

MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



COMMONAGE POLICY AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. AIM/PURPOSE:**
- 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY**
- 4. QUALIFYING CRITERIA**
- 5. ACTION AGAINST MALPRACTICES**
- 6. CONDITION OF APPLICANTS**
- 7. CURRENT STRUCTURES**
- 8. COMMONAGE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**
- 9. COMMONAGE USER GROUPS (CUG)**
- 10. COMMONAGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AT TOWNS LEVEL**
- 11. MATJHABENG COMMONAGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**
- 12. COMMONAGE DEVELOPMENT FORUM**
- 13. PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT;**
- 14. PRODUCTION INPUTS;**
- 15. MECHANIZATION SERVICES**
- 16. MARKETS**
- 17. EXTENSION SERVICES**
- 18. TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP**
- 19. INFRASTRUCTURE**
- 20. MARKET AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS**
- 21. TRAINING & SUPPORT PROGRAMME**
- 22. EXIT STRATEGY**
- 23. LAND AVAILABILITY AND LRAD**
- 24. SUPPORT AND AFTER CARE**
- 25. CONCLUSION**
- LIST OF REFERENCES**

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

CUG	Commonage User Groups
CMC	Commonage Management Committee
MCMC	Matjhabeng Commonage Management Committee
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DWAF	Department Water Affairs And Forestry
DPLG	Department Provincial Government And Local Government
DH&W	Department Health And Welfare
DL	Department of Labour
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
LRAD	Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development
LSU	Large Stock Unit (for livestock assessment)
CMP	Commonage Management Plan
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program

1. INTRODUCTION

The long-term success and sustainability of smallholder and emerging farmer development is dependent on empowered farmers managing their own affairs through appropriate and self-established management structures. Tientenberg, T.H.(5ed)(2000) defined sustainable development as "the management of the human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining the potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations."

It is recommended that this Commonage Policy and management Plan be used to assist farmers to establish and use these structures, which will be essential for effective management of the commonage resource, as well as empowerment of farmers. Hartwick J.M & Olewieler N.D, (1997) describe property rights as a bundle of characteristics that convey certain powers to the owner of the right. A property rights failure occurs whenever there is free and open access to a resource. When an asset is privately owned, the owner has a vested interest in protecting the asset's value. If the owner does not possess the right of land, his/her sole objective will only be to maximize yield without giving consideration to the long term conservation of the land.

Municipal commonages in Free State, more particular in Matjhabeng Municipality have potential to be powerful source of economic development in Free State. However, problems with management as well as lack of training for users prevent commonages from reaching their full development potential. It occurs in places where grazing are an open-access resource. The end-result is a "tragedy of the commons." The farms are overgrazed and it is very difficult for grass regrowth. According to Res-nullis property resource, land could be exploited if taken on first come first serve basis, Hartwick J.M & Olewieler N.D, The economic of natural resources use 1997, USA. The above statements gives reasons why Matjhabeng Municipality needs a clear Policy and Commonage Management Plan for control of commonage farms

2. AIM/PURPOSE OF THE POLICY STRATEGIES:

2.1 This policy aims to address the key issues and challenges of Matjhabeng commonage users.

The strategic aim is to create an enabling farming environment in which the objectives of commonage farmers can be realised, given that many farmers can simply not afford to purchase their own farms.

2.2 This Policy applies to the administrations of all commonage users as determined by the Matjhabeng Municipality with full acknowledgement of the principles inherent in the National Commonage guideline, National Land Reform Policies.

2.3 Ensure the formation of legitimate Agricultural development forums at various levels in order to encourage communication, collaboration and cooperation among affected stakeholders within agricultural industry.

2.4 To promote effective and efficient service delivery by identifying and prioritizing the strategic objectives in agriculture

2.5 To promote accountability and commitment from Matjhabeng Municipality

2.6 Promote coordinated planning with within the Matjhabeng and other external stake holders

2.7 Ensure that the roles of agriculture is publicised and known by community members and all other organ of state so that an effective working relationship is maintained at all levels of the departments and clients, and that services are delivered efficiently

5. OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY

- 5.1. Provide procedures and guidelines for the management and control of commonage farms (s), with prescribed policy guidelines for farmers who can't buy their own farms as they are very expensive
- 5.2. Establish a fair and equitable common commonage Policy throughout the Matjhabeng Municipality.
- 5.3. Provide a framework to assist the Municipality in identifying those who qualify for the limited basic services and assuring that the limits are placed as needed.
- 5.4. Increase access to municipal agricultural land by disadvantaged communities
- 5.5. Contribute to relieving the congestion of livestock and any other agricultural activities in townships and residential areas.
- 5.6. Empower, motivate and encourage stimulation of growth from agriculture and promote the sustainability of land and natural resources.
- 5.7. Ensure that women, youth and disabled are legitimate participants with in Agricultural sector and are provided with services according to their needs.
- 5.8. Ensure the formation of legitimate Agricultural development forums at various levels in other to encourage communication, collaboration and cooperation among affected stakeholders within agricultural industry.
- 5.9. Promote access to and optimal use of productive Agricultural land through objective allocation commonage land, municipal farms and infrastructure development.
- 5.10. Promote access to and optimal utilization of Agricultural production resources for Matjhabeng community, in particular to these who were previously denied such access, for these with demonsratable potential, and these with viable plans and good intension.

