



中国草学会  
Chinese Grassland Society

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Minister for Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia

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Dear Minister

I am writing to confirm that the Chinese Grassland Society (CGS) is a strong supporter of the proposed International Year of Grasslands and Pastoralists (IYRP) and is committed to support the IYRP with events in China.

### *The Chinese Grassland Society*

The Chinese Grassland Society (<https://www.chinagrass.org.cn/>) was established in 1979 with the principal objectives being:

- to promote the advancement of the science and art of using China's grassland resources for all purposes commensurate with their continued productivity and stability;
- to encourage and reward the study of grassland science and improved grassland management;
- to provide a means for the interchange of ideas and information amongst Society members and with those of allied disciplines concerned with grasslands; and
- to hold periodical meetings of Society members in different parts of China.

In 2020, the Chinese Grassland Society (CGS) has about 5,300 members, including land managers, scientists, policymakers and extension personnel. The Society is governed by a Council of 15 persons, with several appointments assisting in the work of the Society.

### *The Chinese grasslands*

China has  $4 \times 10^8$  hm<sup>2</sup> of grassland, accounting for 41.7% of the total land area, the second largest in the world after Australia. The grasslands are sparsely populated, with just about 30 million people

resident in the regions in 2019, representing 2.2% of China's total population of about 1395 million. A relatively high percentage of the rangeland population are Mongolians and Tibetans.

Although there is variation in the data from different sources, pastoralism – grazing animals on native vegetation based on family farming on long-term 'pastoral leases' – is the dominant land-use model in northern and western parts of China, where about 40 million cattle and 140 million sheep graze.

The grasslands face challenges such as climate change, land degradation, a declining population in some areas, lack of good electronic connectivity, and occasional disasters caused by floods, droughts and fires. On the positive side, the Government supports herders greatly through ecological compensation and projects. Furthermore, the quality of Chinese biophysical and socio-economic research and development in the grasslands is high, which benefits both herders and policymakers.

### ***How the Chinese Grassland Society will support the IYRP***

The CGS produces six journals: *ACTA AGRESTIA SINICA*, *Grassland of China*, *Chinese Journal of Grassland*, *ACTA PRATACULTURAE SINICA*, *Grassland and Turf*, and *Pratacultural Science*. These journals cover the topics of grassland environmental, ecology, management, production, breeding, feed processing, biotechnology, seed, machinery, diseases, insect pests, socio-economics, policy, culture, and energy grasses.

Since the Society commenced, 40 well-attended Annual Conferences have been held in rangeland centres around China, and the CGS led in the organisation of the joint XXI<sup>th</sup> International Grassland Congress and VIII<sup>th</sup> International Rangeland Congress in China in 2008. The CGS is also the initiator of the "China–Japan–Korea" Grassland Conference and holds this event every three years. The CGS maintains a website, which carries material relevant to the grasslands, and social media including WeChat.

The CGS will be able to boost the IYRP by highlighting the Year through its publications and Annual Conference and will provide tangible support and seek sponsorship funds from within China specifically for this purpose.

Each year, one issue of *ACTA AGRESTIA SINICA* and *Grassland of China*, respectively, is termed a 'special issue' with a focus on a particular topic or theme. These special issues are very popular, cite well and are funded externally. The CGS will commit to a special issue celebrating the IYRP, with papers commissioned or contributed that enhance the profile of the grasslands and the people that live and work in them. Funding will be sought from partner organisations for this issue and the CGS will arrange for all papers in the issue to be Open Access.

Articles promoting, and relevant to, the IYRP will be published in the other journals, as a way of building interest in and support for the Year amongst stakeholders. These items will include material relevant to China, but also to grasslands in other parts of the world.

Our Annual Conferences are developed and delivered around a theme, and the CGS will hold an Annual Conference with the theme of 'The International Year of Grasslands and Pastoralists' with the

conference timing aligned with other activities around the world. The sessions for the conference will highlight the importance of the Chinese grasslands and their attributes in a national and international context, the achievements in rangeland management and the challenges facing pastoralists in managing the grasslands in an increasingly uncertain climatic and socio-economic environment. The conference and the IYRP theme will be promoted widely amongst stakeholders. Typically, an Annual Conference attracts about RMB 1–2 million in sponsorship, and the added profile of the IYRP is likely to increase that amount.

The other activities that the CGS will organise will be a series of seminars in major population centres promoting the IYRP, with the objective of encouraging public and private stakeholders to increase their investment in grasslands research, development and advisory services, and increased awareness of rangeland issues. Key targets for involvement will include universities, research, and local and regional herders' cooperatives, development corporations and private conservation bodies.

The border between China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and the country of Mongolia is more than 3,100 kilometres long. People of both sides of the border share the same language, culture and living habits. The CGS plans to secure budgets to support joint activities with Mongolian partners to celebrate the IYRP in Inner Mongolia, China, on the border areas of both sides, so as to enhance the communication, understanding and friendship between herders, scholars and policymakers of both sides, and make the IYRP more meaningful.

In summary, the Chinese Grassland Society is firmly committed to the proposed International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists and will align its activities and the resources available to the Year to building support for related activities and the profile of the world's grasslands and the people who rely upon them.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized Chinese characters. The characters appear to be '何新天' (He Xintian).

Mr. He Xintian, President  
Chinese Grassland Society