



International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP 2026): information for pastoralist organisations

What is the IYRP?

In August 2019, the Government of Mongolia – a traditionally pastoralist country – proposed that the United Nations (UN) declare an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). The IYRP Global Alliance supported this proposal and played a central role in advocating for the successful adoption of the United Nations General Assembly resolution proclaiming 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. In July 2025, FAO established the IYRP Steering Committee.

The IYRP Global Alliance has grown over the years to be a coalition of over 380 organisations - pastoralist associations, civil society, research/academic institutions, UN agencies and other supporting institutions. It works to raise global awareness and support for sustainable pastoralism and healthy rangelands.

Why was an IYRP proposed?

In its proposal, the Government of Mongolia stated that over half of the Earth's land surface is rangeland: areas where the vegetation is made up of natural grasses and shrubs that are grazed by livestock and wildlife. The productivity and environmental health of rangelands are critical for the livelihoods and cultures of more than 500 million pastoralists (see explanatory box "To make things clear"). Billions more non-pastoralists benefit from these areas through animal products, tourism, wildlife and biodiversity conservation, renewable energy and other uses and services.

The Government of Mongolia and the IYRP Global Alliance want an IYRP to be celebrated so that more people in the world – especially policymakers – recognise the great value of rangelands and pastoralists and gain a better understanding of how these contribute to the economy, environment, society and culture at national and global level. An IYRP could raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities of life in the rangelands, including the need for access to health and education services, access to production inputs and markets, security of land-use rights, conflict resolution and investment in improving the rangelands. The IYRP could call attention to the need for better policies in and between countries worldwide to favour pastoral production systems.

Who is and can be involved in the IYRP?

The IYRP Global Alliance has formed Regional IYRP Support Groups to plan and implement activities in the time leading up to the IYRP and during the IYRP. Any organisations wanting to actively promote pastoralists and rangelands in their region are welcome to join the Global Alliance and relevant regional group. Pastoralist and pastoralist support organisations are particularly welcome so that they can play a key role in shaping the IYRP.

To make things clear

"Pastoralists" are people who – as their primary source of living – raise livestock, wild or semi-domesticated animals on plants that grow naturally, often called rangelands or grazing lands.

A *"pastoralist organisation"* is a group of pastoralists who act together to improve the lives of the members, for example, by facilitating their access to information and markets and by advocating for pastoralists' rights. The organisation may be registered (formal) or not (informal).

A *"pastoralist support organisation"* is a nongovernmental or governmental group of people who support pastoralists in their development and advocacy, but most of them do not practise pastoralism themselves.

Why is an IYRP important for pastoralists?

- It could increase respect for the achievements of pastoralists around the world in producing food and other products in harsh and challenging environments such as dry, mountainous and remote areas.
- It could strengthen pastoralist organisations and networks (local, national and international) and make them more visible by providing a global platform i) to advocate for their rights to development programmes and laws that meet their needs and ii) to exchange their knowledge and good practices.
- It could showcase pastoralists' pride in their work and culture, also among young people, and reinforce their traditions and diversity, thus supporting their quest for greater recognition of their way of life.
- By making pastoralists more widely known and valued, it could enhance opportunities for them – including women and youth – to generate additional income through new products and markets and expand efforts to set up appropriate services for animal and human healthcare and education, especially for mobile and remote pastoralist families.
- It could give the impetus and means for pastoralists and scientists to carry out joint research to generate good data about the situation of pastoralists and rangelands. This information would be useful for pastoralists in managing land and water and in lobbying for their rights.
- It could improve collaboration between pastoralists and scientists to help pastoralists innovate and adapt to change so that their wellbeing is ensured.
- It could help integrate pastoralists' concerns into national and regional planning and stimulate development of better policies that allow pastoralists to make the best possible use of the rangelands and other areas on a seasonal basis by moving their livestock and peacefully negotiating access to grazing and water and to secure livestock routes. This could help reduce conflicts with cropping, national parks, wildlife preserves, privatised grazing areas, tourism and companies e.g. for mining, oil extraction or alternative energy sources.