LEGISLATIONS

Legislation listed below are currently in force, and it is Matjhabeng Municipality's responsibility to monitor that they are adhered to.

LIVESTOCK BRAND ACT,1962 (ACT NO. 87 OF 1962

ANIMAL DISEASE ACT,1984 9ACT NO.35 OF 1984

SUBDIVISION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND ACT, 1970

CONSERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE ACT,1983

6. QUALIFYING CRITERIA

4.1 All Matjhabeng residents

4.2 These who are willing to live and or live near the farm and operate or work on it

4.3 These who are committed to utilise allocated farms productively

4.4 Applicants may be placed as individuals or as groups depending on circumstances.

4.5 Prospective applicants should show evidence of intended enterprise.

4.6 The applicant agrees to accept the limited level of service and agrees to stay in the program as depicted by any organ of state

4.7 Submit application letter stating and containing, inter alia, the following important information

4.7.1. Surname and names

4.7.2. Copy Identification documents

4.7.3. Copy of livestock registration certificate

4.7.4. Indication of preferred farm and type of enterprise applying for

4.7.5. Postal address and telephone numbers

4.7.6. Proof of residence

4.7.7. Application letter to be handed over to Matjhabeng Municipality

5. ACTION AGAINST MALPRACTICES

This section states the steps that council will take against people who contravene/violate the policy.

The council, without prejudice to any other remedy for breach of contract, by written notice send to the lessee may terminate lease contract for the whole allocated farm or part of, when the following circumstances prevail.

- a) No production taking place in the farm.
- b) Unpaid rentals.
- c) Usage of agricultural land for other purposes without prior approval by council.
- d) Performing of any illegal activity in the farm.
- e) Negligence of council property
- f) Over-utilization of natural resources or non prevention of degradation of the soil

If it is established that the above circumstances prevail commonage farms, the following action(s) are to be taken :

5.1 suspend or termination lease contract /permission immediately

5.2 report to South African Police Services

6. CONDITION OF APPLICANTS

Applicants should be willing and prepared to protect the production potential and capacity of natural resources and also prevent degradation of soil, water quality and biological diversity. This implies

- ❖ Correct stocking rate
 - ❖ Correct cultivation practices
- a) The successful applicants will be obliged to apply corrects calculated grazing capacity for each allocated farm or camp as prescribed by the Department of Agriculture.
 - b) With the advice from the Department of Agriculture the council will monitor and evaluate veld condition regularly so that timely adjustment [stock decrease/increase] can be made.
 - c) The council will be flexible enough to allow that the management system being practiced should be adjusted regularly where ever deemed necessary. It is better to follow an “adjustable/adaptable” style of management rather than specific [rigid] recipe
 - d) The arable land may be used for cultivation of field crops and vegetables
 - e) If municipal water is used, the applicable Municipal tariffs will apply.
 - f) The successful applicants shall be liable for the costs incurred for the use of electricity on the premises.
 - g) No squatters or any other form of houses will be allowed on the premises, but provision may be made to accommodate security personnel.
 - h) The council and / or its representative shall have the right to enter the premises at any reasonable time for the purpose of inspection, or any other reason.
 - i) The premises are leased “voetstoets” and the council receives no guarantee regarding the land or any other improvement
 - j) Charges will be determined by council from time to time

