

# Animal of the month



Each month, we will showcase one or more animal species.

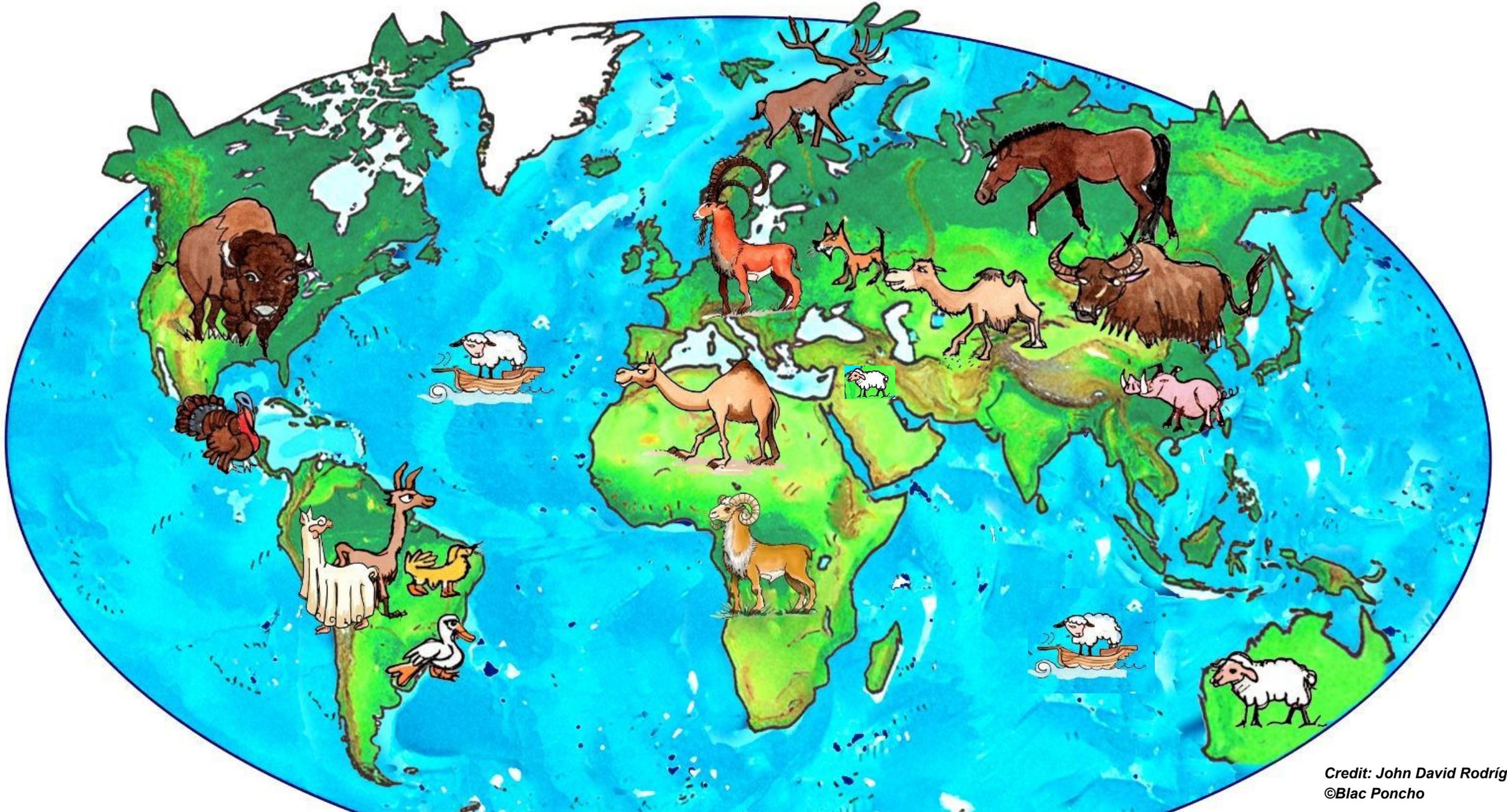
The importance of the relationship between humans and animals will be highlighted during the Year to showcase the diversity of animals raised and valued by pastoralists, and their sociocultural and ecological links.

