



# NAMIBIA CENTRE FOR HOLISTIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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## PRESENTATION OF NAMIBIA CENTRE FOR HOLISTIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT LAND REFORM CONFERENCE

**The name:** Holistic Resource Management (HRM) is a practical, goal-orientated approach to the management of our ecosystem, including the human, financial and biological resources on farms, so-called communal land, public land, as well as game reserves, vital water catchment and other areas. To manage these resources we have to understand how they interrelate and how our management will affect their interrelation. This is what we call holistic management and it is essential to achieving sustainable agriculture and optimal human living conditions.

**The aims:** The aims can be summarised as follows:

- a) to improve the human environment and quality of life through improved Resource Management; and
- b) to assist in helping to overcome the seeming imbalance between the environment and the utilization of our natural assets and resources by providing expert knowledge and awareness and understanding of ecological relationships based on Holistic Resource Management principles.

Namibia is an agricultural country and will remain so for a long time. Today 70% of our population lives directly or indirectly off the land. In view of this Holistic Resource Management can be of prime importance since the following perspectives should enjoy priority in Namibia:

- long-term conservation of renewable resources
- improvement of water supplies
- increase of agricultural production, also for export purposes
- prevention or reduction of migration from the land
- generally raised standard of living and consequently a safeguarding of the social peace.

Holistic Resource Management can make a significant contribution towards achieving these objectives, because Holistic Resource Management principles, regarding the management of the land, were developed from the traditional African practices (100-200 years ago) when animals were herded. Huge numbers of animals were concentrated on a small piece of a land for a very short period, before they were driven further to the next pasture. Of course these practices were not based on any theoretical knowledge of the people in those days, but they simply did co-operate with nature.

Today, of course, theoretical explanations of these practices can be given, but due to lack of time I only want to say the following: Adequate rest periods are vital after such severe and concentrated grazing periods in order to give the plants a chance to recover. But due to the ~~impact~~ impact

by cattle on the soil during the grazing, with firstly the trampling effect of the hooves resulting in the loosening of the soil and the preparing of seed beds for new seedlings and secondly the dunging of the soil, conditions are given for the plants to recover swiftly.

So, the general belief that the total withdrawal of animals, from the land (for even several years) in order to restore the soil, is wrong, because this theory neglects the fact that there exists a natural inter-dependence between animal and land.

Therefore, members of the Namibia Centre for Holistic Resource Management are of the firm belief that a reduction in stock numbers in order to improve our agricultural land is not necessary. But what is necessary are properly managed grazing systems and this will require a lot of hard work, both physically and mentally, because in our barren country nothing is offered on a plate.

**The achievements:** Thirty commercial farmers in Namibia have already proved the ecological and agricultural advantages of the Holistic Resource Management method. In August 1989 they formed the Namibia Centre for Holistic Resource Management which has to date over 60 members. Most of these members have not only improved their grazing considerably but achieve best results from farming.

In conclusion it must be mentioned that Holistic Resource Management can be easily understood and readily applied by communal and commercial farmers to make their operations profitable despite fluctuating markets, high interest rates or other factors often blamed for lack of profits.