

# RSC Standard<sup>1</sup> v0.1 Consultation

## Pastoralist Discussion Themes

### 1. GRAZING MANAGEMENT THEME

#### What this is about

How grazing is managed across the land - where and when animals move, how decisions are made, and how people respond to changing conditions.

Rangelands are always changing. Grazing management is about working with these changes - using knowledge, experience and observation to care for the land while supporting animals and livelihoods.

#### What this might look like in practice

This can include:

- Moving animals between areas at different times of year
- Resting land to allow grass and plants to recover
- Adjusting grazing depending on rainfall, seasons, or pasture condition
- Sharing land with others and coordinating use where needed
- Using local knowledge and experience to guide decisions
- Adapting plans when conditions change (e.g. drought, harsh winters, new pressures)

Grazing does not need to follow a fixed plan - what matters is that decisions are thoughtful, responsive, and based on what is happening on the land.

#### What we'd like to understand

There are no right or wrong answers - this is about your knowledge and experience.

- How do you decide where and when animals graze?
- What signs do you look for to understand land condition?
- How do you know when land needs rest or recovery?
- What changes have you seen in the land over time?
- How do you respond in difficult seasons (e.g. drought, snow, extreme weather)?
- Do you coordinate grazing with others? If so, how?
- What works well in your system? What is challenging?

#### What good stewardship might mean here

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<sup>1</sup> The RSC Standard was previously referred to as the Global Rangelands Standard (GRS) and has been renamed to avoid confusion with other uses of the acronym.

In many places, good grazing management means:

- Land is given time to recover where needed
- Grazing patterns respond to seasons and conditions
- Decisions are based on observation and experience
- People adapt and adjust rather than follow fixed rules
- Where land is shared, there is some level of coordination

But this may look different in your context - we want to understand what it means where you are.

### **What support would help**

- What would make it easier to manage grazing well?
- Are there barriers to managing your land how you want to (e.g. access, policy, climate, conflict)?
- What knowledge, tools or support would be useful?

## **2. WATER, SOIL & BIODIVERSITY THEME**

### **What this is about**

The condition of the rangeland - soil, water, plants and wildlife - and how well these are working together over time.

This includes how soil stability is protected, how vegetation grows and recovers, how the land holds and uses water, and how wildlife and livestock share the landscape. It is about recognising change, understanding what is causing it, and responding where needed to keep the rangeland healthy.

### **What this might look like in practice**

Every place is different, but this can include:

- Noticing changes in grass, plants, and ground cover over time
- Managing grazing and movement to avoid overuse of sensitive areas
- Protecting water sources such as rivers, springs, and wetlands
- Reducing soil erosion (e.g. bare ground, gullies, dust)
- Living alongside wildlife and avoiding unnecessary disturbance
- Taking action to restore areas that are degraded where possible

The focus here is on what is happening to the rangeland ecosystem over time.

### **What we'd like to understand**

- What does healthy land look like here?
- What kinds of plants grow here? Have they changed over time?
- Are there areas where land condition is improving or getting worse? Why?
- What wildlife is present, and how do they use the land?
- Do livestock and wildlife compete for grazing or water? When and where?
- Are there conflicts with wildlife (e.g. predation)? How are these managed?
- What affects water availability and quality?
- What signs do you see of erosion or land degradation?
- What helps land recover?

### **What good stewardship might mean here**

In many places, this might include:

- Soil is stable, with limited erosion or bare ground
- Vegetation is present, diverse, and able to recover
- Water sources are functioning and not heavily degraded
- Wildlife is present and able to move across the landscape
- Livestock and wildlife coexist, with conflicts managed where possible
- People notice changes in land condition and respond over time

This may vary depending on where you are - we'd like to understand how it looks in practice for you.

### **What support would help**

- What makes it difficult to maintain healthy land?
- Are there external pressures (e.g. climate, land use change, policy)?
- What support, knowledge or resources would help?

## **3. ANIMALS & WELFARE THEME**

### **What this is about**

How livestock and working animals are cared for in daily life - how they are kept healthy, fed, handled and supported through changing conditions.

For many pastoralists, animals are central to livelihoods, affecting food, income and security. In turn, animal welfare is closely linked to the condition of the land and the availability of pasture and water. Animals depend on these resources, as well as the care and decisions of the people managing them.

### **What this might look like in practice**

Every system is different, but this can include:

- Ensuring animals have access to sufficient feed and clean water
- Monitoring animal health, condition and behaviour over time
- Preventing and managing disease, injury and parasites
- Using veterinary care and medicines where needed and available
- Handling animals in ways that reduce stress and harm
- Supporting animals through difficult periods (e.g. drought, cold, long movements)
- Managing interactions with wildlife, including:
  - Disease risks between livestock and wildlife
  - Livestock losses to wild carnivores
  - Competition between livestock and wildlife for space and food
- Making decisions about culling or slaughter in ways that minimise pain and distress

What matters is how animals are cared for within the realities of pastoral life, and how people respond when challenges arise.

