

THIRD WORLD LIVESTOCK PROJECTS - PROBLEMS AND APPROACHES

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During 1973 to 1976, an 11,000 ha. cattle station was developed from virgin country in eastern Sumba, Indonesia. An initial survey revealed: (1) poor transport and communication between the project site and the local seaport and airstrip, thus making the former an isolated community; (2) poor access to markets and equipment supplies in Java and overseas countries; (3) extreme seasonality of climate and hence a fluctuating plane of nutrition; (4) the presence of a well adapted population of Ongole zebus, water buffalo, Timor ponies, goats and hairy sheep; (5) a populace familiar with crude livestock herding; (6) the availability of cheap labour.

Accordingly, development was attempted in six ways:

1. Establish the identity of the project with the district's people and progress. This ensured smooth operation and allowed mutually profitable village cattle projects to be undertaken in Year 3.

2. Maximise use of local resources. Trucks, draft animals and ponies were hired during the early stages and modified village style buildings, yards and fences erected. Roads, firebreaks and dams were constructed by hand.

3. The traditional semi-nomadic grazing was adapted to seasonal rotational grazing by subdivision according to soil-type, water and vegetation, rather than on the usual sex and age-group basis.

4. Local zebu and buffalo were used rather than imported cattle. They were selected at two years of age on the basis of size; this allowed improvement of local stock while maintaining the essential elements of adaptation, low maintenance costs, and simplified husbandry. Ponies were **selected** for size and ambling ability.

5. Preservation of traditional herd techniques but with constant encouragement to treat stock more gently.

6. The use of hand **labour** wherever feasible in order to boost local participation and cash incomes. Where the economics of an operation marginally favoured machinery, hand **labour** was used and the extra cost budgeted for as a social benefit.

By Year 3 the project had a commercially viable herd of 2,000 Ongoles, 1,000 buffaloes, 100 ponies and 100 sheep and goats, with three village cattle projects operating. Economy of production proved to be highest in the buffalo herd. **Calving** percentages had risen the village herd level of 48% in Year 1 to over 70% in Year 3,

The study demonstrated the benefits of simple ranching over the traditional open range "nil-management" system, and paved the way for more sophisticated techniques in later years. By this means we avoided the managerial problems repeatedly seen in developing countries. Consultants and managers of livestock projects are often painfully out of touch with the sociological and environmental realities involved, and hence make impractical decisions which cause the massive wastage of foreign aid that we see today.

Failure due to insufficiency of funds and technological know-how is rare, but the same definitely cannot be said for day-to-day management expertise and consultant recommendations. What the Third World needs then, is practical aid in the field in order to foster a "**self help**" attitude, and utilisation, with appropriate modifications, of materials and methods already present.

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