7. CURRENT STRUCTURES

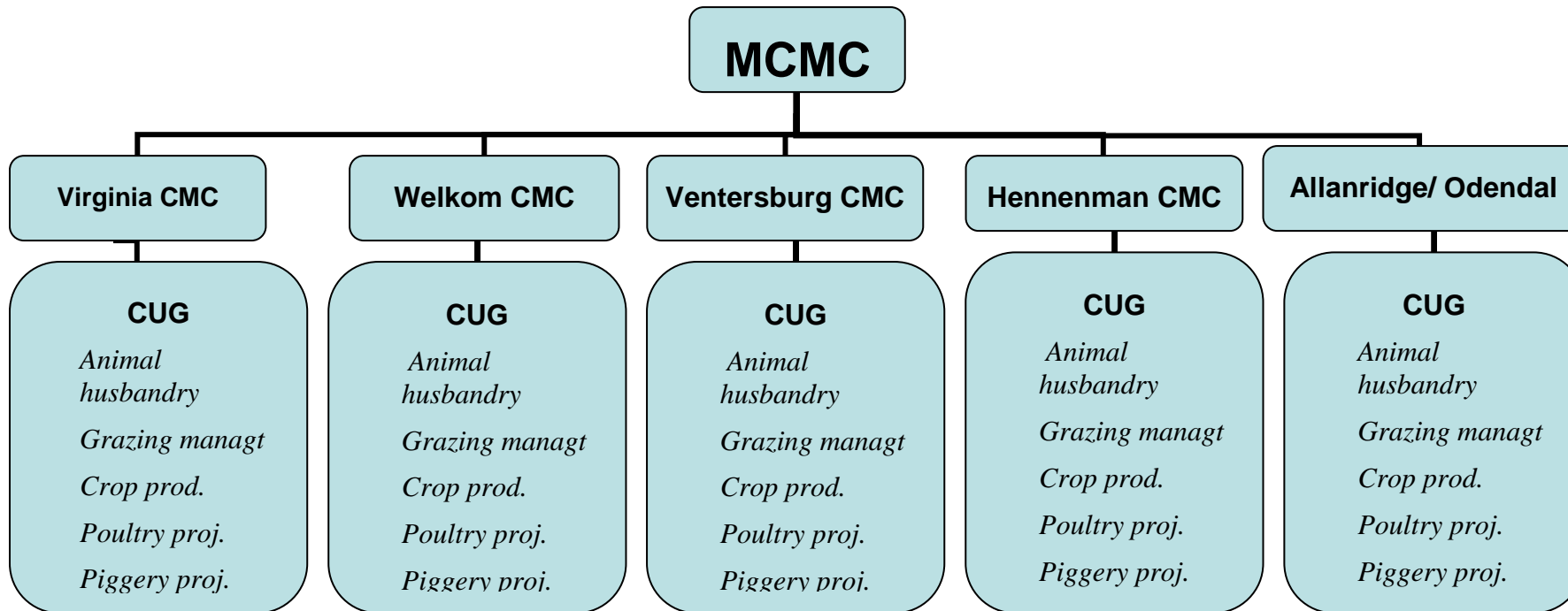
Existing structures representing groups of commonage users in the respective towns of Matjhabeng Municipality are summarized in below

1. Virginia / Meloding
2. Welkom/ Thabong
3. Hennemann/ Phomolong
4. Ventersburg/ Mamahabane
5. Allanride/ Odendaalsrus

This document clearly indicate the establishment of a Matjhabeng Commonage Management Structure (as required according to the DLA Commonage Programme), noting the proposed composition as well as functions of such a structure.

8. COMMONAGE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Effective, sustainable management of the commonage will require the formation of structures representative of all commonage users. These structures need to be created through a bottom-up, building block approach, ensuring that information regarding commonage management issues is disseminated to all farmers through democratically elected structures. The commonage management structure is illustrated below, followed by a discussion on the different levels of community representative structures, and the proposed composition of the overall structure.



9. COMMONAGE USER GROUPS (CUG)

All farmers will need to become part of COMMONAGE USER GROUPS (CUG) as pre-requisite of gaining access to land on the commonage. Structures need to be created to assist with the day to day management of commonages (the prime responsibility of which will be that of the Commonage Manager at Local Municipal level, and represent members of these CMCs at the town level, reporting issues identified by users at this level, and distributing information back to members. The CMC for each town shall be comprised of the various Commonage User Groups (CUG), and the Commonage User Committee (CUC), of the particular group.

COMMONAGE USER GROUPS (CUG) should be established by the farmers in each category on the basis of shared infrastructure, including grazing camps and water points for livestock farmers, and irrigation infrastructure for irrigation farmers. It is recommended that the following training and extension support be directed through the farmer groups:

- (i) *Animal husbandry*
- (ii) *Grazing management*
- (iii) *Crop production*
- (iv) *Water management,*
- (v) *Support services*
- (vi) *Poultry projects*
- (vii) *Piggery projects*

More detail on training that will need to be provided to commonage users, including a discussion on the elements listed here, is included in chapter.

Representatives from each of the CUGs (which will include representation from all the categories of livestock and *Crop production* farmers using the commonage in within each town) will be elected to serve on the Commonage Management Committee for the respective town.

10. COMMONAGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CMC) AT TOWNS LEVEL

Commonage management Committees (at town level) constitute the next level of building blocks towards the formation of the Matjhabeng Commonage Management Committee. The CMC s need to include representatives from each of the Farmer Groups

These structures must be empowered to represent the subsistence as well as emerging farmers at the MCMC level. It is recommended that these committees undergo a process of capacity building and training which needs to focus on:

- Responsibilities
- Day to day commonage management
- Financial management and business principles including collection of levies which will vary.
- Portfolios and functioning of scheme structures
- Infrastructure Maintenance (to be undertaken by “Technical” portfolio of the management committee)
- Constitution requirements
- Meeting procedures (including agendas and record keeping/ minute taking)

It is recommended that the CMCs (at town level) meet once a month on scheduled dates. Special meetings may be called outside these scheduled times if necessary.

