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SUSTAINABLE PASTURE MANAGEMENT CONTRIBUTES TO FOREST CONSERVATION

Problems in the field of pasture management in Gorno-Badakhshan and ways to solve them were discussed during the seminar held on May 11 in Khorog.

The workshop "Pasture Management - Reducing Pressure on Forest Resources" was organized by the NGO "Azal" within the framework of the project "Climate change adaptation through sustainable forest management in river catchments of the main rivers of Tajikistan" (CAFT).

The project is implemented by the Forestry Agency under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan with the financial support of the German Development Bank (KFW) in Ishkashim, Roshtqala, Shugnan, Rushan, Vanj districts of GBAO, as well as in Farkhor and Khovaling districts of Khatlon region. The international consultant of the project was chosen as a consortium of non-governmental organizations - Caritas, Switzerland, which is a leading partner, as well as CESVI and CAMP Tabiat. The CAFT project aims to facilitate the country's adaptation to climate change and biodiversity conservation, as well as to improve the living standards of local people in the project areas through the restoration, conservation and sustainable use of forests.

The seminar was attended by representatives of state forestry agencies (SFA), land management agencies, rural organizations and leaders of forest user groups of Ishkashim, Roshtqala and Shugnan districts. Representatives of the State Forestry Agency and the Agriculture Department of GBAO, Pamir Biological Institute, CAMP Tabiat and NGO "Azal" also participated. The main objectives of the event were to reduce the risk of conflicts in the use of forest land and pastures, to study the main approaches, concepts and experience of other projects in this field.

Sergey Nazarov, Director of NGO "Azal", made a presentation on "Basic approach to pasture management planning". According to him, pastures are used by the population wastefully, and as a consequence, their degradation is observed, natural disasters are becoming more frequent. "The natural disasters that are happening now are forcing us to change our attitude to the use of local resources, and, above all, we need to start changing ourselves," he said. According to S. Nazarov, ignorance of modern methods of pasture restoration and lack of basic skills of managing forage lands leads to a decrease in income, which depends largely on the condition of pastures. In this regard, rural residents should be interested in improving them, added Nazarov.

In the course of the seminar the participants studied the methodology of developing a pasture management plan with the participation of the population and its implementation, considered the issues of institutional development, planning of pasture use and implementation of measures to improve infrastructure, etc. In the afternoon, participants worked in groups to develop an action plan and investment plan, and to assess potential conflicts and mechanisms for their resolution. Each group then presented the results of its work and made recommendations. The working groups noted the importance of reducing the number of livestock in the region while increasing its productivity, creating pasture infrastructure, maintaining pasture turnover, etc.

According to Fakhriddin Dilshodov, a representative of Azal NGO in GBAO, 1-year and 5-years forest management plans are being drawn up within the framework of the Joint Forestry Management (JFM) approach. It is also necessary to draw up such plans for pasture management in order to promote their conservation and more rational use, he said.

"Because of the absence or lack of pastures, the population grazes their cattle in the forests, which causes great damage to the region's forestry," said Khushvakht Kosumbekov, a SFA employee at GBAO. It was noted that in villages where the JFM approach is not implemented, the forest is not distributed among the local population, so the open forest areas are used by the population as pastures. In villages where the JFM operates, forest lands are protected from livestock.

CAPT project consultant Saidakbar Rakhmatov said the country's livestock population is increasing, while the area of pastures is decreasing. "This year, the country has seen a high percentage of livestock deaths due to the lack of fodder supplies," Rakhmatov said. He noted the importance of maintaining pasture turnover, as well as growing fodder on homestead lands to increase the productivity of pastures and livestock.

The participants of the seminar came to the conclusion that it is necessary to carry out explanatory work among the population on the issues of sustainable pasture management, increase of their productivity, improvement of living conditions and feeding of livestock, etc.

Haqrizo Nurmamadov, CAMP Tabiat Collaborative Forest Management Specialist, in his presentation noted that at present, the expenditures of rural residents on animal husbandry exceed the income from it. "The reason for this is that the villagers, by increasing the number of livestock, focus on the number of livestock, not the productivity of livestock," he said. - Reducing the number of livestock will increase their productivity and reduce the burden on pastures and forests. This, in turn, will contribute to the conservation and restoration of forests, which is crucial for the adaptation of the population to climate change and mitigation of its effects.

