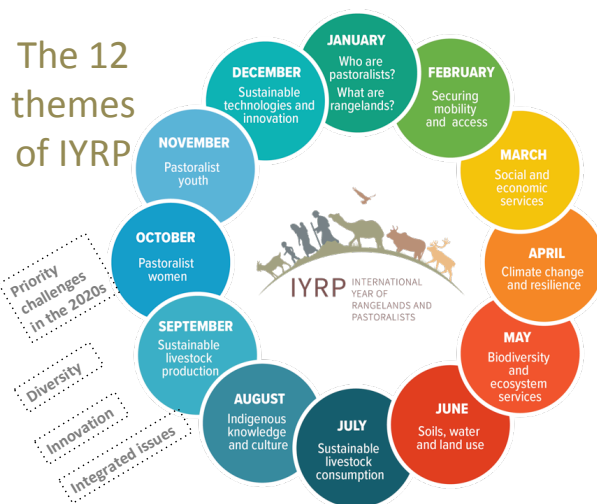


Graphic description of 12 Global Themes for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026

In 2017, the IYRP International Support Group adopted 12 global themes for the IYRP. The objective was to help achieve, during the IYRP, the best possible world-wide awareness and recognition of the value and contributions of rangelands and pastoralists to global society, with the hope that this would influence and launch beneficial country policies, legislation, programs and development and research initiatives that would fill knowledge gaps and achieve sustainability of rangelands and pastoral systems.

The choice of 12 themes follows four key principles: They are **priority challenges in the 2020s**, and they reflect **diversity, innovation, and balance between social, economic, environmental and governance issues**.

These themes drew from the many global declarations and statements recorded by pastoralist gatherings and organizations, United Nations meetings, and research reports that called for greater attention to rangelands and pastoralism. We were inspired by the successful International Year of Soils, which had adopted one theme for each month of the Year. The 12 monthly IYRP themes have been mapped as best as possible to official international days. Given the diversity of rangeland and pastoral systems around the world, we recognize that each region or country will interpret the theme in its own way.



IYRP Theme 1 : Increasing societal awareness of importance of rangelands and pastoralists



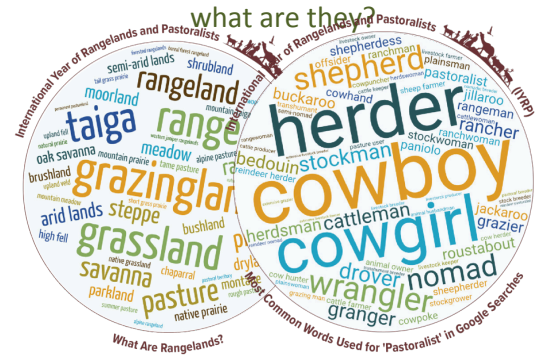
Under the first theme, by way of introducing the Year, we hope to move from persistent **myths to reality**. We need to turn the table on perceptions that pastoralism is an archaic form of production but instead show that it is a sustainable solution for the future.

Under this theme, we will also raise awareness and knowledge on some **basic facts**, for example, that more than half of the world's land surface is actually used as rangeland, as reported by the Rangeland Atlas in 2021.

But it is vital that we are all on the same page when it comes to understanding what are rangelands and who are pastoralists. This is because they have many different names in different parts of the world. For example, the terms grazingland and grassland are used instead of rangeland in much of Asia. Ranchers, graziers, shepherds, transhumants and nomads are all the different livelihoods associated with pastoralism.

It is important that we create a common understanding of these two terms. There is a need to harmonize definitions and build a multi-lingual lexicon of terms that is showcased in 2026. In this way, we can effectively raise the voice of pastoralists worldwide and show the importance of sustainable rangelands to all societies.

Rangelands and pastoralists:



IYRP Theme 2: Securing rights to land and balanced development



In developing countries, the focus of the theme on securing rights to land and development will likely be on **land tenure, common property** management, and land-use systems that support **mobility** of livestock and in some cases transboundary transhumance. In developed countries, the focus might be on managing **portfolios of public and private lands** and securing the **social license** to operate, in other words, acceptance by society at large. Pastoralists may want to advocate for land reform and call for the end of rangeland expropriation. Pastoralists from all countries share a common concern about **balanced development** and not being left behind, for example, whether it is due to unbalanced subsidies, or insufficient capacity building.

IYRP Theme 3: Access to services and resources



Under the theme of access to services and resources, the focus is on what it takes to have a successful enterprise and livelihood system. Creating the technical and social infrastructure is a common issue in all regions. The main topic might be **mobile health and veterinary services** in some countries, while in others, it could be access to **micro-credit and capital, to communications** and the internet, or to **legal and political representation**. Yet others might focus on **reforming the education system** to better support pastoralists.

