



**Land and Ecosystem Degradation and
Desertification:
Assessing the Fit of Responses**



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**Stakeholder
Workshop
Brief summary**

June 28, 2013

Achedrias, Crete, Greece



Department of Geography



**AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY
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Stakeholder Workshop organized by AUA and AEGEAN

Brief summary of the main points that emerged from the Asteroussia study site stakeholder workshop on June 28, 2013

The stakeholder workshop for the Asteroussia study site was held in the Achedrias community on June 28, 2013. The participants included the Mayor of The Municipality Artchanes-Asteroussia, the president of the local municipal department, municipal and local council members, members of stockbreeding associations, businessmen and stockbreeders.

The most important issue that was brought to the fore was that the stockbreeders have to reduce their number of animals because the community will be abandoned due to land degradation caused by overgrazing in a few years. The way that the state has given the subsidies has led the stockbreeders to increase their animals; they stopped to cultivate their land and they focused only on buying imported animal feed. Many stakeholders suggested that the traditional stockbreeding model was more effective because they used to cultivate their land in order to live and to feed their animals.

Another problem that was discussed was the lack of trust and community cohesion as a result of the model of stockbreeding cooperatives; most stockbreeders are afraid to cooperate with each other now. A few small groups of producers that have fomed face problems with the bureaucracy. Population decline has already started and it will accelerate dramatically if measures to solve the problems in cooperation with the local authorities are not taken. The stakeholders noted that they need now specific directions and effective planning from a formal public body which will give them exact instructions of what needs to be done. They believe that stockbreeding should be combined with ecotourism and that the comparative advantages of Asteroussia Mts, such as the natural environment and local products, should be promoted. However, they believe that a change of mentality is necessary but they also need information, such as the information that was given during the workshop, about good land management practices and viable development alternatives.