

# Pastoralism

Jaelin Carpenter

## Historical Background

The two most common places in the world to find pastoralism are deserts and grasslands that are difficult to cultivate. Mongolia is home to both of those types of terrain. Most of the country is covered by the Gobi desert and the Eurasian Steppe.<sup>3,4</sup>



Both are places that are nearly impossible to practice farming agriculture on and do not provide enough flora or fauna for largescale hunter-gather practices to take place. Historically the country has relied on the usage of domesticated animals and trade for added subsistence.<sup>3,6,7</sup> Since weather can be unpredictable in some areas and resources are limited, many individuals tend to move around throughout the year to areas with a better climate and more resources that are easier to access. This is not the case for all peoples that practice pastoralism.

## Challenges

In recent years, there has been a vast decline of pastoral practices in developing countries. Climate change has been a major factor towards this. Drier summers and colder winters have resulted in the loss of entire herds for many pastoralist.<sup>4</sup> Specifically in Mongolia, individuals have given up the nomadic way of life to settle in or around the capital for a more stable way of life.<sup>4,5,8</sup> Issues concerning globalization have also interfered with the traditional way of life. Outside forces have pushed for the expansion of mines, oil fields, and roads by. Along with increased agricultural practices, deforestation, the privatization of a lot of land that was originally used for herds have been taken.<sup>4</sup> In areas where animals are in settled communities, the retention of land and weather conditions are not the real problem. This form can actually cause more harm by polluting its surroundings but individuals are working to avoid this.<sup>8,9</sup> Laws that could be put in place may affect the way pastoralism is carried out in that community.



## Local Use

Although some might believe that pastoral practices would not be the ideal subsistence strategy in this area it is a great possibility. There are many families that raise goats, sheep, or cattle locally. However, it could be a little more difficult because traditionally places where pastoralism is practiced are wide-open spaces. The Appalachian mountains and the woodlands found throughout it are quite different.