CMC Portfolios

Each CMC will elect a committee with each office bearer having a specific portfolio, which will be mirrored by portfolios on the MCMC. Training of these office bearers will parallel that of the MCMC training.

- **Chairperson**

The chairperson will be responsible for the following:

- General co-ordination of activities on the commonage.
- Overseeing and monitoring activities of other portfolio members and subcommittees in the CMC.
- Scheduling monthly meetings for the CMC, and ensuring that all members are informed of these meetings.
- Scheduling regular report back meetings with all CMC members to discuss issues raised at CMC and MCMC levels.
- Represent the town CMC on the MCMC.

- **Vice Chairperson**

The vice chairperson will:

- Assist the chairperson in all duties.
- Act as stand in representative to the MCMC if the chairperson is unable to attend.
- Fill in for other portfolio members unable to attend CMC meetings. (This task could be delegated, but the vice-person will be accountable to ensure that all portfolios are covered.)

- **Secretary**

The secretary will be responsible for keeping all records, including:

- A register of members
- Copies of lease agreements with individual users
- Minutes of meetings
- Other???

- **Treasurer**

Rental income from the commonage will be paid directly into the Council . The treasurer will be responsible for:

- Administrating commonage income from rental
- Administrating other payments such as tariffs for water and infrastructure rental
- Administering CMC Membership fees
- Liaising with the Treasurer portfolio member of the MCMC Financial Management of commonages, including income and expenditure reporting.

- **Technical Portfolio committee**

The maintenance and repair of infrastructure is the responsibility of the technical committee (a sub-committee of the CMC). At this level, this responsibility will involve identifying problems relating to infrastructure repair and maintenance, recording issues noted by members, and reporting these to the MCMC representative responsible for technical issues, who will then need to take appropriate action and report back to farmers through the CMC Technical representative. These issues also need to be reported to the MCMC by the chairperson of the CMC who will represent farmers at that level. Infrastructure that needs to be considered under the technical portfolio include

- Fencing
- Gates
- Roads
- Soil conservation structures
- Irrigation infrastructure
- Stock watering points
- Animal handling/ dipping facilities
- Other?

11. MATJHABENG COMMONAGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (MCMC)

The Matjhabeng Commonage Management Committee (MCMC) will be the primary body responsible for commonage management. This committee will be comprised of commonage user representatives, elected through the system proposed above, as well as representatives from the DoA, DLA, and other departments. The committee will be headed by a Commonage Manager, appointed by Matjhabeng municipality.

This committee will be responsible for the formulation of a land use management plan noting:

- conditions of use
- how commonage use will be monitored, and
- how rules and regulations will be enforced.

Recommendations from the Draft DLA Commonage ‘Toolkit’ for municipalities on setting up a Commonage Management Committee, as well as guidelines on the compilation of land use management plans by such a committee were considered.

TABLE 1, below provides the proposed composition of the Matjhabeng Commonage Management Committee, which is to be the body primarily responsible for management of commonages, under the specific guidance of a Commonage Manager, who is appointed at the level of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality and is tasked with the sole responsibility of commonage management.

Table 1: Proposed composition of MCMC

Member	Organisation
Commonage Manager	Matjhabeng Municipality
2* representatives from the CMCs in each of the six towns. (Chair/ secretary).	Welkom CMA Virginia CMA Ventersburg CMA Allanridge/Odendaalsrus Hennenman CMA

Representatives from (Provincial/District/both) Government:	DoA DLA
Other stakeholders as and when required	Commercial farmer mentors Animal Health/ vet Input suppliers Community leaders Local development Forums DWAF DPLG DH&W Other

This committee shall meet once every quarter to discuss the compliance of the farmers to the policy and commonage BY-LAW and make recommendations to the Matjhabeng Council about any changes actions required in terms of the policy and BY-LAW with the agreement with the farmers. The municipality shall see that all legislation is adhered to at all times.

The Commonage Manager

The Commonage Manager will need to oversee all activities related to management of the Municipality’s commonage area. Specific functions will include the following:

- Source potential funds for commonage development from government, businesses, external funders etc.
- Monitor the business plans of each town
- Monitor users’ compliance with rental agreements and constitutions
- Liaise between the town and municipal management structures (CUCs & MCMC) financial, technical, and other issues
- Serve as Chairperson for the MCMC – responsibilities in this regard discussed below:

Portfolios

The MCMC will have the same portfolios as those proposed for the CMCs above, (with the Commonage Manager acting as Chair person), with specific subcommittees responsible for technical issues relating to infrastructure repair and maintenance, as well as soil conservation, and provision of support services including training.