During the year we will learn that:

- 1) domestication was good for humanity, and it creates a bond between animals and people based on mutual care developed over millennia;
- 2) pastoralists continue to domesticate animals through traditional breeding practices and have learnt to co-exist with wildlife;
- 3) animals and people have co-evolved with the environment, learning from each other and shaping integral ecosystems.

Month and IYRP theme	Animal
January (diversity)	Celebrate animal diversity
February (mobility, land, water)	Water buffalo
March (economics)	Cattle
April (climate change)	Yak
May (biodiversity)	Wildlife interactions
June (land restoration)	Sheep and goats
July (services and infrastructure)	Reindeer and caribou
August (Indigenous, local knowledge and culture)	Camelids
September (Benefits to society)	Herding dogs and companion animals
October (Women)	Horses and other equines
November (Youth)	Bison, vicuña, wild camel
December (Innovation, future)	Unique systems (herding pigs and ducks)

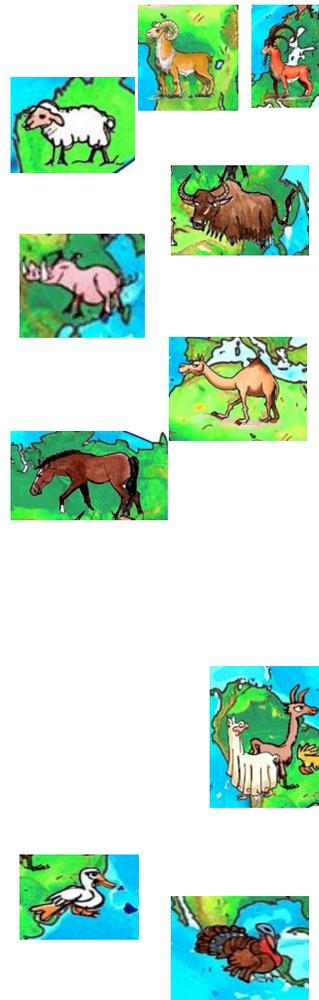
# Where did domestication happen? About domestic animals' centres of origin



# Centres of domestic animals' origin and domestication

There is not only one place and one specific moment for animal domestication; it was a process that occurred - sometimes in parallel - in different areas/regions and over a very long time.

