

EDITORIAL

Camels have remained forlorn and victims of fatal neglect in the past. Lack of a common platform for camel thinkers could not generate a consensus to have a regular scientific periodic journal on camels. On an estimated 19.4 m world camel population the **Journal of Camel Practice and Research** will be the first exclusive scientific journal on camels, in English, other than Camel News Letter. So far camel related manuscripts were published in different scientific journals by researchers and practitioners. An exigency to have an exclusive journal on camels was felt by many of us when scientific or clinical papers on camels were either not accepted or relegated back in the preferential order because of limited readership of camel based papers and failing to attain the required language standards as expected by few journals. As a result this fragmented camel literature drifted away from the world scientific community concerned with camels because most of the papers were then published in languages other than English in national level journals and relevant literature remained inaccessible to the rest of the world. This scenario failed to project the pioneers of camel science in various disciplines. Few conferences, workshops and symposia on camels were organised, some of which were sponsored one, in Middle East and African horn but could neither provide a common umbrella for camel scientists on a global basis, nor concrete recommendations on future camel research were made. It might have been frustrating to many of us. This fact was agitating in my mind since a long time but financial constraints, which yet exist, did not allow me to do so. I could not resist any more and perhaps a divine inspiration stocked me with required zeal and this journal was launched under the banner of Camel Publishing House as its first publication. The CPH is aimed to deal with publications exclusively on camels.

The announcement of this journal was made in more than fifty countries and the response was a luke warm one. Even then I was not disgusted and remained undeterred to release and keep it viable. Financial crunch still exists as number of paid subscribers are very few. The advertisers from all walks of life, in India particularly, supported the journal for the first issue. The support extended by the **League for Pastoral Peoples, Germany** is gratefully acknowledged. I appeal to all camel practitioners and researchers to enroll maximum number of subscribers for this journal to ensure its continuum. I reiterate that all concerned camel vets and researchers should preferably become subscriber of this journal in order to strengthen the '**International Association of Camel Practitioners and Researchers**' which is being formed through this journal. This association will provide a common and veritable platform to all camel practitioners and researchers to interact through this journal or by hosting workshop, conference or symposium under its banner. The recommendations of this association may give new directions to the ongoing and future camel research programmes from time to time as at present it has many missing links. The association will bring into limelight the true camel practitioners and researchers.

The journal in its present format shall publish the original research, clinical and review papers, and short communications. The column 'Camel Practice and Research' will have a case report under section 'Practice' and camel based postgraduate thesis abstracts or summaries and institutional research under the section 'Research'. 'Book Reviews' and 'Forthcoming Publications' columns will deal with camel related books, monographs, journals etc. A sensitive column 'Concern' will ventilate the feelings of readers about sufferings and ignorance towards the camels and shall invoke attention of concerned authorities to take suitable remedial measures. National and international events based on camels will make the column 'News'. Occasionally fun or theme based cartoons on camels will be published. A Column 'Pastoralists Perspective' will highlight the traditional camel husbandry practices adopted by pastoralists. I appeal to all camel practitioners and researchers to contribute various articles, reviews, cartoons, news items to this journal regularly.

Lastly, I supplicate to strengthen the financial base of the journal for its sustenance and suggest the various agencies which can support this journal. Kindly write your views about the first issue and suggestions for improvement of subsequent issues.

With my best wishes to all camel vets and researchers.

(T.K. Gahlot)

GUEST EDITORIAL

There has been no shortage in recent years of conferences, symposia and workshops devoted exclusively to the camel and the number of publications dealing with this once neglected species has sky-rocketed. All these efforts tend to originate from either one or the other school of thought and academic philosophy. On one side, there are the purely science oriented endeavours which dwell on highly specialised and increasingly detailed aspects of the camel, mostly in regards to its anatomy and physiology. This research often appears to be undertaken for the sake of 'Science' itself, without due consideration for any practical application. On the other side, there is the people directed approach exemplified for instance by the Somali-Swedish Camel Project which made a sincere and sustained effort to involve in its work those people whose life is most closely intertwined with this animal—the camel pastoralists. Within the framework of this project several workshops with local pastoralists were held in different parts of Africa.

These two schools of thought seem to be separated by a gap so large that 'never the twain shall meet', leaving precious little, if any, basis for communication between the veterinary/agricultural scientists and social/anthropological researchers. As **chairwoman of the League for Pastoral Peoples**, my sympathies are naturally with the latter and I strongly believe that research should have a reason and not be undertaken only on account of self-perpetuation. Yet, because of my veterinary background, I cannot deny the potential of even apparently eclectic scientific research to eventually improve the economic situation and livelihood of camel pastoralists.

Social scientists and anthropologists have excelled in elucidating the camel breeding and management practices of camel pastoral societies, conducting research which could be considered the domain of animal scientists. They have documented the intricacies of the traditional knowledge systems of camel pastoralist and demonstrated how well pastoral behaviour is attuned to respective ecological conditions. Yet, although pastoralists are resilient and have always had to adjust to changing circumstances, the developments of the 20th century, including agricultural encroachment, unsupportive development policies, and population pressure, present unprecedented challenges. Crucially, pastoral peoples, although their populations too have increased, nowadays have to make do with smaller areas in which to pursue their subsistence strategies. This is where technical research comes in. If camel pastoralism is to survive at all as an economic option, it will have to be adapted to the changing scenario, and methods will have to be devised to maximise its outputs within the given ecological constraints. This can be achieved only through an amalgamation of the traditional knowledge and expertise of camel pastoralists with problem oriented scientific investigation. For this, an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation between the representatives of the two knowledge systems, will have to be created. This is not a small task, but one that has to be tackled.

The first step for implementing such an approach is improved communication across the disciplines. For this reason, I am extremely happy, that the editor of this journal, Dr. T.K. Gahlot, while himself a strong proponent of the veterinary school of thought, has had the broadmindedness to make space available in his journal for contributions that represent the perspective of the people whose economic survival depends on camels. The journal will feature a regular column about traditional and folk knowledge pertaining to the camel.

I would like to close with an appeal to social scientists who work with camel pastoral societies to submit their materials to this journal, even if at present it is technically oriented. And I would also like to address a plea to the veterinary and natural scientists to represent their research with a concern for its practical application. If this journal could succeed in becoming a truly interdisciplinary forum for information exchange on camels and camel pastoralism, then it will not only be a unique venture but make an important contribution to sustainable use of the world's arid lands and the welfare of its inhabitants.

Ilse Kohler Rollefson