### **What we'd like to understand**

- What does good animal care look like in your system?
- What are the main challenges for animal health?
- How do you monitor animal condition and wellbeing?
- What happens when animals become sick or injured?
- How do you manage feed and water in difficult seasons?
- Are there challenges with predators or wildlife? How are these managed?
- Are there disease risks between livestock and wildlife?
- What support do you rely on (e.g. vets, traditional knowledge, community support)?

### **What good stewardship might mean here**

In many places, this might include:

- Animals are generally in good condition and able to move, feed and behave normally
- Illness and injury are recognised and responded to
- Animals have access to adequate feed and water
- Handling practices reduce unnecessary stress or harm
- Animals are supported through difficult periods
- Interactions with wildlife are managed as far as possible

### **What support would help**

- What makes it difficult to care for animals well?
- Are there gaps in access to veterinary care, medicines or knowledge?
- Are there challenges linked to climate, land condition or mobility?
- What support, services or resources would make the biggest difference?

## **4. PEOPLE, RIGHTS & GOVERNANCE THEME**

### **What this is about**

How decisions are made about land and resources, who is involved, and how people's rights and responsibilities are recognised in practice.

Rangelands are often shared and used in different ways - through customary systems, community agreements, or formal rules. This theme is about how these arrangements work in reality, and whether they support fair access, coordination and long-term use of the land.

### **What this might look like in practice**

Every system is different, but this can include:

- Understanding who has the right to use land, water and grazing areas
- Recognising customary rules, seasonal agreements, or formal arrangements
- Making decisions about land use through discussion, community processes or leadership structures
- Coordinating with others where land is shared or overlapping
- Ensuring different groups (e.g. women, youth, workers) are considered in decisions
- Managing disagreements or conflicts over land and resources
- Responding to outside pressures affecting land access (e.g. infrastructure, policy, other land uses)

What matters is how these systems function in practice - how clear, fair and workable they are for the people involved.

### **What we'd like to understand**

- Who has the right to use this land and its resources? How is this understood?
- How are decisions made about grazing, movement and land use?
- Are there shared or overlapping uses of land? How are these managed?
- Are some people more involved in decisions than others? Why?
- Are there groups whose voices are less heard (e.g. women, youth, workers)?
- What happens when there are disagreements or conflicts?
- Are there external pressures affecting access to land (e.g. development, conservation, policy)?
- What helps these systems work well? What makes them difficult?

### **What good stewardship might mean here**

In many places, this might include:

- Land use is based on recognised and understood rights (customary, shared or formal)
- People affected by decisions have a chance to be involved
- Shared land is used in a coordinated way to avoid conflict where possible
- There are ways to raise and resolve disagreements
- Different perspectives are considered in decision-making
- External pressures are recognised and, where possible, responded to

### **What support would help**

- What makes it difficult to manage land access and decision-making fairly?
- Are there challenges with unclear or changing rights?
- Are there conflicts that are hard to resolve?
- Are there external pressures affecting land access or mobility?
- What support, processes or recognition would help strengthen these systems?

## **5. LIVELIHOODS & CHANGE THEME**

### **What this is about**

How people make a living from rangelands, the risks they face, and how they adapt to change over time.

Pastoral livelihoods are shaped by many factors - weather, markets, land condition, policies and social changes. This theme is about how people manage these uncertainties, what helps them cope, and what supports long-term resilience.

### **What this might look like in practice**

This may include:

- Relying on livestock and rangelands as the main source of income or food
- Combining different livelihood activities where possible (e.g. livestock, trade, other work)
- Adjusting herd size, movement or practices in response to conditions
- Preparing for and responding to risks such as drought, harsh winters, disease or market changes
- Using local knowledge, experience and external information (e.g. forecasts) to make decisions
- Supporting each other through community networks or shared strategies

- Finding ways to maintain livelihoods without damaging the land or resources

What matters is how people continue, adapt and make decisions in the face of change.

### **What we'd like to understand**

- What are your main sources of livelihood or income?
- What are the biggest risks you face (e.g. climate, markets, policy)?
- How do you prepare for or respond to difficult periods?
- What changes have affected your livelihood over time?
- What strategies help you cope or adapt?
- Are there opportunities to diversify or strengthen livelihoods?
- Are some people more affected by risks than others? Why?
- What makes it easier or harder to continue your way of life?

### **What good stewardship might mean here**

In many places, this might include:

- Livelihoods are able to continue over time despite challenges
- People are aware of risks and able to respond to them
- Decisions balance short-term needs with long-term sustainability
- Livelihood strategies do not undermine the health of the land
- People are able to adapt to change while maintaining their way of life
- Different groups are able to access support where needed

### **What support would help**

- What makes it difficult to sustain your livelihood?
- Are there barriers to adapting to change (e.g. access to markets, services, land)?
- What support systems are missing or insufficient?
- What kinds of investment, services or policies would help most?