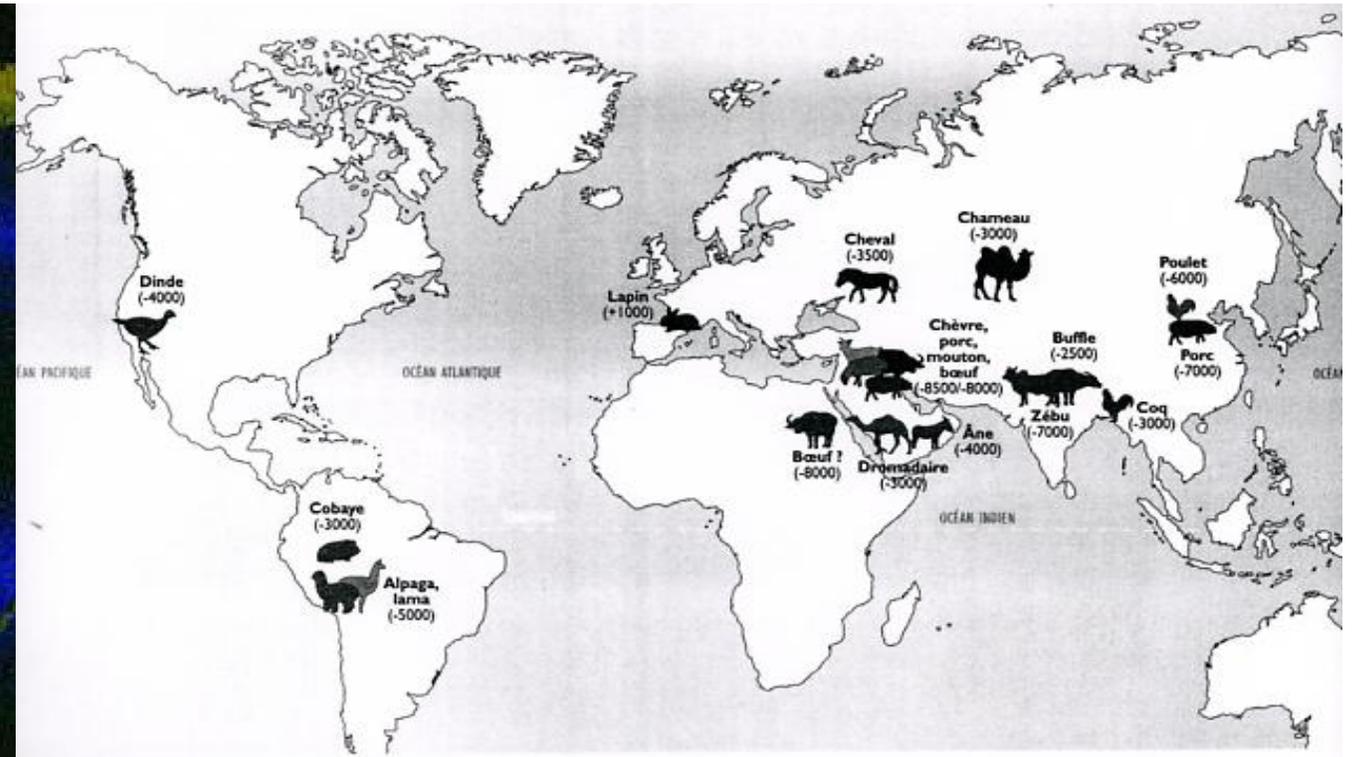
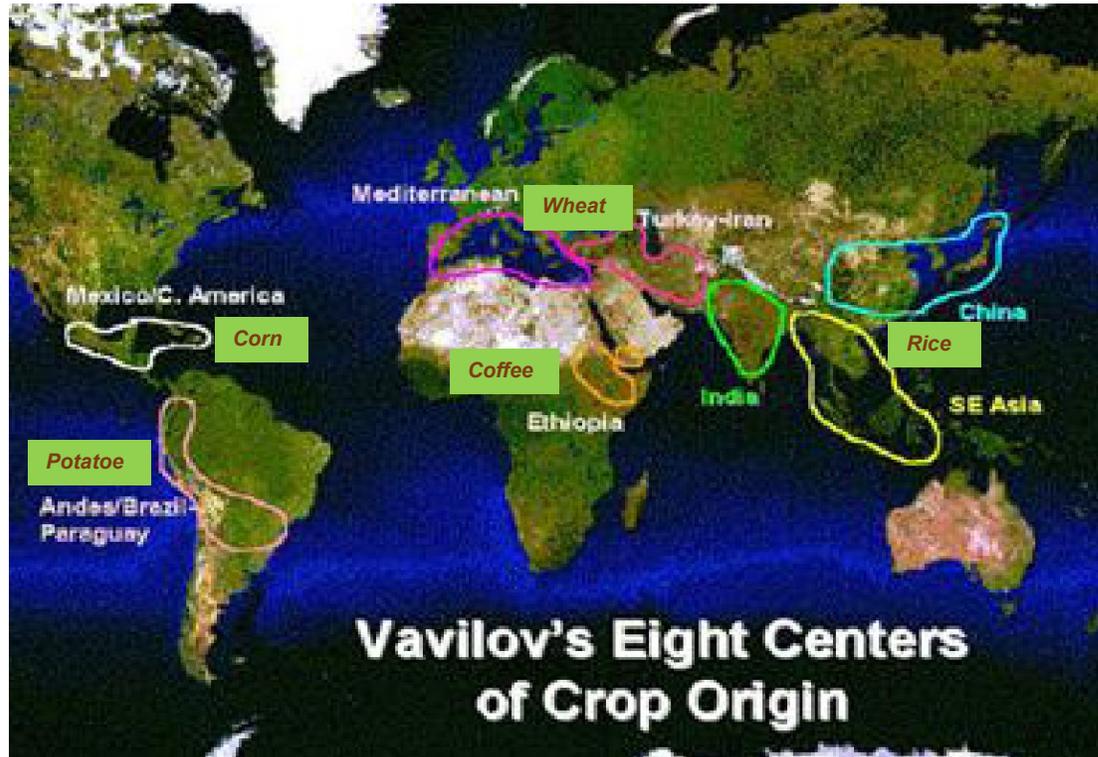
Species	Latin name	Wild progenitor	First known domestication	
			Time	Place
Cow	<i>Bos taurus, Bos indicus</i>	aurochs	xxxx	West Asia -Middle East - North Africa
Goat	<i>Capra hircus</i>	Wild goat	7000 - 8000 BC	West Asia
Sheep	<i>Ovis aries</i>	Mouflon	7001 - 8000 BC	West Asia
Horse	<i>Equus caballus</i>	Wild horse	3500 BC	South Ukraine
Donkey	<i>Equus asinus</i>	African ass	4000 BC	Egypt
Yak	<i>Bos grunniens</i>		Not known	Not known
Pig	<i>Sus domesticus</i>	Wild boar	7000 BC	Asia
Dromedary camel	<i>Camelus dromedarius</i>	Camelus sp	3000 BC	West Asia - North Africa
Bactrian camel	<i>Camelus bactrianus</i>	Camelus sp		
Alpaca	<i>Vicugna pacos</i>	Vicuña	4500 BC	South America, Central Andean region
Llama	<i>Lama pacos</i>	Guanaco	4500 BC	South America, Central and Southern Andean region
Cuy - Guinea pig	<i>Cavia porcellus</i>	Poroncoy	3500 BC	South America, Central Andes region
Chicken	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	Jjungle fowl	4000 BC	South and Southeast Asia
Duck	<i>Cairina moschata</i>			South America, El Chaco
Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	Wild turkey		North America