- **Chairperson**

The chairperson will be responsible for the following:

- General co-ordination of activities on the commonage.
- Overseeing and monitoring activities of other portfolio members and subcommittees in the MCMC.
- Scheduling quarterly meetings for the MCMC, and ensuring that all members are informed of these meetings.
- Assisting CMCs with the process of information dissemination, and ensuring that regular feedback meetings are held to report back to all users.
- Represent Matjhabeng Municipality on any potential District Forum for Commonages.

- **Vice Chairperson**

The vice chairperson will:

- Assist the chairperson in all duties.
- Fill in for other portfolio members unable to attend MCMC meetings. (This task could be delegated, but the vice-person will be accountable to ensure that all portfolios are covered.)

- **Secretary**

The secretary will be responsible for keeping all records, including:

- A register of members
- Copies of lease agreements with individual users
- Minutes of meetings
- Other records.

- **Treasurer**

The treasurer will be responsible for:

- Administrating commonage income from rental
- Administrating other payments such as tariffs for water and infrastructure rental
- Liaising with the Treasurer portfolio members of the CUCs Financial Management of commonages, including income and expenditure reporting.

- **Technical Portfolio committee-** The maintenance and repair of infrastructure is the responsibility of the technical committee (a sub-committee of the MCMC). This responsibility will involve:

- Ensuring that maintenance and repair of infrastructure takes place in accordance with the Infrastructure Maintenance Plan.
- Identifying problems relating to infrastructure repair and maintenance,
- Liaising with technical portfolio members of CMCs,
- Recording issues noted by commonage users,
- Identifying appropriate actions to repair and maintain infrastructure
- Identifying and appointing appropriate contractors/ service providers to maintain/ repair infrastructure as required, in accordance with the Infrastructure Maintenance Plan.
- Monitoring the standards of infrastructure repairs.
- Infrastructure that needs to be considered under the technical portfolio include Fencing, Gates, Roads, Soil conservation structures, Irrigation infrastructure, Stock watering points, Animal handling/ dipping facilities, Other?

- **Services Committee**

It is proposed that a services committee be established, which will be responsible for the setting up of a Farmer Support Center which will facilitate all services to farmers. DoA extension officers/ technicians will play a vital role in the management of these services to farmers.

12. COMMONAGE DEVELOPMENT FORUM

It is proposed that a (Lejweleputswa) Commonage Development Forum be established at District level to serve as a platform on which key community leaders and various stakeholders can be involved. These would include local and district municipalities, Local Community Representatives, Commonage Committees (including MCMC), as well as the Departments of Agriculture and Land Affairs. These will all be regarded as core members, while other members could involve external implementing agents, other Departments as and when required (e.g. DEAT to deal with specific environmental issues or DWAF when Water matters are at hand (Water Board representatives could also be included in this regard). A summary of proposed composition of the CDF is provided below:

MEMBERSHIP

Core Members:

- Matjhabeng Municipal Council (local government)
- Lejweleputswa District Municipality
- Local Community Leaders
- Matjhabeng Commonage Management Committee
- Commonage Management Committees from Nala, Masilonyana, Tokologo and Tswelopele Local Municipalities
- DoA representatives (Province/ District)
- DLA representatives (District/Province)

Other members:

- Other Departments as required, e.g. DWAF, DEAT, DPLG
- Commercial Farmer mentors
- Water Boards?
- Input suppliers

- Community Development Forums? Women's groups, Youth groups?
- NGOs
- CBOs
- Other

FUNCTIONS

The aim of the forum will be to address sensitive community issues that impact on the successful operation of the schemes, and integrate development initiatives within the district's sphere of influence. It also provides a mechanism to share Commonage Programme progress with community structures.

The Commonage Development Forum would be responsible for:

- Sharing information and problem solving
- Land allocation issues
- Matters relating to Water Allocation
- Environmental Management of Commonages
- Integrating and coordinating development approach

13. PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT;

This section provides a summary of issues that need to be considered with regard to management of farming operations on commonage land for subsistence and emerging farmers, specifically looking at the types of support and training that would need to be provided to farmers.

Livestock owners have been keeping animals for a long time. However, production from a scientific point of view is often erratic, and product quality is not as good as required by the market. Improving livestock production on communally managed rangeland is a formidable challenge. Understanding the reason for livestock ownership opens the way to support these livestock owners to achieve their goals.

From a pure technical perspective the answer to the problem seems straight forward, but the issue of overgrazing and over-stocking is much more complicated. Politicisation of the issue has complicated the approach which should be followed. However, this does not give an excuse to do nothing. The approach of training and demonstration combined with understanding the reasons for livestock ownership and tailor-making the intervention towards achieving these goals have the prospect of success.

The greatest impact can be achieved by improving reproduction rate and survivability of the animals. This can be achieved in many ways. Increasing productivity and product quality, however, will only improve the sustainability of the farming operations if there is a simultaneous improvement in the efficiency of the marketing function.

