



中 - 澳 中国西部草地可持续发展项目研讨会 中国·呼和浩特  
Sino-Australian Sustainable development of grasslands in  
western China :Hohhot China



*Talking with herders – what was learnt  
about their attitudes and solutions?*

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# Talking with herders in their language

## Listening what farmers think about:

- Animal production and their income change
- Pasture condition and its impact on their life
- Concerns---current and future
- Attitude toward government policies

## Understanding:

- problems of the current production system
- the first step towards solutions
- What shall we do as the professors





# Sample of questionnaires

Talking with herders in Sunan County				
Questions			Sunan	
			27 Male	4 Female
Grassland Management and Forage Development	1.1	Participatory processes used for development of grassland management plans	70% little or no input into planning	50% some input into planning
	1.2	Degree of increased grassland quality since 2004 (affected by climate variance in the past few years)	60% noticeable or significant improvement	75% noticeable or significant improvement
	1.3	Users perception of the value of a participatory grassland management methodology	60% some to lots of benefits	75% some to lots of benefits
	1.4	Strategy to ensure availability of feed throughout the year	60% have no specific strategy in place	75% have at least minimal feed requirements
	1.5	Condition of ewes at end of winter (herder describes conditions, and enumerator interprets the conditions to for a score)	75% show weight loss of less than 10%	75% show weight loss of less than 10%
	1.6	Access to feed and forages from artificial pasture?	68% do not have access to artificial pastures	75% do not have access to artificial pastures





# Herder's Attitudes

- Herders found the extension services and training programs were quite helpful and relevant.
- More women than men reported that new methodologies could be incorporated into their operations,
- Fewer women than men reported that extension bulletins were useful.





# Herder's attitude over the policies

- Government policies of seasonal ban and grazing ban are not long term solutions, unless .
  - more money provide or
  - more opportunities or
  - better education for kids ( go away)
- Herders are not fully alongside with current government policies. They ask why
  - They should reduce stocking rate
    - -Income reduction
  - They should pen-fed their animal in winter
    - More investment
  - They should purchase more supplements in winter
    - More investment and skill





# Attitudes about their future

- Some herders expressed that there is no future for their children if current situation of pasture degradation goes on.





# Benefits to the researchers

- Benefits to researchers
  - Real picture
  - True information
  - Valid data for models
  - Aims on farmers
  - Relevant to the practice

E.g. Body weight lose through winter

Desirable and non-desirable grass on the pasture

Resources of the households---animal, land, labor

Services—marketing information, T&A

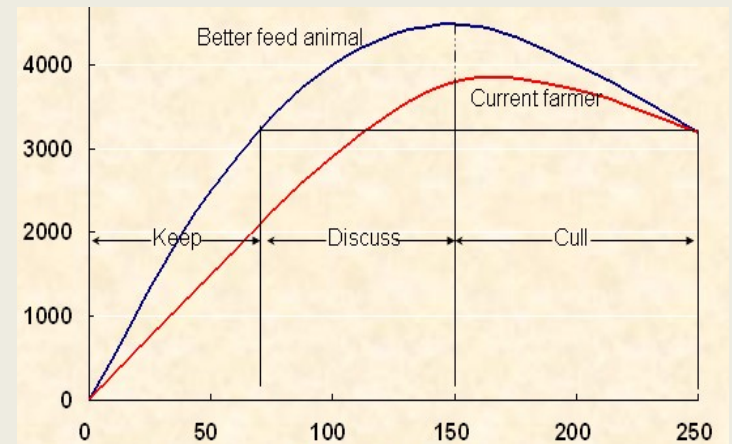


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# Attitudes of researchers

Research on solutions versus publications



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# Approaches in achieving sustainability

- Herder focused approach
- Production based pasture management
- Dynamic concepts of sustainable pasture management
- Relevant researches and extension

