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ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
Thimphu : Bhutan



SECRETARY

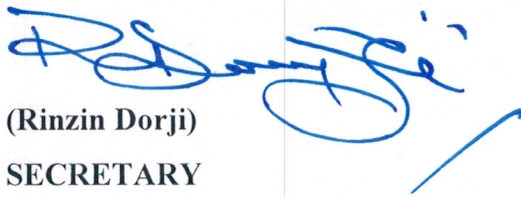
SEC/MOAF/7/ 224

11th October 2018

NOTIFICATION

In accordance with the provisions prescribed in Chapter X, Section 22(1) of the Livestock Act of Bhutan 2001 and Chapter IX, Section 179 of the Livestock Rules and Regulations of Bhutan 2017, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests have developed Guidelines for Tshethar Practice to facilitate the implementation of Tshethar activities in the country. The guidelines shall apply to all those persons or Tshogpa responsible for carrying out the Animal Tshethar activities. This guideline shall be applied in conjunction with Chapter IX and other relevant Chapters and Sections of Livestock Rules and Regulations of Bhutan 2017, relevant guidelines, and specific disease prevention and control plans.

The concerned agencies as mentioned in this Guideline shall be responsible for implementation of Tshethar activities in the country.


(Rinzin Dorji)
SECRETARY

Copy to:

1. The Hon'ble Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Thimphu
2. Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Thimphu
3. Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Thimphu
4. Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Health, Thimphu
5. Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Works and Human Settlement
6. The Chief of Police, Royal Bhutan Police, Thimphu
7. The Secretary General, Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Thimphu

8. All Dasho Dzungdags
9. All Dasho Thrompons
10. The Director General, Department of Livestock, MoAF, Thimphu
11. The Director General, Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority, MoAF, Thimphu
12. The Director General, Department of Marketing and Cooperatives, MoAF, Thimphu
13. The Director, Department of Agriculture, MoAF, Thimphu
14. The Director, Department of Forests and Park Services, MoAF, Thimphu
15. The Director, Department of Trade, MoEA, Thimphu
16. The Director, Directorate Services, MoAF, Thimphu
17. The Chief Planning Officer, Policy and Planning Division, MoAF, Thimphu
18. The Program Director, National Biodiversity Centre, Serbithang
19. The Tshethar Tshogpas



Guidelines for Tshethar Practice

**Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
Royal Government of Bhutan**

August 2018

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GUIDELINES FOR TSHETHAR PRACTICE

1. Introduction

The Guidelines for Tshethar Practice was developed in accordance with the provisions prescribed in Chapter X, Section 22(1) of the Livestock Act of Bhutan 2001 and Chapter IX, Section 179 of the Livestock Rules and Regulations 2017. The guidelines shall apply to all those persons or Tshogpa responsible for carrying out the Animal Tshethar activities. This guideline shall be applied in conjunction with Chapter IX and other relevant Chapters and Sections of Livestock Rules and Regulations 2017, relevant guidelines, and specific disease prevention and control plans.

2. Rationale:

The practice of Tshethar in animals is an age old tradition where animals are rescued and let free from the point of slaughter. Number of issues are being faced due to this practice as the Tshethar of animals is not properly regulated. The unregulated practice lead to compromising the welfare of animals such as non provision of adequate housing, care during transportation, health management during illness and general management of animals (feeding, water etc.). Besides, the unregulated practices also lead to introduction of exotic diseases in the country such as Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak, Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) and Brucellosis. Besides, there are number of incidences of disease spread within the country due to Tsehtar practice.

Thus, this guideline outlines strategies that will ensure the improvement of the welfare of animals by fulfilling physiological, psychological, social, environmental and behaviour needs of the animals. Besides this guideline aims to minimize the detrimental effects caused by Tshethar animals to the communities such as introduction and spread of diseases in animals and damage to the crops and household pasture land.

3. Implementation strategy

This guideline consists of 10 (ten) sections comprising major areas of concern that are directly or indirectly related to “Tshethar” practices:

3.1 Registration of Tshogpas

1. All TshetharTshogpas should be registered as an NGO with the CSOA prior to taking up any Tshethar activities.
2. Any individual interested in Tshethar activity, should donate the intended Tshethar animal(s) to the registered Tshethar Tshogpa after obtaining consent from the respective parties and all the conditions in this Guidelines are complied with.
3. An agreement (MoU) should be signed between the Tshethar Tsogpa and relevant Government Agencies (Department of Livestock/ Local Government) encompassing the essence of Tshethar guideline.

