

Fieldwork Report – Research within SAF-BIN project

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To conduct the data collection for my master`s thesis about goat breeding strategies of farmers in Nepal I spent 3 months in the Kaski district in the mid-hills of Nepal. I`ve been to Asia before for an internship, which was a great experience – that`s why I was happy to return for scientific purposes.

The aim of my research is to find out if crossbreeding is useful for local small-holder farmers, how they organize breeding and what aims they have. Therefore, in cooperation with another student, I developed a questionnaire for smallholder farmers participating in Strengthening Adaptive Farming in Bangladesh, India and Nepal (SAF-BIN) project. We also prepared ourselves for the field trip with literature research and emails with project members in Nepal and Vienna.

After squeezing equipment and clothes for three months in a small backpack, I was ready to leave for our introduction week in Kathmandu. We – four master students and



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our supervisor - were all located in a hotel near the Caritas Nepal headquarter, where we spent the first week on organizing the field trip.

During this week I presented the framework of my thesis to the local team and my aims and my schedule for Nepal. Furthermore we arranged transportation and accommodation during our stay and did a first expert interview with researchers from the NARC (Nepal Agriculture Research Council) about goat breeding and goat feeding. We double checked our questionnaire with the researchers and also our local supervisors from Caritas Nepal. The local team introduced us with presentations to the status quo of SAF-BIN in Nepal and took us out for lunch and walks to help us in adapting to Nepal, the culture and the climate.



The following data collection was conducted together with another master student who is doing her research about goat feeding. We didn`t only share a questionnaire, we also did expert interviews together and visited the same farmers. On the farms we would weigh the goats, two of local breeds and two cross-breeds to make a comparison. For the feeding part we made feeding calendars and took fodder-samples. We also took many pictures during our field trip and took notes in a field diary.

After the first seven days we made our way to Kaski, the main research area of my thesis. Our supervisor was still present to

conduct a first test-interview with farmers and see other experts in goat research.

On our first days in the research area we rented a room, got introduced to our local supervisor and the whole Caritas team in Pokhara and could also celebrate the Holi festival, covered in colorful dust.

We attended a first group meeting of farmers, bought material for our research and also started looking for a translator, which was strongly needed in rural Nepal. We found the perfect one, Nanou, who helped us not only with translations but also showed us Nepal from her perspective.



Soon we had a list of all villages we planned to visit to reach a total of 30 farmers.

In the end we visited 31 farmers, a butcher, had expert interviews with Heifer International, the NARC department in Bandipur, a commercial goat farmer and other relevant organizations. We had a final week in Kathmandu where we had space for final meetings with Caritas Nepal and slowly getting used to travel back to Europe soon.

I have to say that first of all the scientific part of the trip gave me huge insights regarding how much knowledge you can get from farmers – through them I had many unexpected yet very interesting findings. Everyone was welcoming and helped us a lot! I also learned a lot about



how one can conduct research in a country very different from what I am used to and how this effects the methodology. I am thankful for everything I learned and I hope in the coming months my findings will result in an interesting thesis for future projects of SAF-BIN. Secondly, in my free time I had a chance to get to know Nepal through hiking, weddings, a trip to Chitwan National Park in the Terai, Yoga and many more things, especially with the local team and our translator. Many friendships were formed and I hope I can return soon.



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