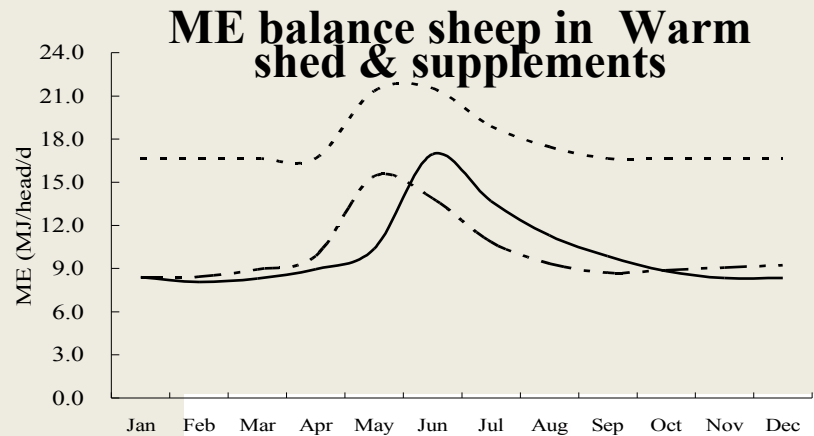
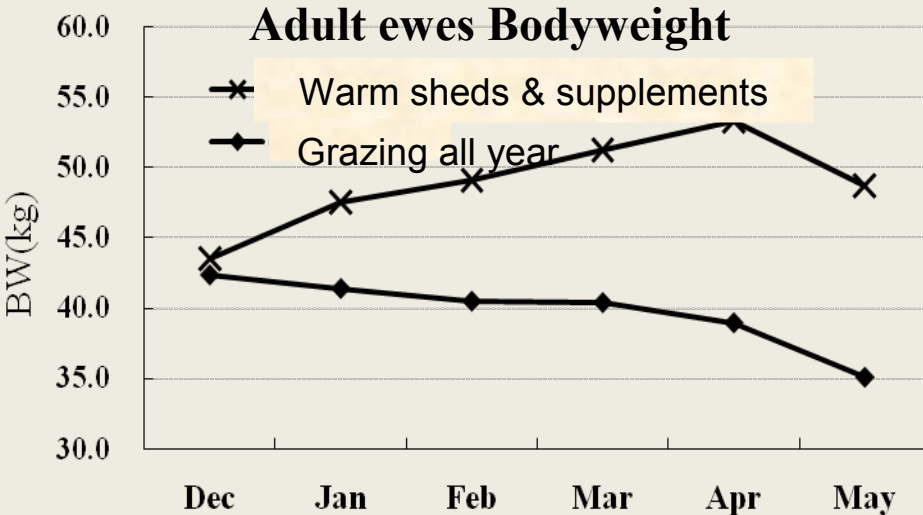
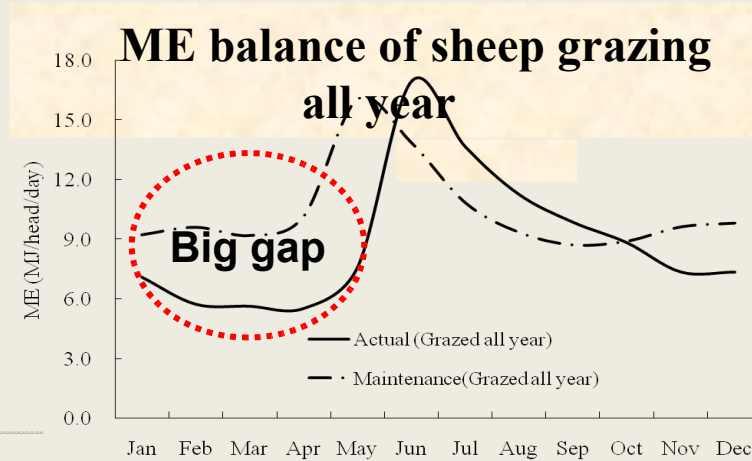


