Best practices for sustainable use of common grasslands in the Western Balkans and Europe

Session: Country presentations focusing on the governance of the commons in WB and SEE Europe, including policy support for these systems
- Republic of Macedonia -

Prof. Suzana Kratovalieva,
Agicultural Institute-Skopje, Univ. Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, R.Macedonia

Mrs. Tatjana Milcevska,
Public Enterprise for Pasture Management, R.Macedonia

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AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY FEATURES

Agriculture represents 11% of GDP (2009) in Macedonia.

In 2010 agricultural land covered 1.12 million ha divided between cultivable land (45%) and pastures (55%).

The majority of the cultivable land is arable land. Permanent crops cover 7% of the agricultural area (35,000 ha) and meadows 59,000 ha. Forest areas cover 960,431 ha.

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Livestock systems provide an income to villages, contributing to preventing migration to urban areas; produce healthy supplies of staple foods, including meat, milk, cheese, other products (cheese, sour cream, oil, whey, processed meat products).

Pasture area cover approx. 50% of agricultural land!

About 611,000 ha pastures are state owned, according to statistics. (MAFWE, 2003)\(^1\).

In reality the figure is much lower due to loss to other land uses (e.g. expansion of cities, mines, roads.

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IMPORTANCE OF COMMON GRAZING IN MACEDONIA'S AGRICULTURE

Pastures in Macedonia are mainly natural and semi-natural;

Depending on their use they are divided into summer (>1200m asl V-X)) and winter pastures (less than 1200m asl X-V);

The average grazing capacity is 3 small ruminants/ha – there is grazing for 2 million, without damaging the sward;

Livestock farming is a traditional practice for farmers in rural areas where high proportion of land is mountainous pastures and meadows.

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Extensive pastoralism is still practiced in the mountain regions of the Republic of Macedonia.

Most of the herds are from different strains of Pramenka sheep and/or hybrids with Württemberg, Merino and east Frisian sheep.

The Sharplaninska strain is found in Western Macedonia and the Ovchepolska strain still exists along the Vardar River and Eastern Macedonia.

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Livestock breeding plays a major role in the economy and has socio-political significance.

Extensive grazing predominates in the country, reflecting the importance of pasture as one of its major resources.

In the RM large areas are managed under traditional farming systems, using grazing pastures and lowlands.

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## LIVESTOCK NUMBERS

### Flock Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flock size</th>
<th>Keepers</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 10</td>
<td>3271</td>
<td>10897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 100</td>
<td>3434</td>
<td>159154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 to 300</td>
<td>2161</td>
<td>376208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;300</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>239700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9337</td>
<td>785959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Herd Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herd size</th>
<th>Keepers</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 10</td>
<td>35983</td>
<td>118118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 50</td>
<td>4403</td>
<td>90445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>52510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40915</td>
<td>261073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Law on pastures
(Official gazette 3/1998)

Amendments
-OG 101/2000
-OG 89/2008
-OG 105/2009
-OG 42/2010
-OG 116/2010

Regulate, e.g.:
-Procedure for pasture allocation
-Leases
-Placement of temporary objects (pens, etc.)
-Surveillance and inspections
-Fines for breaches of the pasture law
  -Legal persons (€3000-6000)
  -Individuals (€1000-2000)

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- Pastures have never been included in the National and EU support programmes;

- Problems - the need to delimit accurately and precisely the pasture areas;

- The lack of a register of state-owned pastures.

- Poor cooperation between the domestic and foreign institutions that deal with pastures.

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RIGHTS TO USE STATE-OWNED PASTURES

- The right to graze is limited to legal and natural persons who both own livestock and have a contract to use the state-owned pastures;

- Contracts are in a set format and are for 5 years with an option to extend for a further 5 years;

- Currently around 8000 agreements for the use of pastures in force, but there are about three times as many actual pasture users.

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PROBLEMS IN PASTURE MANAGEMENT

- Usurpation by farmers, e.g. conversion to arable

- Conversion to non-agricultural uses (both permanent and temporary), often involving other Ministries

- Afforestation

- Poor pasture composition, e.g. low proportion of digestible forage; weediness

- Lack of access roads to the sheepfolds and pens;

- Poor water supply.

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I. There is a need to adopt new legislation, harmonised with EU directives, that will regulate all areas of pasture management:
   1) distribution,
   2) agricultural usurpation
   3) conversion to other land uses

II. Implementation of measures to improve the conditions and management of pastures – water supply, roads, electricity, pastures composition, coordination of appropriate grazing practices.

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Thank you and best regards from Suzana!