(Adapted from Nitya S. Ghotge)

# Centres of origin of domestic crops and animals

Animal domestication is closely related to the regions where the crops were domesticated – Vavilov's centres of origin, domestication and diversification of plants and animals.



<https://ook.info/rbn/Heritage/>

<https://domusapientiae.wordpress.com/2011/05/30/las-primeras-domesticaciones-animales/>

Various domestication locations independently:

Goat – Bezoar goat, Türkiye

Sheep – Mouflon (Iraq or Iran, then the Balkans and western Mediterranean)

Cow – Aurochs. wild ancestor extinct

Pig – Wild pigs. China, eastern Türkiye, Central Europe, Italy, northern India, Southeast Asia

Alpaca – Vicuña, Central Andes of Peru

Llama – Guanaco, Southern Andes between Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina

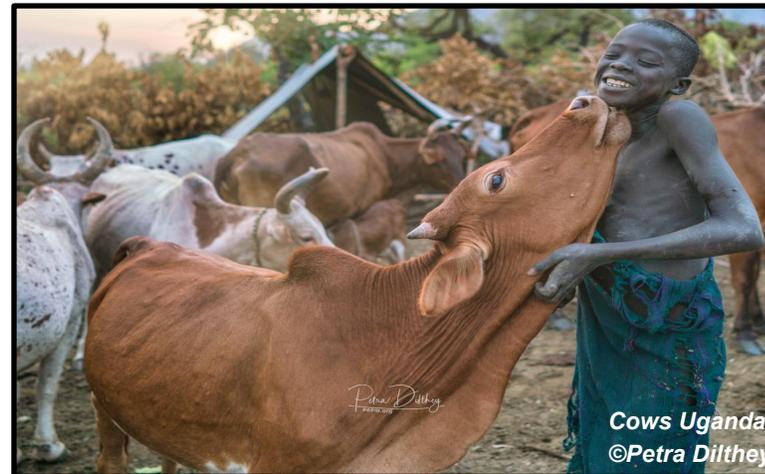
# LIVESTOCK KEEPERS – PASTORALISTS

*Human communities that have a tradition of raising animals, and for whom their animals have social and cultural importance, as well as the preservation of their landscape and the soil quality and biodiversity they live on.\**

*More than just livestock farming for production, it is the relationship between people and animals, where livestock represents a source of life and identity.\*\**

6,000–10,000 years ago, animal husbandry became a means of livelihood.

Do you have a word for pastoralists / herders in your language?