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# Working with herders

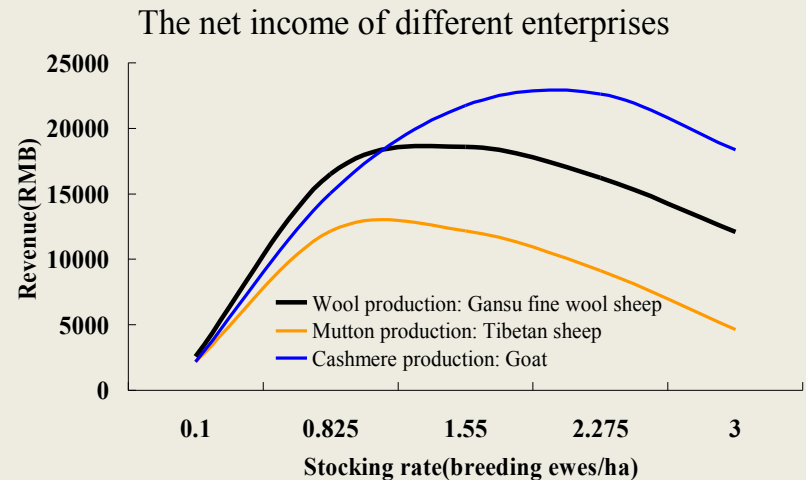
- Case study in Sunan
  - Conventional practice
  - Supplements in winter





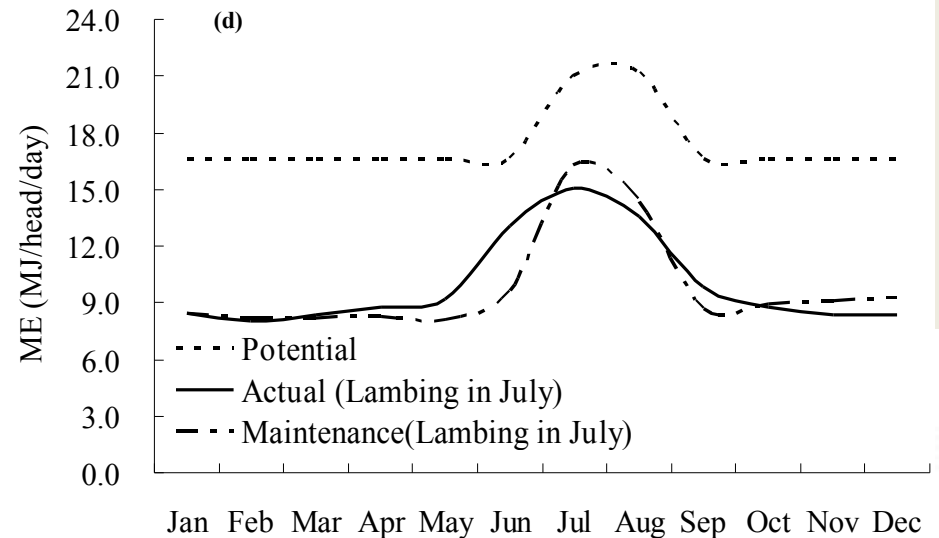
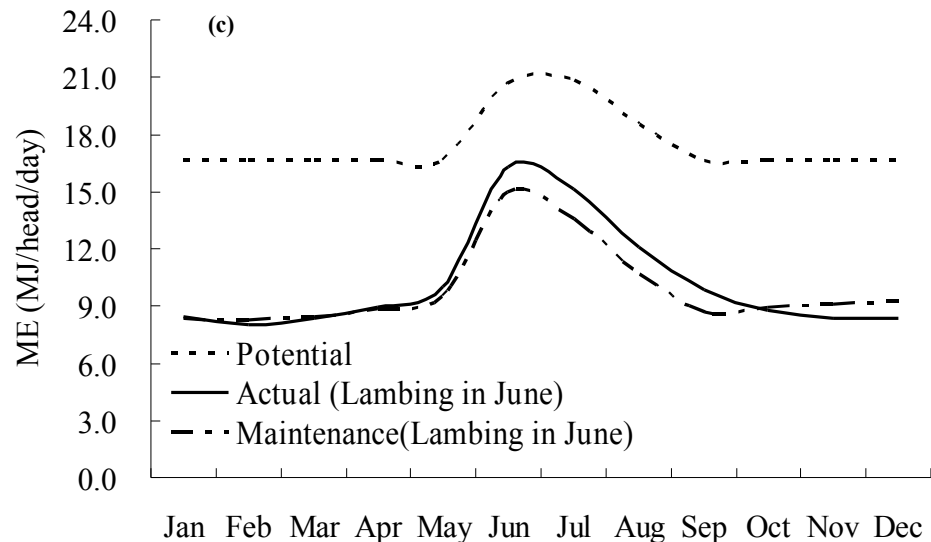
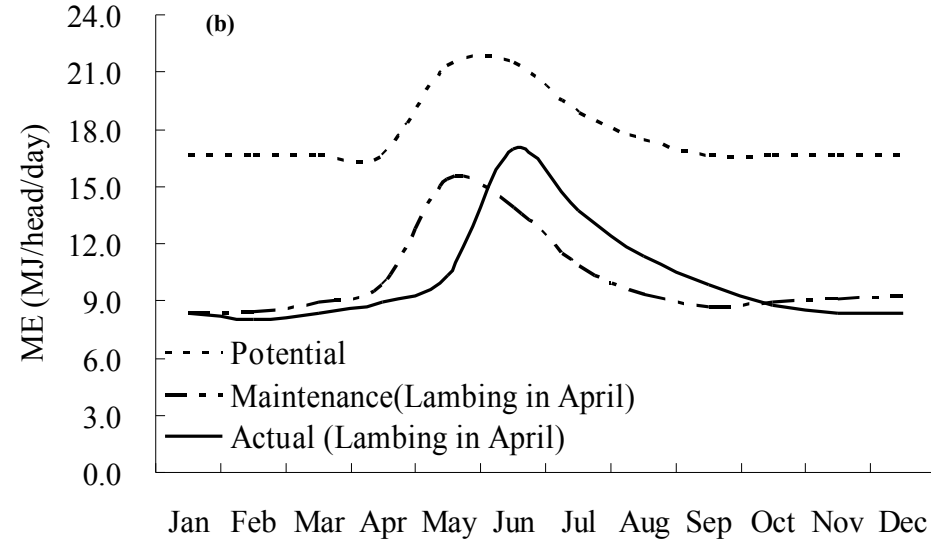
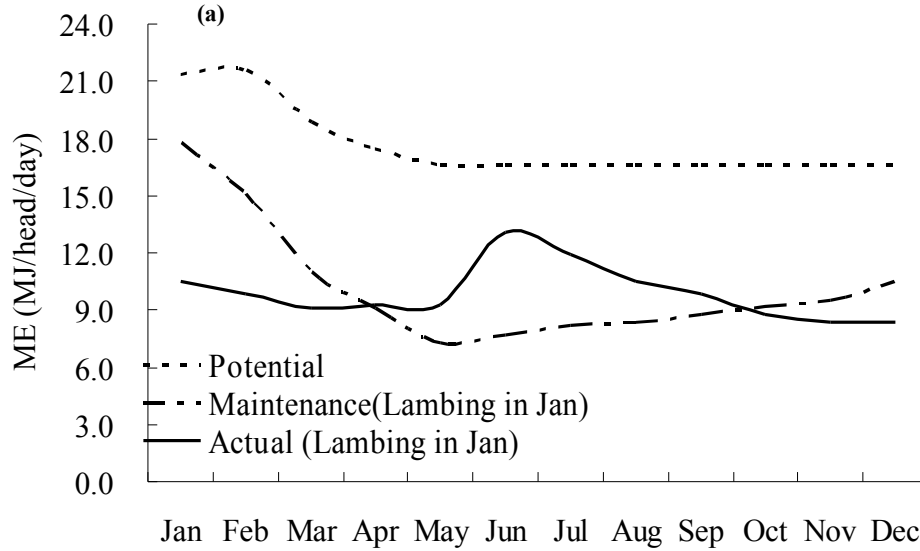
# Testing the options

- Change enterprises
- Changing lambing time
- Early weaning
  - 45days weaning age
  - Good ewe condition
  - Quick return to oestrus
  - Improved reproduction
  - Better growth rate
- Warm shed fattening
  - Energy saving
  - Quick finishing time
  - Environmental friendly





# One option of changing lambing time





# Testing the options

- Feasibility in herder's tradition
- Feasibility in animal science
  - Reproduction physiology –estrus
  - Stress of shearing
- Feasibility in practice
  - Shearing time
  - Wool quality
  - Market





# Talking solutions to herders

- Introduction of solutions to herders
  - Training
- Demonstration of solutions
  - Extension
- Let's the neighbors talk to each other
  - Field school



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# Herders are masters

- Herders are main players
- Herders are implementers
- Herders are masters of all in sustainable pasture management process

Therefore, if we want better quality life, we need to talk with herders, to work with herders, to listen to herders and to server herders.



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Thanks

谢 谢



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