

UTILIZATION OF A METHOD BASED ON COGNITIVE MAPPING IN ORDER TO DISCOVER THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF GOAT FARMERS IN TCHAD

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In African agro-pastoral societies, livestock plays a determinant role for savings and accumulation of goods. However, a high mortality level in kids has been reported in Tchad. In these societies, the family group is responsible for the economic management under the authority of the family chief. The importance of the family group influences the organisation of the production and determines the location and movements of the livestock. The family group is also a privileged environment for human and animal relationships. Therefore, it appears to us, that it is very important to understand the decision centre (family chief) and the composition of the working group responsible for goat rearing. It is also important to uncover the conceptual framework used in the family group for goat rearing and decision making. Previous pathological field studies in the N'Djamena region were done but did not explain significantly kid's mortality. Also, a classical cross-sectional epidemiological study was conducted in 1998 using the usual north American conceptual framework and did not provide satisfactory insight. This study (1999-2000) has therefore for main objective to reveal the family group decision making process. The family groups owning a goat herd (n=35) have been randomly selected according to three strata identified from data collected during the previous cross-sectional study done in the area surrounding N'Djamena. A non-directive interview has been performed with each family chief. The textual content of the interviews was transferred as computerised data and a thematic content analysis was done using the NUD-IST NVIVO software. This type of analysis helps to discover the themes and the master concepts of each interview. A comparison of the 35 interviews is afterwards done, based primarily on these themes and concepts. The present study results uncovers the conceptual framework used by the family chief to manage the goat herd. The knowledge of this framework is essential for epidemiological study of kids mortality in these herds.