



SPOTLIGHT ON: THE SFA IN CHINA

The SFA is expanding its footprint into Inner Mongolia this year. So far, we have welcomed eight committed Chinese manufacturers and brands to our growing membership base.

Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the SFA's first regional meeting to discuss the development of sustainable cashmere in Beijing is now taking place as a tele conference in March. Further details will follow shortly. For organisations wishing to learn more about our efforts in China, we are also offering 1-1 consultations with our Chinese-speaking SFA Board member and rangeland management expert, Dr Andreas Wilkes. Please contact us if you would like to arrange your own consult.

TRADER-HERDER NETWORKING EVENT, MONGOLIA

The SFA Mongolian team are organising a speed networking event where 10 traders and heads of 30 herder organisations will meet. The aim is to make the market more accessible and transparent, creating a space for herders and traders to meet before the cashmere season gets underway.

However, as a precaution against Coronavirus, the Mongolian Government has closed schools and placed restrictions on large gatherings. Our team are currently working on a contingency plan in case the shutdown extends throughout February.



FIRST BLOCKCHAIN PILOT IN CASHMERE

The SFA recently participated in a pilot project with the UNDP to test a new blockchain technology developed by Convergence.tech. Blockchain is a method of recording transactions along a supply chain and offers a promising route for tracing SFA-certified fibre.

SFA herding organisations across three provinces provided 471kg of raw fibre, which was then tracked to a processing plant in Ulaanbaatar using a specially-designed app.

We are now looking at how best to build on this pilot and develop a system for tracing responsibly-produced fibre from herders to the final product.



GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

SFA Mongolia are working with the illustrator and writer, Mr. Bat-erdene, to communicate the SFA's rangeland stewardship and animal husbandry codes of practice to herders in an innovative and accessible way.

Posters are being developed to demonstrate examples of good practice, as well as a series of entertaining podcasts based on informal conversations between two characters that will improve herders understanding of the code of practice requirements and encourage knowledge sharing within herding communities.



HERDING LIFE

This week's pics is from Artsad, a herder from Bat-Ulzii Soum in Uvurkhangai Province.



"Here's my grandson with his kid goats, they're eating the food we prepared to keep them strong during this harsh winter. It's been calm but the weather is getting stronger."

Artsad

MEET THE HERDERS SERIES

We've made a series of seven short films with SFA herders, giving an insight into their lives and the challenges that they face. Each film has a different theme, but all portray the herders' genuine passion for this ancient way of life and the respect and love they have for their animals.

We will be releasing all videos on our new website soon, but here's one as a taster. It stars Gonchig, a charismatic 12-year-old who dreams of being a herder....

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnFz4KHn-wI



WEATHER WATCH

The weather in Tov reached a peak of -12 degrees Celsius this week. From Lunar new year (24th Feb), the worst of the winter is considered to be over. However, there is still chance of Mongolia facing a *dzud* - severe winter conditions leading to mass loss of livestock. This year more than 50% of Mongolian rangelands are at high risk of *dzud* and about 25% is at moderate risk. The northern and western regions face the highest risk.

OF INTEREST....

- NPR radio have produced a 9-minute podcast on the impact of Mongolian dzud, how herders are adapting to this 'slow onset natural disaster' and the importance of sustainable land management and risk preparation to reduce herder's vulnerability to mass livestock losses. www.npr.org/2020/01/28/800592753/a-decade-of-dzud-lessons-from-mongolias-deadly-winters
- Hu, The Mongolian Rock band taking the world by storm shares SFA's ethos.... "Human beings and nature are connected," said Jaya. "And, as nomadic people, we have cattle and we have to move all around, so we don't destroy the land. We respect it." <https://tinyurl.com/yypna5en>