We are facing a global crisis that manifests itself differently among pastoralists in different regions. The focus of the Theme 4 could be on the need for better methodologies and metrics to calculate **greenhouse gases from rangelands**. It could be about turning **variability into an asset**, where pastoralists could showcase strategies that build on traditional **resilience** and mitigate the effects of climate change, whether it is tackling more **droughts** or more **floods** or more severe **winters**. Successful examples of rangeland restoration for carbon sequestration can be showcased. Another topic could be the impact of **large-scale renewable energy schemes** on rangelands and benefit-sharing with pastoralists.

IYRP Theme 4: Climate Change and Resilience



IYRP Theme 5: Biodiversity and ecosystem services

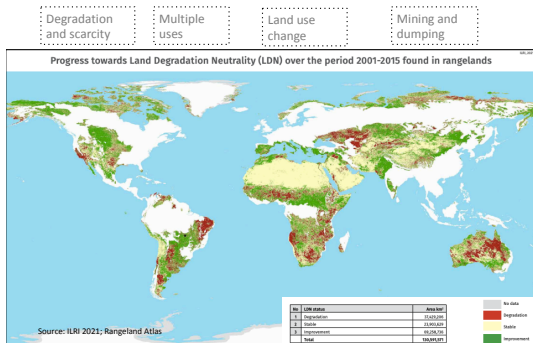


Source: M. Niamir-Fuller; Nairobi National Park

Not everyone is convinced that sustainable pastoralism and wildlife are compatible, or that sustainably used rangelands benefit ecosystem services, but this theme can focus attention on these issues. **Indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights** might be a focus in many countries. Some countries might wish to focus on **co-management of conservation areas**, while others might focus on **sustainable extractive enterprises** carried out by pastoralists such as harvesting gum arabic or wild rice. Mobility of livestock through transhumance as a determinant of **landscape connectivity** for biodiversity might be another topic. **Wildlife tourism and conservancies** on rangelands,

control of **alien invasive species**, and **genetic diversity of livestock** are among the diverse topics that could be covered under this theme.

IYRP Theme 6: Land, water and soils



Source: ILRI 2021; Rangeland Atlas

Under the theme of land, water and soils, we hope to achieve a deeper understanding of the **root causes of land and water degradation**. Restoration and rehabilitation successes can be highlighted, as can pastoralists' role in achieving **land degradation neutrality**. In some parts of the world, **water scarcity** is already a crisis issue. Some pastoralists might focus on **mining and dumping of waste** on rangelands, or campaign to stop labelling rangelands as "wastelands". Multiple uses of rangelands might be another focus of attention.

Of all the themes, the one on sustainable consumption shows the largest difference across the world. In some parts of the world, the poor lack access to protein-rich foods whereas, in other parts of the world the rate of obesity is high. Both of these are signs of **malnutrition**. Even in the same countries but in different societies, one finds both kinds. Public perception of **animal protein** has undergone a dramatic turn to the negative in many developed countries. On the other hand, nutritionists and several UN Agencies have shown the value of animal-based protein for reducing malnutrition. This theme offers the opportunity for a more transparent and balanced discussion on the subject of consumption of animal protein, including issues such as **animal welfare**. In some countries, there could also be a focus on better understanding **novelty foods**, such as camel milk and its role in helping diabetics, or the illegal trade in donkeys. The COVID pandemic has also generated many **myths about livestock** that could be countered.

Theme 7 : Sustainable consumption of livestock products



Source: Tom Martin, VSF Swiss; www.iyrp.org

In some countries, there could also be a focus on better understanding **novelty foods**, such as camel milk and its role in helping diabetics, or the illegal trade in donkeys. The COVID pandemic has also generated many **myths about livestock** that could be countered.

Theme 8: Pastoralist and indigenous knowledge, innovation and culture



Source: T. Tillman & A. Sabas, ITLA; www.iyrp.org

- Local knowledge and worldviews
- Cultural diversity and heritage
- Rights of indigenous peoples
- Languages, folklore, art and music
- Innovation

This theme would cover the value of **local knowledge and worldviews**, celebrate **cultural diversity** and focus on the conservation of **cultural heritage**. In some countries, it might prioritize the **rights of indigenous peoples**: elsewhere it might showcase the different pastoral **languages, folklore, art and music**. Pastoral communities may wish to highlight how traditional knowledge is retained or adapted to new circumstances. Some countries might use existing festivals (e.g. rodeos in the USA).

