

## **Book review**

### **Forage Production in Drylands of Arid and Semi-arid Regions**

Edited by N.K. SHARMA, R.P. SINGH, M.S. YADAV and K.C. SINGH. Published by Scientific Publishers (India), Jodhpur, April 1999. 152 pages. Price Rs. 475; US\$30. ISBN 81 7233 218 1. (hard-cover).

This book focuses on grassland production of the arid and semi-arid regions of India including states such as Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka. These areas occupy a total of 40% of the land area of the subcontinent and are therefore a very important physical and economic resource.

Much of the information in the book is based on research undertaken by the authors and their colleagues at the Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur, the Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute, Jhansi and the Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture, Hyderabad.

The authors describe in detail the current management systems operating in these dry grassland areas and indicate they are largely used for communal grazing which has often resulted in severe degradation. They offer several management solutions to this problem which could be

implemented without major change to traditional practices.

Detailed descriptions are provided for a range of grasses, legumes, shrubs and trees, both native and exotic, which are adapted to conditions in these areas and can be integrated into the management systems to help achieve sustainable productivity.

Much of the emphasis of the book concerns the management of silvo-pastoral systems where trees and shrubs occur naturally or are incorporated into grasslands. The woody species provide fodder and fuel wood and help ensure landscape stability by acting as a buffer in times of environmental stress.

Other sections of the book deal with nursery techniques for shrub and tree species, cultivated fodder crops, seed production of pasture species and forage conservation. The book is specifically targeted at extension workers, researchers, foresters, development personnel and farmers working in these regions in India but would be of interest to others who are involved in arid zone grasslands and their management.

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