

Session (7):

Nutrition, Range & Environment

## The Future's Choice in Challenging Environment is the Promising Camel

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### ABSTRACT

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is one of the driest and challenging landscape on the face of the earth. The major portion of the global deserted lands fall in this region, making it a hostile ecosystem for many livestock species. The nature blessed the region with the highly adapted and unique livestock species "the Camel", well said as Atallah in Arabic. Camel is an animal of unique characteristics' making it the most valuable creature of the drylands. The people living in this region, especially the camel herders and pastoralists had depended on the camels for food, accessibility and other livelihoods for ages. In the climate change scenario and fragile security (in some parts like Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Syria) camel is the animal of choice to provide precious food items as milk & meat (primary product) to ensure survival of the people in a very low input production systems. Based on my personal experience and scientific discoveries, camel is the most sustainable farm animal for the region of such a wide climatic conditions, especially MENA region. The cow model (cow dairies) is hardly sustainable in such a hostile ecosystem and the milk produced is very expensive if calculated in the ecosystem model; as a cow needs more water to produce one liter of milk, 4 times more in same environment. The camel tolerate very high ambient temperatures, on contrary the cow needs cooling system to produce milk in a like milieu. The quality of camel milk is very appreciating than that of cow milk. Free of allergen protein, intolerant lactose and low in saturated long chain fats making the camel milk the best choice for health sensitive people. The region need to ensure joint efforts for making policies regarding the food and agriculture to keep the camel on top priority as the animal of food security in climate change scenario. The organization "Camels4Life" which is an advocacy group supporting camel's cause is always willing to support both governments and NGOs for finding ways to use camel as a sustainable farm animal contrast to its old vision of beast of the burden.

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