Sustainable livestock production is about making pastoral operations more **environmentally sound**. Some countries might wish to focus on **chemical-free** innovations in production and processing of products. **Integration of pastoral and farm production** might be the focus of other countries. Challenges of maintaining **mobility of livestock** in a context of rapid land-use change and fragmentation of rangelands might be a topic for some. A common issue across the world will likely be how to break down the barriers for the **marketing** of nature-based pastoral products, including such tools as **certification standards and labelling of geographical origin**.

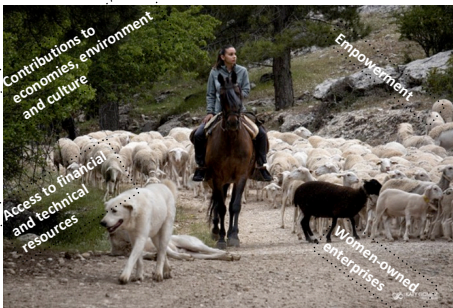
Theme 9 : Sustainable production



Source: Kia Krarup Hansen; www.iyrp.org

- Chemical-free production
- Fragmentation of extensive rangelands
- Market barriers
- Certification of nature-based products
- Integrate farming and pastoralism

Theme 10: Pastoralist women



Source: Katy Gomez Catalina; www.iyrp.org

- Contributions to economies, environment and culture
- Empowerment
- Access to financial and technical resources
- Women-owned enterprises

A better understanding of pastoral women's **contributions to economies, environment and culture** is the main topic of this theme, especially important for raising pastoral women's voices and visions for pastoralism. The focus could be on **empowerment** of pastoral women in their local communities or in national politics. Other issues could be pastoral women-owned **enterprises**, and better access to technical and financial resources leading to greater autonomy.

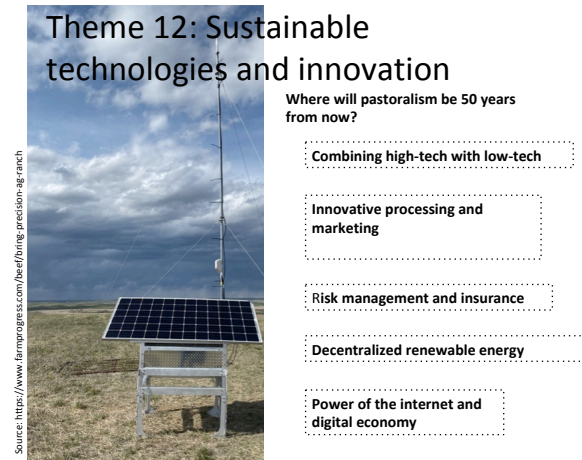
The future of pastoralism rests on its youth, and this theme provides the framework for a discussion of their needs, **perspectives and empowerment**. **Vocational training** for pastoral youth may be a topic in some countries, while others might go further and focus on the **professionalization of herders**. Examples where youth

Theme 11: Pastoralist youth



- Perspectives and voice
 - Vocational training
 - Alternative income opportunities
 - Professionalization of herders
- Kyrgyz pastoralists support the "INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS".
Let's preserve our pasture for future generations!
- Kyrgyz Youth

are returning to their rangelands, or entering pastoralism for the first time as in Europe, might be highlighted in some countries, while others might want to show how the youth are merging traditions with new technologies.



The final theme of IYRP would draw together all the previous ones, into a futuristic outlook. **Ask yourselves: where will pastoralism be 50 years from now?** It would showcase the many innovative and sustainable solutions that exist today and make the point that pastoralism is not only here to stay, but able to adapt and progress. Some countries might showcase how pastoralists **combine high-tech with low-tech**, or how the **internet** has helped shape things that make pastoralist lives easier, more profitable, and more sustainable, such as mobile money. Some countries may wish to focus on innovative **processing and marketing**, or **risk management and insurance**,

while others might focus on how **decentralized energy** access through renewables can unleash more innovation.

The IYRP is important for raising awareness of the public, the scientist, and the policy maker. But it is important for pastoralists too. The IYRP will allow their voices to be heard on the global and national stage, and get a better understand of the global diversity of pastoral systems, innovations and home-grown solutions from around the world.

The IYRP hopes to raise awareness, but it also hopes to stimulate much better understanding and knowledge of rangelands and pastoralism worldwide. Already much has been achieved in the past 5 years or so, as the support to the IYRP from 300+ organizations attest. Research and development work has also expanded. We hope that the few years remaining before 2026 will continue to set the stage for launching many more initiatives during and after 2026.

Prepared by M. Niamir-Fuller, J. O'Rourke, A. Waters-Bayer, B. Hutchinson, D. Kelly and L. Coppock for the IYRP International Support Group, February 2022.

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