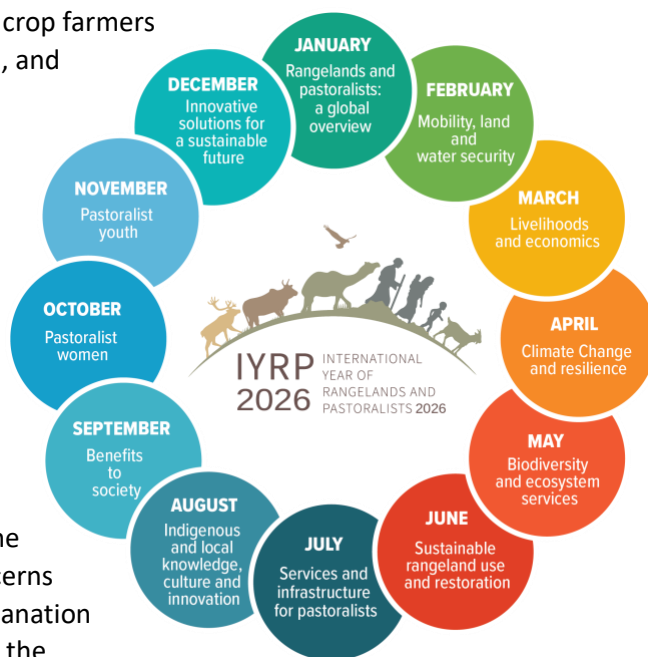
What is happening when?

The IYRP Global Alliance has an “online booth” (www.iyrp.info) to show what the members of the Alliance are doing, and to give voice to pastoralists worldwide. The website includes short video films and photos of pastoralists and rangelands, plus the logos of organisations that support the IYRP 2026.

The Global Alliance has had many achievements already. At the global level, members of the Alliance have raised awareness at global environmental conventions and other global and regional events resulting in more attention being paid to pastoralists and rangelands. New policies and programmes are needed because pastoralists and rangelands are very different from crop farmers and arable land. A global Rangelands Atlas has been created, and information about the diversity of rangelands has been disseminated. Eleven Regional IYRP Support Groups are actively engaging stakeholders in their regions.

Pastoralist organisations and support organisations have increased their activities in countries and in regions, including new projects, meetings, films and exhibitions. There is now an online global map of pastoralist communities that is constantly being updated as new ones join ([Global pastoralist map/ League for Pastoral Peoples](#)).

Several multistakeholder IYRP Working Groups have helped the Global Alliance to develop [12 global monthly themes](#), one for each month of 2026 to help communicate the main concerns of pastoralists to the world. These themes start with an explanation of who pastoralists are and what rangelands are and then cover the economic, social, environmental and governance challenges and opportunities. There is a month devoted to pastoralist women, and another for pastoralist youth. The last month of 2026 is dedicated to innovation



and the future of pastoralism and rangelands. These issues will be highlighted in every month through the Internet and at conferences and gatherings. Pastoralist organisations can participate by showcasing their concerns and best practices.

Pastoralist organisations and pastoralist representatives will take centre stage in activities to mark the IYRP. There are several regional gatherings of pastoralists planned in 2025 and 2026, during which pastoralists will discuss their main concerns and select representatives to go to the Global Pastoralist Gathering (GPG) being planned for mid-August 2026 in Mongolia. The decisions made at the GPG will then be put in front of government and civil society representatives gathered for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) Conference of Parties in Mongolia the following week.

The Global Action Plan of the IYRP Global Alliance highlights examples of other activities that are being planned for IYRP 2026:

- National-level events, including municipal declarations of support, showcasing sustainable pastoral systems, awards and prizes, innovation fairs, video documentaries and educational materials
- Social media campaign and video films to raise awareness of producers, consumers and policy-makers worldwide, including a video of herders worldwide playing football in time for FIFA 2026
- Joint research by pastoralists and scientists to fill in gaps in documented knowledge and information about pastoralists and rangelands at national, regional and global levels

The IYRP Global Alliance invites all pastoralist organisations and supporting organisations to join this important campaign. Please contact the Global Alliance Co-Chairs - Igshaan Samuels, Enrique Michaud and Burmaa Dashbal - at: iyrp@iyrp.info

For more information, please see:

<https://www.iyrp.info>

