

FOREWORD

Smallholder farmers account for a significant number of the producers in most countries, and in developing countries they provide a substantial contribution to national agricultural output. In spite of these features, this section of the farming community is often neglected. This is mainly on account of the practical difficulties to reach this large number of small units and partly on account of the farmer's lack of material resources to adopt new technologies. Fresh approaches are required to facilitate and improve communication with smallholder farmers, and to propose procedures that make better use of resources already existing in their farm units, but with minimum expense in purchased inputs.

Smallholder farmers rely on an integrated approach to farming. This involves taking due consideration of local field conditions so that a range of different crops, large and small livestock, trees, fish, and other enterprises can be exploited simultaneously. However experienced they may be as farmers, there is usually ample room to increase the complementarity amongst these different enterprises. In this context it is very important to remember that slight improvements, if introduced simultaneously to a number of different farming factors under a well designed and properly managed plan, can result in a substantial increase of overall farm output and/or make working conditions far easier.

Draught animal power is just one farming component whereby smallholder farmers can improve their output through better husbandry, adequate harnessing and the use of appropriate implements. Skilled farmers will train their animals to assist them in multiple jobs such as land cultivation, packing and transport, in response to their different requirements throughout the different seasons; animals providing such services are highly appreciated and well cared for. This present Manual tries to introduce simple technical messages that should be used by agricultural field staff and extension workers; they indicate how to train farmers who are interested in the use of their animals in agricultural activities.

The Manual is a collection of messages which are contained in brief, practical lessons or Modules. The contents of each Module must be evaluated by the users at the end of each lesson given during the course, and recommended modifications should be introduced whenever

necessary; this allows for the continuous up-grading of the Modules and encourages trainers and trainees alike to contribute towards the improvement of the Manual. This first edition of the Manual is therefore a prototype; it aims to allow different farming communities, in different environments and countries, to introduce to it the necessary modifications, additions and deletions, as dictated by local needs and possibilities, and this in the quest to make better use of the farmer's animals as a source of power.

The prototype for this Draught Animal Power Manual has been designed and prepared by a number of specialists, and it has been subjected to preliminary field testing in Malawi and Uganda with the assistance of numerous agricultural field staff and farmers. These efforts have been planned, coordinated and supervised through inputs of the Animal Production Service (AGAP) and the Agricultural Engineering Service (AGSE) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Mr John Ashburner is responsible for the formulation of the workplan to prepare the Manual, for the preparation of most of the Introduction Modules plus Chapters 2, 3, 4 and a part of Chapter 5; he is also responsible for the technical editing, the chosen format presentation and for the supervision of the printing. Mr Paul Starkey contributed Modules for the Introduction, all of Chapter 1 plus three Modules in Chapter 5.

Field testing of the Modules was carried out under the supervision of Messrs. Paul de Roover and John Ashburner in close collaboration with Mr J.L. Chidothi, Mrs Sarah Kiyingi, Mr John Olupot, Mr Emmanuel Kayaayo and a great number of very enthusiastic field staff and farmers.

To conclude, it is emphasised that this document constitutes a roughly structured training tool; the text and illustrations must still be worked upon by field staff and farmers in order to adapt it to their specific needs. Continuous field testing should improve its quality as a Training Manual and increase its use for the improved training of more and more farmers.

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