14. PRODUCTION INPUTS;

A common problem facing primary producers in remote rural areas is the availability of production inputs within close proximity to the farms. Livestock require feed, dips and veterinary medications, and for the smallholder farmer, these products are packaged in quantities that far exceed immediate requirements. The temptation therefore exists to omit certain treatments, which in turn may compromise livestock health and vigour. The formation of a cooperative can go far to alleviate most of these constraints. It is requirement for groups to form **primary cooperative with assistance from the Commonage Manager.**

Procurement of production finance is a common restraint to production, both in terms of quality and quantity. Many financial institutions now require a business plan before they will consider advancing production credit, and individual smallholder farmers often do not have the resources to compile such a business plan.

15. MECHANIZATION SERVICES

The problem of “bulky inputs” plagues the smallholder farmer, and many do not have their own machinery. Contractors in rural areas are often very expensive. Improving the availability of mechanisation services over which a degree of price control may be exercised would therefore improve sustainability.

16. MARKETS

A market analysis will need to be undertaken in order to identify other opportunities for the commonage users to produce certain commodities e.g. goats milk, wool, other? Factors to consider in the analysis are as follows;

- Market Size: The volumes required, level of organization, market characteristics, etc;
- Distance to markets;
- Specific product handling and packaging requirements e.g. cooling, bulk or bottled, tanning, fresh/ dried/ processed, etc.;
- Health requirements, e.g. inspections, milking parlour regulations, “measles free” brucellosis and tuberculosis free;
- Quality Requirements: Evaluate the quality requirements for the relevant buyers, i.e. pasteurisation etc. and identify those qualities sought after for specific purposes (e.g. unpasteurised milk for amasi);
- Price Analysis: Carry out a trend analysis, forecasts and sensitivity;
- Market Cycle: Examine the market cycles, paying attention to the peak and trough periods in the cycle and the duration (days or months) of those periods;
- Production Projections: Examine the factors that could affect production (e.g. fodder supply, parturition date, etc.);
- Demand Analysis: Analyse demand, paying attention to the periods when production would be at its peak e.g. summer versus winter;
- Barriers to Market Entry: Determine whether there are barriers to entry for the smallholder producer into any particular market.

17 EXTENSION SERVICES

The extension team would be responsible for extension activities such as:

- Coordination of training and capacity building among members;
- Establishment of farmer and employee study groups, farmer's days and marketing days; and
- Establishment of self evaluation days.

18. TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP

Farming skills and knowledge is acquired over a number of years, and it is only recently that Black farmers have been given access to agricultural land. It is therefore to be expected that these farmers are at a disadvantage in terms of farming experience and knowledge at an entrepreneurial level. Business management for many is still a new skill, and this is decidedly an important focus for training programmes. Furthermore, it is hoped that a number of commercial livestock farmers will be willing to mentor some of their smallholder fellow farmers. Vertical integration requires additional knowledge and skills, especially regarding production planning which need to be developed.

Specific training interventions that will need to be considered include the following:

- **Technical skills:** Training on the technical aspects of crop production and livestock husbandry; including:
 - (i) *Animal husbandry*, including issues related to animal health, feed, herd composition, etc.
 - (ii) *Grazing management*, noting the importance of adhering to carrying capacity, effects of erosion caused by overgrazing, and other issues concerning grazing.
 - (iii) *Crop production*, focusing on crop selection, land preparation, planting crop protection, harvesting and quality control,
 - (iv) *Water management*, where water distribution and sharing, irrigation, scheduling and levies,
 - (v) *Support services*, where essential services for sustainable production, such as mechanization services, production loans, input supplies and marketing are covered.

- **Business and organizational skills** (i.e. administration, management and leadership skills). This training should include the following topics:
 - How to manage the organization;
 - How to manage a budget;
 - How to access finance;
 - How to design, plan, implement and evaluate a project or activity of the organization;
 - How to manage conflict and to establish workable communication systems;
 - How to understand and apply contracts;
 - How to develop financial control mechanisms; and
 - Design of organizational structures

- **Marketing skills**

Specialised training in small business development and management for all prospective farmers is an important key to the success of this project. This then needs to be under-girded by sound technical and extension support, which will facilitate effective technology transfer to the target group. This extension task involves developing knowledge, skills and positive attitudes among commonage users, thus enabling them to benefit from research and technology with the ultimate aim of raising their production efficiency and achieving higher standards of living.

The role of the private sector to provide support services and partnerships (in the form of share equity schemes etc) to emerging farmers must also be investigated. The identification of suitable private sector partners on both the supply side and the value-chain side of the primary production units could add stability and reduce risk for the smallholder livestock owner. Established agro-industrial and commercial farmer organisations will have a vital role to play in the support and long-term sustainability of the development project. The project team must therefore investigate the scope of support services required by the livestock owners, and this will provide the basis for the design of a participatory extension delivery model in the community.

