
Biodiversity Scenario of Pakistan & Environmental Issues of Livestock Production

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Abstract

Biodiversity quantify that the total number of species able to interbreed freely under natural conditions on earth are thought to range from 2 to 100 million, though less than 1.5 million have actually been described. Biodiversity in nature provides free of charge services worth hundreds of billions of dollars for mankind every year that are crucial to our well-being. These services include clean water, pure air, pollination, soil formation and protection, crop pest control, and the provision of foods, fuel, fibres and drugs. These services are not widely recognized by us nor valued in economic and social terms since long. Pakistan with its unique geological history, broad latitudinal spread and immense altitudinal range spans a remarkable number of the world's broad ecological regions. It spans the coastal mangrove forests of the Arabian Sea to the spectacular mountain tops where the western Himalayas, Hindu Kush and Karakoram ranges meet. So Latest statement, April 2014 from the Biodiversity Action Plan of Pakistan reads, "Persistent overgrazing has reduced forage production in Pakistan's rangelands to 1/3 and in some areas to as low as 15% of its potential". Principal cause has been quoted deforestation for fuel wood & timber for household firewood. Next major cause stated to be the rapidly increasing livestock population of Pakistan. Cattle population has doubled in Pakistan between 1945 & 2013 while buffalo, sheep & goat population has more than tripled in the same period. BAP further adds "the loss of forest habitat has had a severe impact on Pakistan's biodiversity and has serious implications for the nation's other natural and agro-ecosystems". Similarly Indus River Delta wetlands, declared as an internationally protected site in 1971, has lost 1000 Sq.Km. since 1960. Livestock production may have a bigger impact on the planet than anything else. A report from FAO estimates that livestock are responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, a bigger share than that of transport. Some 40% of the world's land surface is used by 7 billion of us & vast majority of that land - about 30% of the world's total ice-free surface - is used to support the livestock, chickens, pigs and cattle that we eventually eat. End.

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