

BOOK REVIEW

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Review of *Pasture Landscapes and Nature Conservation* edited by Bernd Redecker, Peter Finck, Werner Hardtle, Uwe Riecken and Eckhard Schroder

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Cultural landscapes over the globe are characterized by a mixture of open habitats, hedges, trees and patchy woodlands. The development of these landscapes during the past decades have been characterized by ongoing intensification as a result of changing economic conditions. In several countries, large-scale, low-intensity pastoral systems have been recognized as one solution to this problem. These systems can succeed in combining nature conservation objectives with an economic and healthy production of meat and other livestock products. They could also offer an alternative to intensive, industrial livestock-raising around the globe and will represent a substitute to the established, costly habitat management tools.

Internationally, several working groups are engaged in this subject with little communication among them. Thus, the book discusses different concepts to preserve pastoral landscapes. The outcomes of the workshop presented in this volume will doubtlessly contribute to efforts to preserve biodiverse pastoral ecosystems. This

book is a collection of 33 chapters organized into five main sections.

The introductory part deals with the subject matter of pasture landscapes, nature of conservation and strategies for preservation of pastoral landscapes. It deals with challenges, risks and constraints of preservation practices.

The second section deals with grazing systems and their influence on biodiversity in the region of the pastoral activities and role of invisible biodiversity in pasture landscapes. It describes biodiversity conservation and pastoralism in Wallonia, the mountain pastureland in the Pollino National Park and the landscapes of northern Spain; conservation aspects of pastoral farming in Georgia; and managing wood pasture landscapes in England, e.g. the New Forest.

The third section is dedicated to grazing as a nature conservation strategy. It highlights the significance of Europe's agricultural policy on the nature conservation of pastoral farmland, progress towards sustainable use of pastures in Germany, maintaining biodiversity in landscapes by grazing, and combining ecosystem

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functions for development. It also describes some developmental projects like the Border Meuse Nature, grazing of coastal grasslands and Galloway-based grazing systems in Germany. The Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) has for several years been working on innovative concepts to preserve valuable cultural landscapes. Several workshops have been organized on a national level, most recently in October 2000 at the International Nature Conservation Academy of the BfN on the island of Vilm. Topics include low-intensity pig pastures as an alternative approach for habitat management; grasslands and scrublands in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula; silvopastoral systems and nature conservation through landscape development and species protection in woodlands, forests and pastures using large herbivores. The Large Herbivore Initiative (LHI) is an Eurasian conservation and restoration programme for a key-species group in ecosystems like Europe, Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia with restitution as a consequence of the use of different grazing systems. Management concepts for abandoned xerothermic slopes in the Middle Rhine Valley for sustainable development of cultural landscapes. Examples include the maintenance and restoration of wood pasture sites in the UK and the potential for the creation of urbanized man, longing for a New Wilderness.

The fourth section deals with habitat dynamics emphasizing large-scale grazing systems by herdsmen, their impact on landscape patterns and biodiversity in a dynamic riverine ecosystem and the protection of open areas. Methods are discussed for the investigation of patterns and processes in large-scale grazing systems. Other topics include effects of large-scale cattle grazing on Orthoptera (Saltatoria et Mantodea) on pastures in Georgia (Caucasus); multi-species pasturing maintain high biodiversity with rare and endangered species. Furthermore, this section discussed co-operative grazing systems as an alternative concept for the management of endangered open and semi-open landscapes.

The last section entitled "Outlook" discussed the central question of pressure on common pastures and on the significance of pasture landscapes for nature conservation and extensive agriculture. It has been highlighted that these landscapes are considered as most important source of grains for pastoral communities. Chickpea and pigeonpea are ancient crops grown in many regions for centuries and eaten as a dry pulse or green vegetable. It is a useful and timely overview of pastoral systems.

The book is a series of studies on vegetation of pastures, and certainly the field botanist or environmental scientist concerned with these ecosystems or interested in their conservation will find a wealth of rich material. It provides readers with a vivid picture

of the environmental, social and political changes that pastoral societies face in different regions. Readers could also benefit from learning the wisdom and efforts of local pastoralists and other stakeholders to solve their practical problems in diverse local settings. From an academic perspective, this book further develops the field of social-ecological theory and resilience thinking by systematically connecting theories with management practices.

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Authors' contributions

KH and THJ have critically gone through the book in pursuit for sustainable pastoralism in India. THJ drafted the manuscript and KH made necessary grammatical corrections. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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