

Contract number: ICA4-2000-10229

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC UTILISATION OF WILD SOUTH AMERICAN CAMELIDS: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING RURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN PASTORAL COMMUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA



Period: November 1, 2001 – October 31, 2005

Co-ordinator: MACAULAY LAND USE RESEARCH INSTITUTE, Aberdeen, UK. (MLURI)

Context and objectives

The research aims to increase the productive base of pastoral communities in the high mountain and steppe ecosystems in Latin America while maintaining the interests of conservation and animal welfare of wild camelids. The work will provide essential tools for monitoring key ecological variables for the sustainable management of vegetation resources and develop high-welfare systems for management and handling vicuña and guanaco leading to the production of high quality textile fibre. The project aims:

- To develop guidelines for best practice in systems for sustainable economic utilisation of wild South American camelids in Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina for the production of high quality textile fibre.
- To disseminate this information to producers, the European textile industry, rural communities, and regional policy makers through publications and by establishing a network of researchers and experts

Activities

The work will provide essential tools for monitoring key ecological variables for the sustainable management of vegetation resources and develop high-welfare systems for management and handling vicuña and guanaco leading to the production of high quality textile fibre. There work concentrates on five distinct, but interdependent areas:

- Utilisation systems – produce management guidelines for health, welfare and product quality
- Economics and socio-cultural impacts – test viability of management and policy options
- Environmental impacts – assess effects on local and large scale population ecology
- Biodiversity conservation – develop management strategies for conservation genetics
- Networking and dissemination – environmental education, training/capacitation, publications.

Expected results and outcome

The project will provide a scientific basis for the development of sustainable systems for exploitation of wild camelids. This will assist in the development of local scale management systems, as well as regional scale policies. Outcomes will be in the form of:

- Codes of good practice for sustainable exploitation of wild camelids
- Refereed papers and conference presentations
- Regular information bulletins and a web site (<http://www.macs.puc.cl/>)
- Training workshops for campesinos and extension workers
- A conference and a book on sustainable use of the wild South American camelids
- Training courses for teachers in environmental education.