



« Restoring value to grassland : lessons for practice change »
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Potential for better grassland management in link with beef-cattle value chain development in Northern Mountains of Vietnam

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Case overview

■ General situation

The Northern Mountainous Regions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- medium population density;- high proportion of ethnic minorities;- high poverty rate- poor infrastructure- medium to high altitude (200 to 800 m +)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- market access difficulties;- uneven terrain- steep slopes;- low soil quality

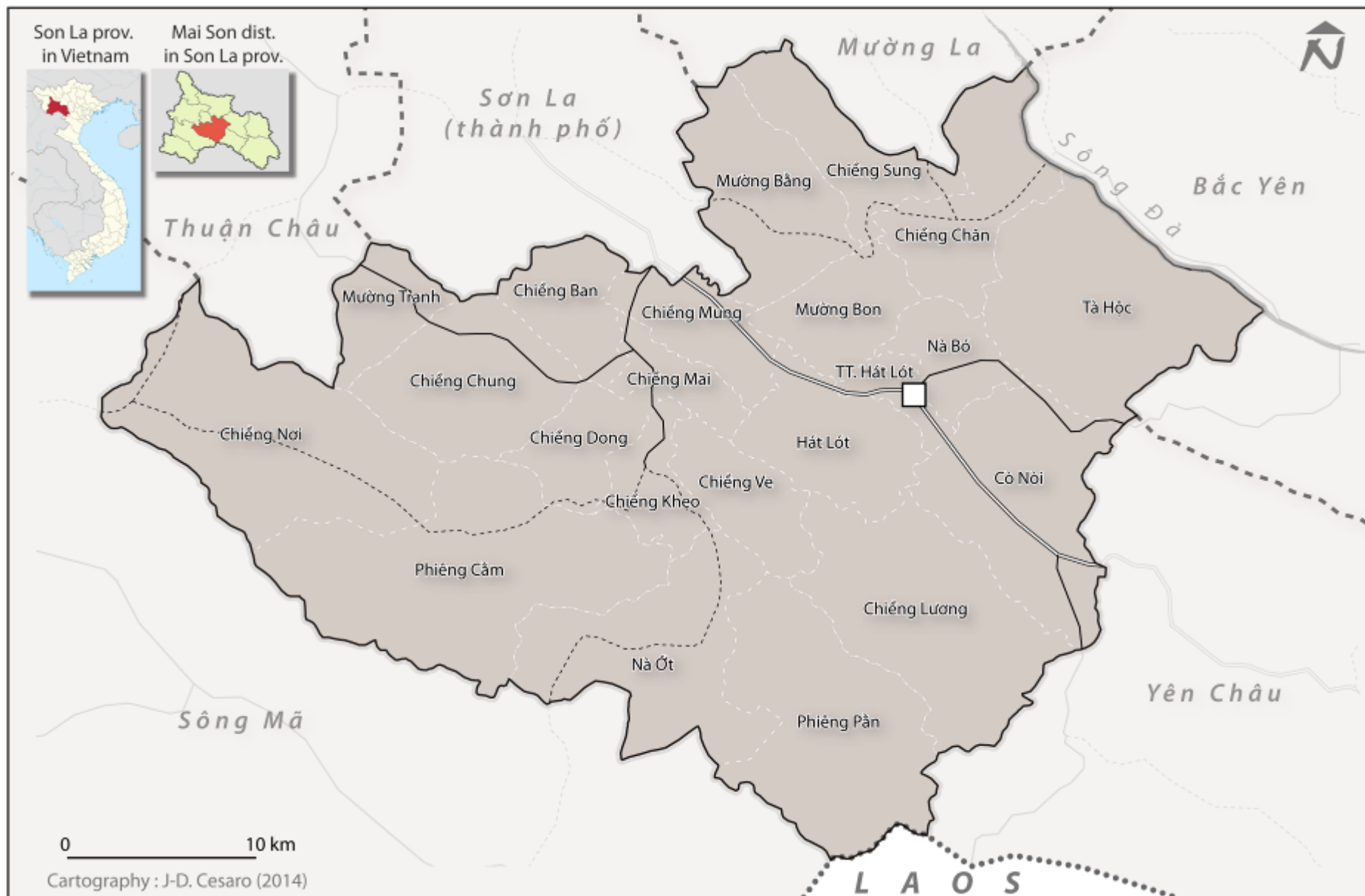
■ Production structures : land still available for pastures

