

Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan  
P.O. Box 1  
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District Pali  
Rajasthan  
India

17<sup>th</sup> July, 2014

TO:

Chief Minister of Rajasthan  
The Hon. Shrimati Vasundhra Raje  
Jaipur

**Subject: Camel as state animal and ban on trafficking camels**

17<sup>th</sup> July, 2014

Respected Madam,

As traditional camel breeders, we welcome your dedication to save the camel and that you have declared it state animal. We are however deeply concerned about the planned legislation punishing camel slaughter and trafficking and we are convinced that this will not solve the problem and, rather than solve the problem, make it even worse.

For generations, we have had herds of female camels and have sold the male offspring at the Pushkar fair. This sale of young male camels was our only source of income from our herds. We sold young male camels to traders who raised them for use as work animals. For the last three years, there have been hardly any sales at Pushkar ; we have had to take our camels back home and have gone without any income. Because of this lack of income, as well as because of other reasons, our sons and grandsons are not interested in breeding camels, nor can we encourage them to do so: camel breeding has become a dying profession.

Besides the lack of income, the two other big problems are disappearance of grazing areas and absence of veterinary care. It has become very difficult for us to find grazing for our camel herds, so often they are in a state of semi-starvation which also means that they easily become sick with tibursa and mange. We loose many animals due to disease, starvation and accidents.

All three factors combined make it virtually impossible to make a living from camel breeding: no market, no grazing, no health care. All these problems need to be solved, and a ban on trafficking will not help at all, but make it worse. It will lead to more neglect and suffering of camels.

Instead we suggest the following:

1. We need a **market for camel products**. Without the possibility of income, how can we continue to keep camels? **Camel milk** is a great product, which some of us are already selling, although in the gray market at low rates. Because of its health enhancing properties,

it should be sold at premium rates, but in order to build up a value chain large investment is required. We suggest that you support and provide incentives to private camel dairies or to public-private partnerships that process and market camel milk. We can learn from Arab and other countries in this respect.

2. Other products are **camel wool and use of camels as draught animals**, especially in tourist areas. Some places, such as inner cities of Jaipur and Jodhpur could be closed for autos and cars, with camel carts being only means of transportation. Such a move would really put Rajasthan on the map! For development of innovative products from camel wool, the state design and fashion institutes should be given incentives.
3. For **grazing areas**, some places should be earmarked for this purpose – these should be identified in a dialogue with the camel breeders. Furthermore, camels should be integrated into the planned **Kumbhalgarh National Park**.
4. In order to keep a check on the camel population and monitor it, the camel breeding herds should be **registered**. Already this has been done by LPPS in Jaisalmer and in Pali district. This would be the foundation for providing subsidies to keepers of camels – we have read that a subsidy of 50 Rs/day that is planned to be provided by National Disaster Relief Fund in drought situations. However, the problem of finding feeding for camels is permanent jnot limited to droughts.

Madam, we request you to establish a multi-stakeholder platform for the exchange and generation of ideas on how to really save the camel and make it Rajasthan's USP, instead of prematurely passing legislation which will not solve the core problem but increase camel suffering and hasten the decline of this wonderful animal.

Signd by:

Hanwant Singh Rathore, Director, LPPS

Bhom Singh, President, Jaislamer Camel Breeders Association, Sanawra

Harji Ram Raika, President Godwar Camel Breeders' Association.