Abstract:

A summary is given of a study conducted during 2003 in the Darfur states of western Sudan. The study presents information about mainly nomadic camel owners, types of camels and other animals reared, camel herd structure, purpose of camel rearing, movement during the year, feeding, management and the economic aspects of camel husbandry. The camel (Camelus dromedaries, one-humped camel) in Darfur originated in Arab countries and was introduced to the Sudan. These camels are kept in nomadic systems in the semi-desert and savanna belt of Darfur, in association with sheep and goats. Camels produce milk, meat, wool, hair and hides and are used for riding, transport and cultivation. Nomadic Sudanese Arab tribes that own camels include Maalia, Mahria, Umm Jallol, Awlad Zaid and Bani Halba. Other tribes of the Midob and Zaghwa also own camels. Nomadic Arab tribes and other tribes owning camels have entered Sudan through the west and north-western borders via northern Chad or southern Libya, reaching their ultimate destination at the River Nile. The problems facing camel production in Darfur states include shortage of water in desert areas, complicated inter-ethnic grazing access and diseases and parasites. In recent years these areas have been affected by drought and some areas of grazing land have been partially desertified; hence migratory herds of camels have penetrated southwards into the savannah zone for dry-season grazing. Moreover, the extension of crop farms has meant a reduction of available grazing land, which has led to serious problems culminating in the Darfur war starting in mid-2003. Arabian camels have become fully adapted to the desert and semi-desert regions of Sudan. The number of camels in the Sudan was 3.20 million (FAO 1999). The total number of camels in the three Darfur states is estimated as 759,000 of which 397,000 were in Northern Darfur, 287,000 in Western Darfur and 75,000 in South Darfur (Central Bureau of Statistics 2003).