- ❑ Family farms involved in crop–livestock systems (maize, cassava, rice..)
- ❑ Small size cropping land, with communal or private forest and pastures

■ Current pastoral management

- ❑ Seasonal movement from natural pasture to harvested fields
- ❑ Whole year on communal pasture

Son La province, North West Vietnam





Seasonal movement from natural pasture to harvested fields



Seasonal movement from natural pasture to harvested fields



Whole year on communal pasture
(grassland with less perennial trees)



Whole year on communal pasture
(under perennial trees in the forest)

Problems and issues

Increasing demand for beef and for maize/cassava

→ Reduction in pastures quality and quantity



Importance of grazing land not formally recognized by local institutions

→ Management of available pasture and improved grasslands not considered



Monitoring and evaluation

- **Objective:** Providing arguments to local authorities for :
 - ❑ Enhancing the management of communal pasture
 - ❑ Making public investments in the marketing chain
 - ❑ Supporting farmers in making decisions on land allocation and grassland management
- **Method:** systems approach (**practices and organizations**)
 - ❑ Knowledge and practices of cattle keepers and other stakeholders.
 - ❑ Value chain mapping on cost and margin, and institution analyzing.
 - ❑ Workshop with local authorities to discuss about the value of grass lands.
 - ❑ Seasonal measurement and mapping of natural pastures.
 - ❑ Identification of land plots suitable for forage / grass production by different scenarios for comparison of benefits between crop production and cattle production.
 - ❑ Applying pilots to calculate the benefit from improving natural pasture management

Illustration
(Huyen et al., 2013)