\* Ilse Köhler-Rölefsen

\*\* Jorge Flores-Ochoa

# Animal domestication

## Mutual breeding – *Uywanacuy*

“To create bonds” “to breed”

*Uywanakuy*\* is a Quechua and Aymara concept meaning mutual nurturing, reciprocal care or co-upbringing, reflecting a deep, horizontal relationship of interdependence between humans, animals, plants and even spiritual entities like *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) in the Andean world. It's a core principle of Indigenous Andean worldview, emphasising balanced, complementary and caring relationships to sustain life and territory.

The *Runa* or human is also raised (*uwyakunan runata*\*); plants and animals are raised just like children.



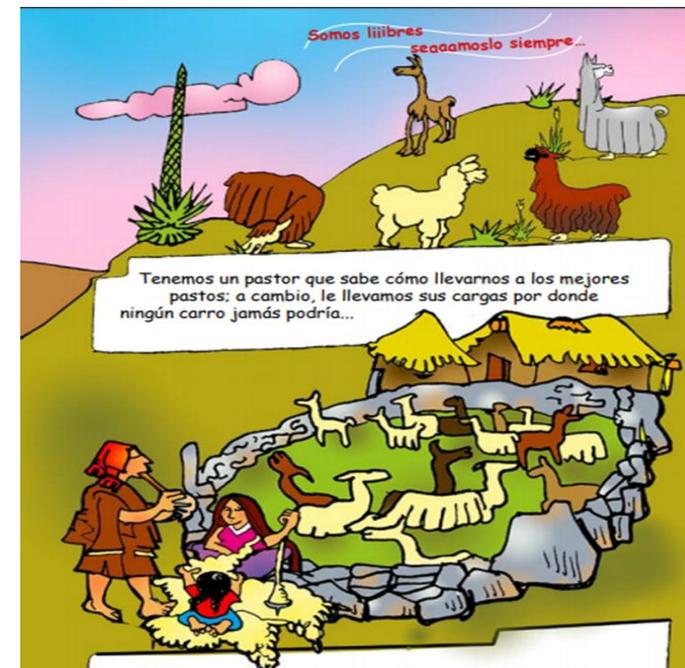
### *Uywa Michiq Punarunakuna* \*

#### Herders of the high Andean Puna

Andean people maintain a close mystical relationship with animals.

- *Uywa*\* (domestic): raised by runas (humans). Domestication creates bonds between animals and people
- *Salqa*\* (wild): raised by the *Apus* (gods). Not under human control; property of the gods; in the mythical realm they are domesticated.

\* Concepts and words in Quechua, ancient language in the Andes in South America



### Time – Dedication

The process was long, happening in several places and over a long period of time. Many parallel domestication processes occurred in many different places, they all needed time.

### Relationships – Bonds

Codependency with animals: people could inhabit ecosystems where no crops can grow, by transforming vegetation into meat, milk and other animal products; in return, animals received benefits from people such as care, food and security.

### Consequences – Effects

Many intraspecific changes occurred and a diversity of new breeds emerged. Some differences in appearance, colour and size of the animals appeared because of external drivers other than environment. People bred animals to shape them for their benefit, producing the current landscape of animal species and genetic resources worldwide.



Sheep and goat ©Katy Gomez



## Anthropogenic effects

Domestic animals  
Phenotypes/colours  
Resulting relationship with people



Buffalo India ©Vans Gujjars - Anthra

# Biodiversity

Ancient genetic improvement programmes

"Molding life"



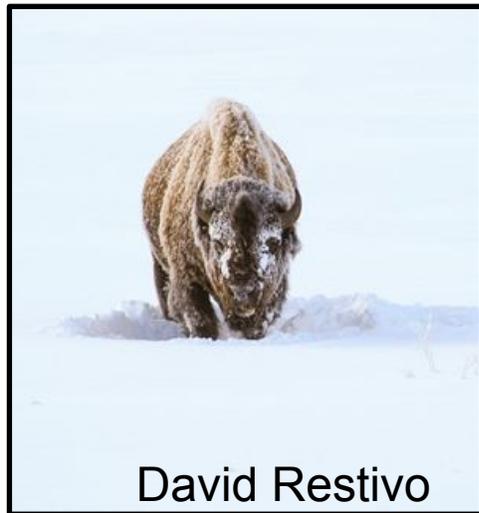
Wild ancestors – Similar appearance/phenotypes



Alpaca Peru ©Kike Michaud

# Semi-domesticated and wild animals

Pastoralists also raise semi-domesticated animals and are mindful of and co-exist with wildlife.



