flow by the dams. This means control of mating, by exclusion of sires at unfavorable periods. Also, young stock should be given access to sufficient feed (after weaning for some months or a year) so they are not expected to compete with older animals for feed and water. Deprivation of young stock increases susceptibility to diseases.
3. Clean, unpolluted stock water. Inadequate or polluted stock water places stress on all livestock, and makes them more susceptible to infectious diseases and may be a direct source of disease causing agents. Water must be available within reach of livestock feed sources. Young stock and lactating dams, as well as sheep and goats, have more need for readily available stock water than the more mature cattle. The accessibility of water may be a major factor in choice of livestock type suitable for a specific region.
4. Temporary care of unthrifty or sick animals is essential to assist in recovery, or observation as to possible disease. If disease becomes evident in a herd or flock, segregation and isolation of unthrifty or sick animals will prevent spread throughout the herd or flock.
5. Diseased or sick animals should not be slaughtered for meat, or marketed. Some livestock diseases are deadly to people. Seek advice of a veterinarian if dangerous disease is suspected.

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\*The "Herder" is the person with responsibility for decision making, in managing the grazing livestock enterprises.

6. Prompt diagnosis of infectious diseases should be sought from a qualified veterinarian; and the specialist's recommendations should be followed to minimize animal losses.
7. Prompt burial or burning of all dead animals is a responsibility of the herder. Eliminate the possibility of wild animals feeding on the carcass, and spreading infectious diseases; or dissemination by wind or water.
8. Compliance with the established animal health control regime, as to vaccinations and other treatments, such as tests and quarantine should be followed as promptly as possible, to avoid needless losses of livestock. The livestock specialists of the national government should advise on such programs.
9. Spread of infectious diseases from herd to herd, is a constant hazard for livestock being trekked to market. Trekking\* exposes animals to parasites that transmit disease, as well as transmission of infectious diseases from local infected herds to the moving herd or flock. To the extent feasible, it is desirable to exclude contact of herder's flocks with all other livestock.
10. The livestock market may be a source of infectious diseases. Animals purchased in markets or from other flocks, should be held in local isolation long enough to provide assurance that they are not infected with any contagious disease, before being intermingled with local livestock.

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\*Trekking - driven or traileed to market, or to distant grazing lands