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LEAD-SIPSA programme:
an information system for pastoralism in the Sahel

In the Sahel, pastoralism is the main activity practiced for the sustainable management and use of fragile and sparse rangeland resources. This activity is, however, now hampered by new constraints:

- reduction in the size of pastoral rangelands as a result of high population growth and increasing competition for access to natural resources, and also due to the development of protected areas
- direct and indirect restriction of movements in rangelands
- modification of the economic function of pastoral systems as a result of the shift in favour of world market production and due to increased competition with other production systems to serve domestic markets
- major climatic changes and recurring drought.

Livestock farmers and political representatives require specific information to be able to cope with this situation and to draw up sustainable development strategies for pastoralism. The second phase of the LEAD-SIPSA programme (MAEE/FAO funding) in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal is to set up an information system for pastoralism in the Sahel. The programme is divided into four components: (1) Public awareness and training, (2) Networking and institutional anchoring, (3) Development and implementation of the SIPSAtechnique, and (4) Monitoring and assessment. The midterm results obtained for these components are as follows:

- setting up and consolidation of a functional dynamic network mobilizing national and international expertise on pastoralism and involved in the programme
- boosting public awareness on the programme issues, aims and deliverables
- drawing up a general charter for sharing information products derived from this programme, currently being amended and validated in each national coordination committee.
- drawing up the general SIPSA specifications, currently being finalised and tailored in each national coordination committee.
- information products used and accounted for in decision support processes concerning livestock production policies
- supervision of around 10 trainees (Master's level, engineering school).

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For further information: www.fao.org/AG/AGAINFO/projects/fr/lead/sipsa/home.html

TRANS Programme:
Livestock farming transformations and rangeland dynamics

The dynamics of change in livestock farming activities are central to the sustainable development of many grassland and pastoral regions. The vitality of these areas depends closely on herbivore farming patterns, which in turn contribute to changes in natural areas and are pivotal to environmental issues. The TRANS project (ANR 2005-2008 funding) aims to implement new ways of assessing livestock farming transformations and correlate these transformations with rangeland dynamics.

This research programme is structured along two main lines. The first involves analysis of changes on the livestock farm level, while the second correlates farming dynamics with ecological and landscape dynamics. The research combines farming season time scales, farm trajectories, agroecological dynamics, and spatial scales ranging from the field to the farming area. There are five main study areas (Amazon, Pampas, French mountains and hills, North Vietnamese mountains and the Sahelian region). These areas pool a diverse range of environments, farming dynamics and public policies that are useful for comparing methods and analysis frameworks and developing generic models and knowledge. French-speaking research teams are involved in conducting studies on livestock farming changes and rangeland dynamics.

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Ranching systems in fallow areas of the Amazon forest region

The URP (cooperative research unit) 68 team is involved in the research and coordination of both parts of this programme on the topics 'long-term change relationships' and 'support modelling'. Six training Master's level courses, a PhD thesis and a post-doctoral fellowship have been funded and supervised since 2005. The research is focused on assessing the emergence of wage earners, changes associated with pastoral resource access, long-term change relationships via family-herd relationships, livestock farming model genericity elements through comparative studies.

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