David Restivo



Nitya Ghotge



©2026 ZS Loujin



Svein D. Mathiesen



Roman Tuprin



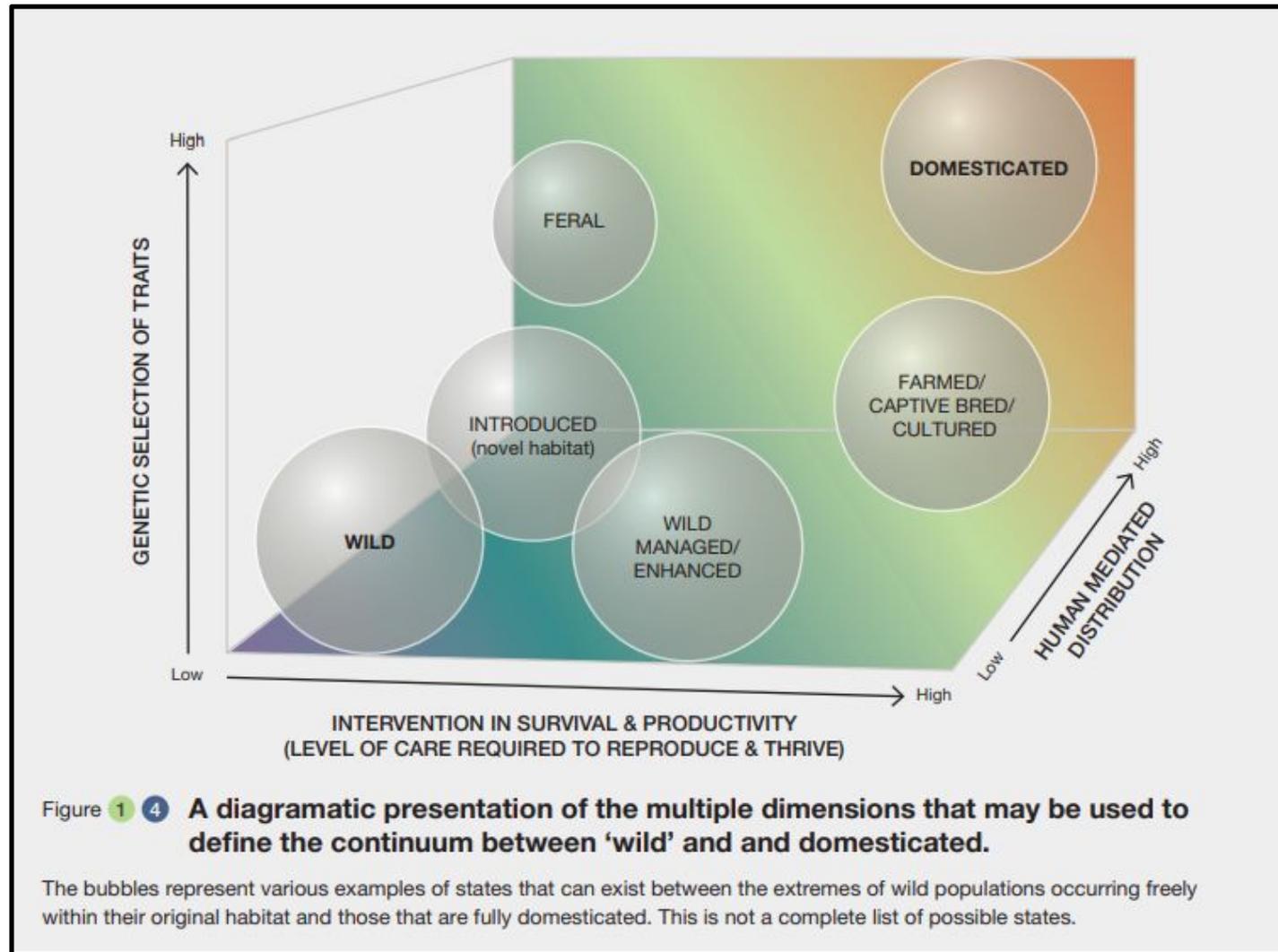
Hector Condori



Petr Kaurgin

# Continuum between domesticated and wild animals

**Wild:** still found in their natural range, have not undergone multigenerational selection for traits, and can survive without human intervention.



