



Secretariat of the Committee on Agriculture
(COAG) of the Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy

25.09.2020

**Subject: Support to the request from the Government of Mongolia
for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The German Association of Professional Shepherds (*Bundesverband Berufsschäfer e.V.*) presents its sincere greetings to you and your office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. We are an association of shepherds who mostly practise mobile herding. We write to express our support of the request of the Government of Mongolia for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Rangelands are diverse habitats, harbouring a multitude of plants and animals, among them many threatened species, and microorganisms. Large parts of these areas have been created through animal grazing. They provide good water filtration and are a major store of carbon. Through our extensive herding and mobile grazing, we contribute to rangeland conservation – a decisive contribution in view of the high rate of species loss that Germany is currently experiencing.

We produce high-quality food with few feed concentrates, veterinary products or pesticides; we conserve local and adapted domestic animal breeds; we preserve attractive landscapes for tourism and local recreation; we help prevent erosion, avalanches in mountains, and the breaking of dykes; and we help fertilize fruit and many other crops and preserve the habitats of their pollinators.

Unfortunately, the income we earn from our tireless efforts is often not enough to support our families. Many of us find it difficult to find successors for our farms in the face of the poor economic prospects in our profession. We face growing bureaucracy, rising land rents, and other problems. With every farm or flock that is given up, a piece of our

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knowledge and experience is lost. With it disappears an important contribution to preserving Germany's permanent grasslands and their high natural value.

Exchanges with herders from other countries and regions have shown us that they too preserve valuable landscapes. They too have to contend with the similar kinds of problems to us.

We believe that global measures to preserve rangelands and traditional herding practices are urgently needed. The proclamation of an 'International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists' would provide an opportunity to inform policymakers and the public about the functions of rangelands and about our work. It would help draw attention to the importance of the rangelands to all of us. Such a Year could increase support for rangelands and pastoralists at the national and global level.

Please accept our support to the request of the Government of Mongolia for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Yours sincerely,



Günther Czerkus
Chair, Bundesverband Berufsschäfer e.V.
German Association of Professional Shepherds