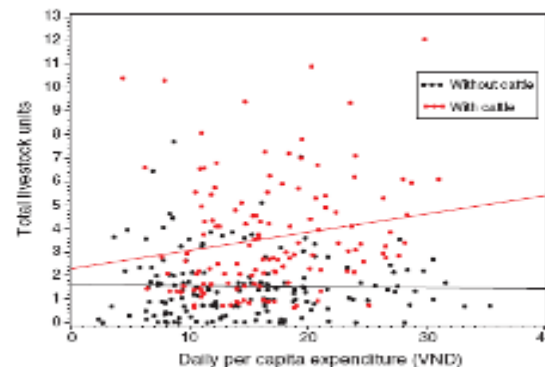
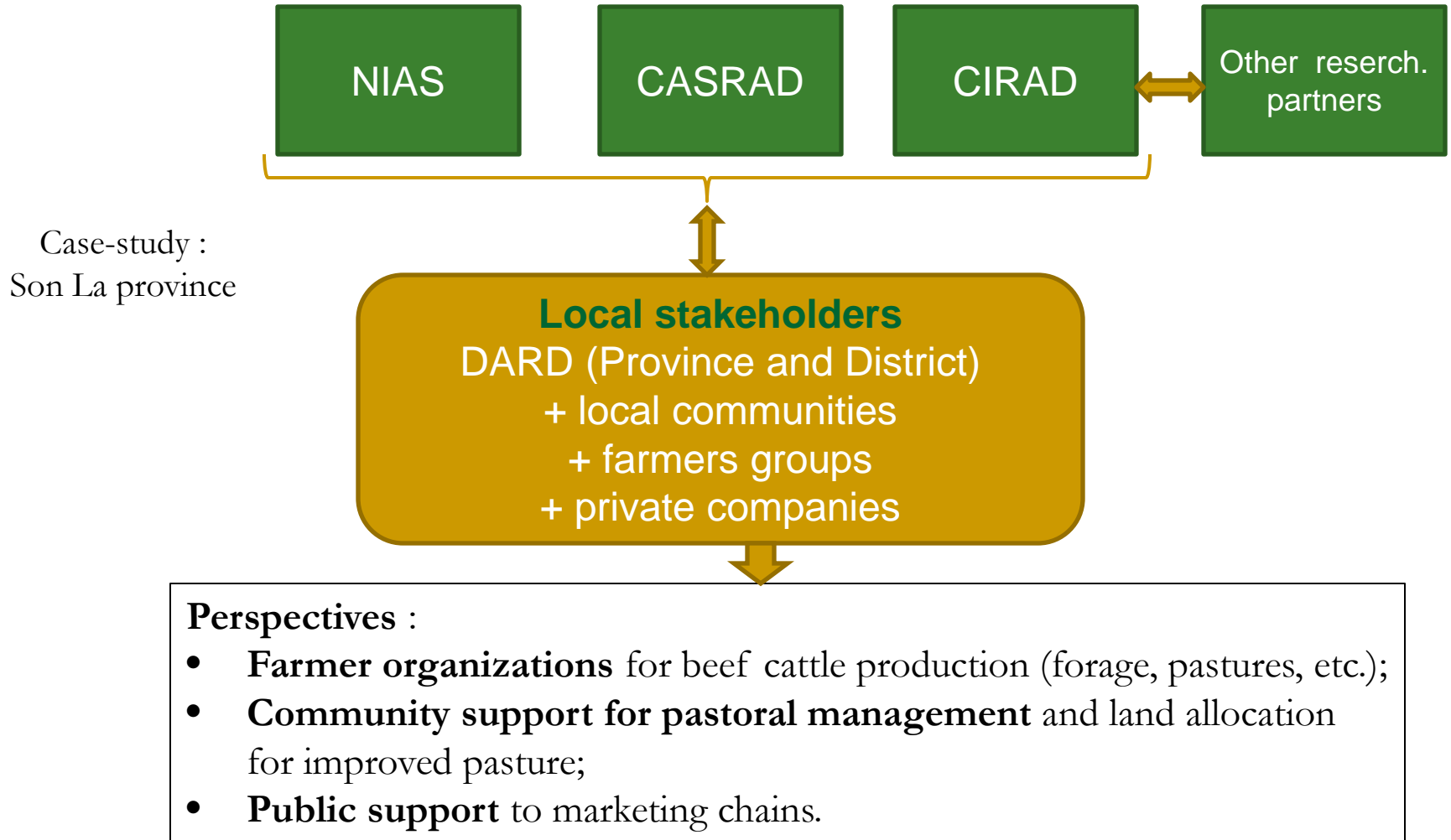


Fig. 1. Plots of total livestock units versus daily per capita expenditures of firms with and without cattle.

Institutional context of the research site and partners



Lessons Learnt

- **Farmers in the poor regions** can make use of available resources for their production with very low additional inputs. Better off farmers can succeed better than the very poor for extension of cattle production.
- **The formation of common interest groups** can help the poor farmers in accessing to the grass lands or other resource needs for beef cattle production. The linkage of farmer organization with traders and local institutions can develop beef value chain as well as enhance the effort in improving the management of grasslands.
- **Without the involvement and governance of local authorities** (at village and communal levels), the over-grazing problem could not be solved, and the value of grasslands could not be improved.
- **The perception about the value of grasslands** will go along with the success of beef cattle value chains in the regions and as a base of the consideration for improvement of pasture management.

→ Bringing awareness of farmers, traders and local authorities on the real value of grasslands in the sustainable cattle production

Knowledge exchange

- The involvement of local authorities and other stakeholders with the researchers during the study is necessary.
- The main objective of the study should be in the same route with policies and direction the local authorities.
- Further, it is also very important if the study can fill the gaps of the current policies and local plans.
- The sustainable and efficient results from improving beef value chains linking with grassland management need to be aware by farmer themselves, other stakeholders and local authorities.

→ *Sustainable development of beef cattle production and land tenure*