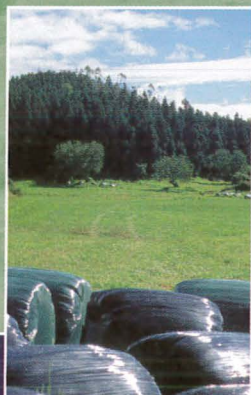


Actes du Séminaire Inra-Cirad
et
Journées préparatoires au Colloque régional

Coordonnateur : Patrice GRIMAUD



Les outils d'aide à la gestion des fourrages



13 - 17 mai 2002
Pôle Elevage du Cirad
à la Réunion

Comité organisateur : M. DURU, P. GRIMAUD, H. GUERIN,
P. LECOMTE, P. THOMAS



2002

Community based natural resource management in a degraded catchment in the Upper Thukela, South Africa

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The Okhombe community in the Upper Thukela region relies heavily on the surrounding natural resources for their daily living. Approximately 4 300 head of cattle and 2 000 small stock graze in the area. Indigenous grasses provide an income for local women through the sale of thatch and baskets. The people of Okhombe subsist from the 800 ha of crop lands and depend on the available trees for firewood and poles. Villagers rely on water from streams. A major concern of the communities in Okhombe is that some of the perennial streams in the catchment no longer flow throughout the year.

One of the main causes for the decline in natural resources is the increase in land degradation as a result of overpopulation, overgrazing, drought and a lack of technical and financial support. Situated in the foot hills of the Drakensberg, the land of Okhombe is characterized by steep slopes and high soil erosion. There is an urgent need to address the problem of soil loss and reduced water supply. An integrated resource management plan has been initiated based on land-users needs.

■ Objectives

- 1 • Enhance the capacity of local institutions in Okhombe to manage their natural resources through the establishment of a catchment committee
- 2 • Investigate and evaluate different interventions to reduce rates of land degradation :

- i) agriculture (e.g. cattle grazing camps and crop management)
- ii) physical structures (e.g. contours, terracing, gabions), and
- iii) vegetative measures (grassland management, tree planting)

- 3 • Promote the effective use of technical services to develop sustainable land management practices through developing partnerships with other organisations.

■ Research and Development

1 • *Develop a revegetation action plan*

The reclamation of degraded areas with vetiver grass is an alternative management option for reducing soil erosion and decreasing runoff. Vetiver is professed to be a good thatching and weaving grass and has the potential to provide an income for families in the area. The feasibility of establishing this species as well as other indigenous and exotic species is being investigated.

2 • *Examine ways to increase production of fuelwood and poles*

At present there is a critical shortage of wood for fuel and construction timber. Research into agroforestry systems for temperate regions is being conducted.

3 • *Examine options for cattle management*

Research into an innovative approach to rangeland management in rural areas is being conducted.