The forum of most training processes should be that of workshops which are conducted in a shared-learning and participatory manner. In this way both local knowledge and new knowledge is used in the training process. People should also be encouraged to participate and act on what is learned. Where possible, and where relevant, the workshops should take place in the field using live examples.

19. INFRASTRUCTURE

With the implementation of the proposed land use programme the requirements for fencing, stock watering etc needs to be planned and quantified. Developments such as feedlots, dairies abattoirs etc. will also need planning and quantification.

Existing infrastructure on the commonage is a constraint to farming, particularly for livestock owners, as water points often do not work, and lack of fences and gates allow animals to get out (which subjects them to impoundment).

With regards to bulk infrastructure, the main elements of infrastructure affecting sustainable production are poor transport systems, lack of access to markets, and limited access to agricultural support services.

Other infrastructural needs to be considered relate to communications infrastructure. Many smallholder farmers do not have access to e-mail and internet services, and rural telephone lines are often unreliable. Distance to markets also presents a challenge to some producers.

20. MARKET AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The sector analysis will provide in-depth analysis of the livestock and crop product portfolio of commonage farmers, noting agricultural marketing (supply and demand trends) and economic opportunities in the province as well as the district, and opportunities for export. It can be used to make recommendations on potential economic opportunities for agricultural projects that can be used to guide the formulation of recommendations for the development of suitable projects. Responsibilities of this activity will include:

- Collation of relevant economic data and statistics for the crop production and livestock sectors;
- Identify and analyse risk factors;
- Identification of opportunities for BEE in livestock and crop production in the district;
- Overview and analysis of niche products and markets;

- Identification of value-adding opportunities for selected crops and livestock products that can supply niche markets; and
- Investigation of the feasibility and viability of the establishment of agri-villages or cluster approach in the district.

This activity will culminate in the preparation of an economic analysis of the agricultural sector in the district.

21. TRAINING & SUPPORT PROGRAMME

A Training and Support Programme must be designed by the MCMC, including representatives from the:

- Municipality,
- Department of Agriculture,
- Department of Land Affairs,
- Department of Social Welfare
- Agricultural Union – (Commercial farmer mentors?)
- Input suppliers and Implementing agent
- Other potential providers of financial/ technical/ management/ production/ institution building/ other support?

Such a programme needs to indicate the responsibilities each of the role players noted above will have for the provision of support, including training and capacity building of farmers.

A training schedule must be drawn up, indicating:

- what training will be provided
- to which farmers (training to be provided to Commonage User Groups (CUGs),
- who will provide the training

- how often training will be provided, and when.

Active participation in the training programme could be used as an incentive ‘milestone’ for farmers if some form of preferential access (e.g. for LRAD grants/ other types of funding/ assistance), could be linked with training.

Ongoing support and training for farmers graduating to their own land through the LRAD Programme will also need to be included in the training programme, and incorporated into an after care programme as indicated in the Exit Strategy (see **chapter 22**).

22. EXIT STRATEGY

An Exit Strategy must be designed through which farmers will graduate off the commonage to becoming commercial farmers on their own land. Of more immediate relevance however is the need for an Interim Strategy, through which Interim Category farmers, who currently have more than the permitted number of stock for, can be assisted to graduate off the commonage as soon as possible. This needs to be a matter of priority, on which the potential feasibility of the proposed policy relies, as commonages are currently already overstocked, and no room can be made for new beneficiaries.

This document discusses issues for consideration in an Exit Strategy for Interim farmers, which can be used in future as the basis for an ongoing exit strategy for farmers as they move through the system.

The most important elements to consider in an Exit Strategy are the following:

1. The availability of land for commonage farmers graduating to (pre-) commercial level. This will be done through the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) process of land acquisition for redistribution, in collaboration with the Department of Land Affairs (DLA). Support will need to be provided to farmers in accessing such grants and obtaining sufficient land to continue farming on increasingly commercial level.
2. A comprehensive ‘after care’ support programme to assist graduating farmers on their newly acquired land, through training and extension services, access to input capital, insurance, and assistance with financial and business management and planning, as well as production and marketing.

23. LAND AVAILABILITY AND LRAD

DLA assists in acquisition of land for distribution through LRAD, depending on the availability of suitable, and suitably priced, land in the area.

There have been very slow graduation of farms from commonage to own farms in Matjhabeng, and therefore if sufficient interest is shown, and suitable land identified, DLA has indicated that it would assist to facilitate the process.

Problems and delays have been encountered in the LRAD process until now

- The problem of availability of suitable, suitably priced land is noted as a key constraint in the smooth running of the LRAD process, and is of particular relevance in Matjhabeng Municipality, where land is perceived to be highly overpriced.
- The process whereby LRAD applicants must find suitable, available land for purchase through the LRAD grant has also created problems and delays.

