



SPOTLIGHT on AGRICULTURE

Ministry of Agriculture,
Water and Rural Development
Directorate of Agricultural Research and Training
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FARMING SYSTEMS RESEARCH and EXTENSION in the OMAHEKE, HARDAP and KARAS REGION

OBJECTIVES

Establish a multi-disciplinary team, working as an inter-disciplinary group, which can assist the farmers of these three regions to:

1. Identify hindering problems and shortcomings that do occur.
2. Find suitable and affordable solutions to these problems.
3. Find means to a better living standard and ensure household food security.
4. Go from subsistence agriculture to income generating agricultural activities, producing excess food and other products for the rest of the country.

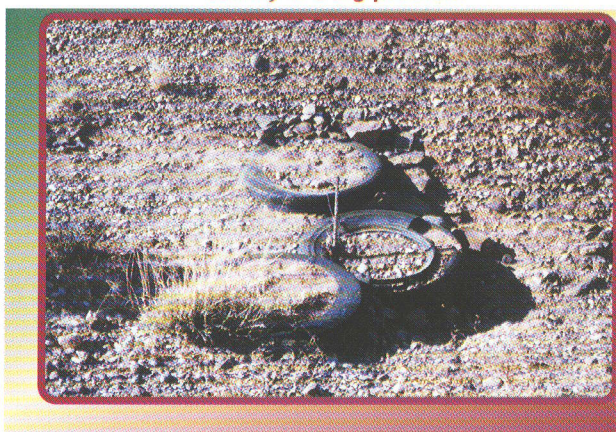
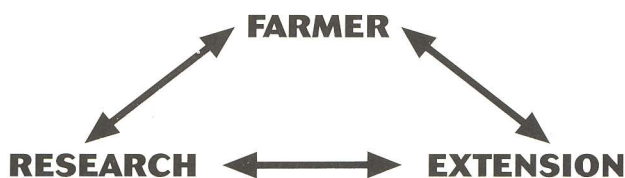
This will help the future generation to create jobs for themselves and be self-sufficient.



Salinity is a big problem

APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

All activities are based on the following diagram:



Weirs – to prevent further erosion

1. The farmer is the most important figure in all the activities.
2. Needs are identified by the farmers through continuous discussions.
3. Possible solutions are then discussed with the farmers.
4. An interdisciplinary group will then implement projects and trials, working with the farmers.
5. It is seen as a learning process for all parties involved, concentrating on indigenous knowledge as well.
6. All results and knowledge gained are distributed either through articles, the media and exposure trips.

CURRENT PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

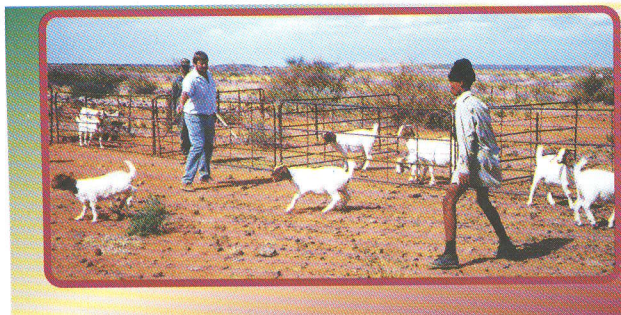
Needs are identified in the communal areas through Participatory Rural Approach (PRA) and surveys, currently working on an agri-economical survey in the South. There is a constant contact between the farmers and agricultural officials, discussing agricultural and non-agricultural issues.

HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

The age structure and the gender composition lead to nutritional and health problems in the communal areas, forcing the people to look at easier and more affordable ways to generate food for the house. Rabbits, chickens and muscovy ducks were introduced. They are easy to keep, produce good quality protein and will not compete with the already scarce resources in these areas. Gardening on a small scale is also promoted, providing fresh fruit and vegetables on a daily basis and the refuge from the gardens will provide food for the rabbits, chickens and muscovy ducks.



Mrs Böck breeds these rabbits



Assist and train farmers in selection of their quality Boer Goats

BETTER LIVING STANDARDS

In these three regions livestock production is the main source of income for the larger part of the occupants. Working with the farmers, we are looking for ways to increase animal production and market prices. Existing Boer goat and Karakul improvement projects are concentrating on improving the marketable quality of the animals and in the process training the farmers in different aspects of livestock keeping. Chicken and rabbit production on a larger scale serves to ensure extra income for the local people, e.g. providing food for the local market.

INCOME GENERATION

The bigger garden, e.g. Boikago garden, also produces for the local market and provides schools with vegetables. It also assists the farmers to sell the access products and to practice value adding, for example making jams, canned fruit and selling prepared meals at auctions. Non-agricultural activities, such as tannery, needlework and leatherwork are also a part of the daily activities.

TRAINING

- Grazing evaluation and demonstration sites are important training tools to help the farmers to conserve the pasture, especially for the drier seasons.
- Training on the management of livestock to get the optimal production from the animals in the existing production systems.
- VREC is a project concentrating on involving the people in the handling and selling of animal health medicines.



Training on rabbit farming done at a community

- The use of saline water and the production of saline resistant plants for home consumption or as fodder for livestock in collaboration with the Spanish Corporation.
- A number of training courses are presented to the farmers, using the Governmental Research farms for this purpose.
- Farmers' days are a very important date on the calendar, as it gives us the opportunity to meet with farmers on a regular basis, discussing problems and other related issues.

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