**Domestic:** distribution of specimens managed by humans, who generate favourable environments, reproduction and assisted health, as well as deliberate selection.

# The Global Alliance for Rangelands & Pastoralists will showcase different animals each month.



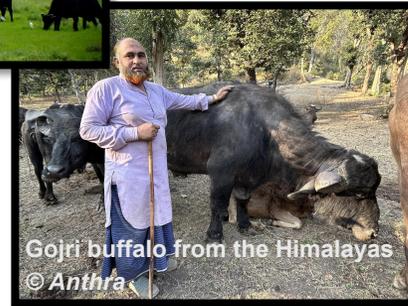
**January** (domestication)  
Celebrate animal diversity



Banni buffaloes herded by Maldharis © Ovee Thorat



Scotland cow © Kike Michaud



Gojri buffalo from the Himalayas © Anthra



Waasai cattle Kenya © Michael Benanav

**February** (mobility, land, water)  
Water buffalo

**March** (economics)  
Cattle



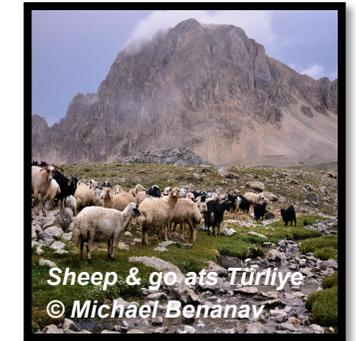
China © Marc Foggin



Wildlife Australia © Caroline Jones



© Kalyan Varma



Sheep & goats Türkiye © Michael Benanav



Yak Mongolia © Rita Willaert

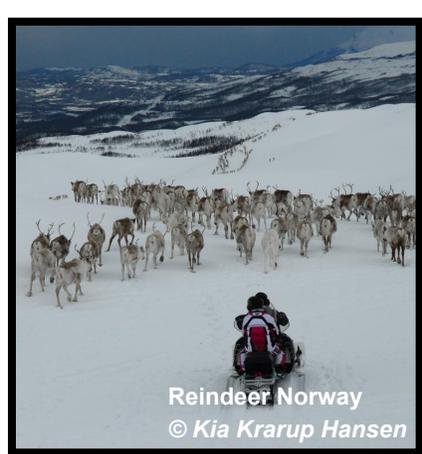


Sheep Georgia © Kakha Nadiradze

**April** (climate change)  
Yak

**May** (biodiversity)  
Wildlife interactions

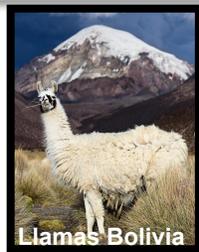
**June** (land restoration)  
Sheep and goats



Reindeer Norway  
© Kia Krarup Hansen



Alpacas Peru  
© Kike Michaud



Llamas Bolivia



Camels and donkey Nige



Sheep dog Spain



"Michico" Dogs Peru  
© Kike Michaud

**July** (services and infrastructure)  
Reindeer + caribou

**August** (Indigenous, local knowledge and culture)  
Camels and South American Camelids

**September** (benefits to society)  
Herding dogs / companion animals



Donkeys Tibet © Marc Foggin



Cow dog and horse Navajo Nation  
© Michael Benanav



Vicuñas, Peru



©2026 ZS-Luujin



Bison in Chihuahua, Mexico



Duck India  
© Mr. Vinod



**October** (Women)  
Horse and other equines

**November** (Youth)  
Animals saved from extinction  
Bison, vicuña, wild camel

**December** (innovation, future)  
Unique systems (herding pigs and ducks), alternative uses



## Rangelands



## Animals

People, animals and the environment were always connected, as in the current One Health vision; the interactions and integrality matter. We will honour these ancient bonds by learning about and connecting to them.



## Pastoralists



**Join us to celebrate each Animal of the Month!**