NB NOTE- The prompt graduation of Interim farmers to their own land must be seen as one of the most important prerequisites for the potential success of the proposed policy. These farmers are currently using commonage land, which according to the policy must be targeted for small farmers who are still in the process of growing their herds. It is thus vital that these larger, pre-commercial farmers be assisted to acquire their own land through LRAD, and then provided with the necessary support to continue farming.

Furthermore, the process through which farmers will need to obtain land into the future, if the maximum time limit proposed is to be adhered to, must be efficient and sustainable if the policy is to succeed.

In this regard it is hoped that particular priority will be given to Matjhabeng Municipality in this regard, and that every effort be made to expedite the process of acquiring land for graduating farmers now and into the future.

24. SUPPORT AND AFTER CARE

Support in obtaining grant

Interim farmers will need to be informed how the LRAD programme works. This would include information on:

- Types of projects the grant can be used for, e.g. 1) food safety net, 2) equity schemes (here potential commercial farmer mentors could be brought in), 3) production for markets, or 4) agriculture in communal areas.
- Options on how to apply for and access grant (e.g. individually? as group (which would require formation of formal entity)? as family (recommended by DLA as flexibility in programme allows for larger grants on this basis).
- How much they are eligible for based on existing assets (including livestock and labour) as own contribution,
- What is needed to apply (process to be followed)
- How to obtain additional assistance (e.g. through appointment of a design agent if required)
- Information about land on the market. This can be obtained in part by tapping into existing databases at a local level, e.g. in print and *via* the Internet.

After care

Though DLA assists emerging farmers with acquisition of new land, there is a critical need for after care. Many emerging farmers have raised the concern that after they have been given land, there is no after care and this makes farming difficult because they still have much to learn and vast experience to be gained.

DLA, DoA and municipalities should together devise means to provide the necessary aftercare and training to emerging farmers.

Such an after care programme needs to be designed, looking at elements discussed in more detail in this policy, dealing with Support and Training requirements to be considered for commonage farmers, as well as those graduating through LRAD. Elements to be considered include:

- Production Management
- Production inputs
- Mechanisation services
- Markets
- Extension services
- Training and mentorship
- Infrastructure
- Market and economic analysis, and

Farmers will need particular support in this regard, as they will not have come through the ‘stepping stone’ process proposed in the commonage system, through which future graduating farmers will have received extensive support. Thus, although these farmers have large numbers of stock qualifying them to move off the commonage, it must be remembered that they do not have the necessary business, management, as well as technical skills to go out on their own.

25. CONCLUSION

This document proposes a management structure on which commonage users will be represented, thereby including them in commonage management issues. The establishment and effective functioning of such a structure depends on commitment from all key stakeholders, including the municipality, Departments of Agriculture, Land Affairs, and others, as well as commonage users, and other relevant role players, to become involved.

This document provides an overview of elements which need to be considered in the design of a comprehensive training and support programme for commonage users, as well as farmers graduating off the commonage to their own land acquired through LRAD. A more detailed and training programme will need to be designed by the Matjhabeng Commonage Management Committee, through a process of consultation to determine training needs as perceived by farmers in addition to the issues discussed here. Such a training programme must be seen to meet the real needs of farmers, addressing specific issues and questions as and when they become relevant to farming operations.

Extensive training and support will be required to assist the proposed community structures to carry out their responsibilities. Such responsibilities at local level revolve mainly around the dissemination of information to all commonage users, thus acting as communication channels between the commonage users and the Matjhabeng Commonage Management Committee, headed by a dedicated Commonage Manager, which will be ultimately responsible for commonage management.

This document provides further information extracted from the DLA Toolkit for Commonages, on steps to be taken in the formation of a Commonage Management Committee, as well as guidelines for the drawing up of land use management plans, which will be one of the first tasks of the MCMC once established. The Interim Exit/Graduation Strategy will aim to facilitate most expedient and efficient access of LRAD grants to obtain land for farmers who need to be moved off the commonage to make space for new subsistence and lower level emerging farmers (for whom the system is really to be designed).

An aftercare programme to support graduating farmers will need to be designed by the LCMC, with inputs from the DoA, DLA, Municipality, as well as potential external training providers, based on elements mentioned in this document, and discussed in more detail in chapter

Experience gained in the implementation of the Interim Strategy will be used to refine the Exit/Graduation Strategy to be adopted for farmers who have moved up through the system and require their own land. Monitoring the progress of farmers assisted through the Interim Strategy will provide insight into needs that need to be addressed (e.g. training/ other requirements), and the most appropriate means of addressing such needs.

List of References

The Communal Land Rights Act, Act 11 of 2004 (CLRA).

Commonage review - Dept Agric Free State Policy

Information Decision Systems cc

Hartwick J.M & Olewieler N.D, The economic of natural resources use 1997, USA

Tientenberg, T.H. (5ed) (2000) Environment and natural resources economic. Harper Collins Publishers Ine, New York