3.2 Registration of the animal shelter

4. The animal shelter meant for Tshethar purpose should be registered with the respective local government/ Thromde.
5. Any request submitted for registration by the Tshethar Tshogpa/individual should be cross checked with the concerned local government (Thromde or Geog).
6. In case, a farmer/owner/Tshogpas have an adequate area registered in their respective name(s); it should be validated through the local government/ Thromde to DoL on demand.
7. The registered land to be used for animal shelter should be demarcated clearly.

3.3 Type of animal species for Tshethar purpose

8. Any of the following species of animals (but not limited to) are intended for tshethar activity:
 - 1) cattle, yak, mithun, buffalo
 - 2) goat, sheep
 - 3) pig

- 4) poultry and
- 5) fish and;
- 6) other animals

3.4 Source of Tshethar animals

- 9. Animals can originate from any places such as slaughter houses, farms, villages and towns but within the country.
- 10. As per Section 38 of the Livestock Rules and Regulation of Bhutan 2017, Import of Animals for Tshethar purpose is prohibited.

3.5 Carrying capacity of the animal shelter

- 11. The number of animals (including poultry and fish) allowed for Tshethar should be based on the carrying capacity of the animal shelter/ premises where the animals are to be kept.
- 12. The carrying capacity will be pre-determined by the competent authority (Department of Livestock) based on livestock Unit.
- 13. Following are the requirement of carrying capacity:
 - 1) Open area/ premises

Species	No	Space requirement
Cattle & Yak (adult)	1	0.25 Acre registered land
Sheep & Goat (adult)	4-6	0.12 Acre of registered land
Fish	5 (weighing approximately 200-300gm each)	1 sq m

- 2) Floor space for shelter area

The floor space requirement of animal shelter including transportation requirements should be based upon Rules, guidelines and standards adopted under Chapter X – Welfare of Animals of the Livestock Act of Bhutan, 2001.

Species	Nos.	Floor Space requirement
Pigs (adult pigs in group)	1	1.4 sq m
(boars in individual pen)	1	6 sq m
Poultry (Layer)	6	1 sq. m
Poultry (Broiler)	10	1 sq. m
Turkey	3	1 sq. m

3.6 Requirements for the animal shelter

14. The animal shelter designated/identified for the Tshethar animals irrespective of the animal species should fulfill following important requirements:
- 1) Should be designed, constructed and managed to ensure their health and welfare
 - 2) Should have access to suitable drinking water at all times
 - 3) Should have provision for adequate feed
 - 4) Should have provision for proper litter/bedding/nesting material (where applicable to each species)
15. In case of yaks, a caretaker should be appointed by the concerned Tshethar Tshogpa(s) to ensure that the animals are confined to grazing within the registered /demarcated area. The animals should not be allowed to encroach and damage any government or private properties.
16. In case of sheep, goat and pig, sheds and fencing are required and the size of the sheds constructed should be as per the carrying capacity requirement.
17. The animal shelter should have proper disposal pit for disposal of dung/ wastes/dead carcasses.

3.7 Issuance of movement permit

18. In-country movement permit for animals intended for Tshethar should be issued by BAFRA officials.
19. In areas where there is no BAFRA official, the authorized personnel from DoL shall issue the permit in accordance with the Section 80 (1) of Livestock Rules and Regulations 2017.

20. In-country movement permit will be issued based on the health check (vaccination and routine health checkup) certification from animal health center and authentication letter to confirm the source and ownership of the animals from the respective local leaders.
21. Identification of Tshethar animals using ear tags or any other acceptable identification system shall be implemented by BAFRA/ DoL during issuance of movement permit for the purpose of monitoring (movement, disease outbreak, misuse, and resale) purposes.
22. The BAFRA shall restrict issuance of in-country movement permit or revoke the permit if issued earlier, in the event of an outbreak of notifiable disease in any area along the migratory routes.
23. The BAFRA shall impose any other additional measures as deemed necessary for issuance of in-country movement for prevention and control of notifiable disease.

3.8 Welfare of Tshethar Animals

24. The welfare of Tshethar animals should be given priority and should not be compromised.
25. Adequate animal welfare aspects should be considered during transportation of Tshethar animals in accordance with the provisions of Chapter IX of the Livestock Rules and Regulations of Bhutan 2017 and as per Bhutan Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines.
26. The animal welfare aspect should focus keeping in view the following needs by animals and to fulfil the species specific requirement:
 - 1) Physiological needs – e.g. food and water, appropriate temperature/humidity, air and light conditions, shelter from environmental conditions, etc.
 - 2) Social needs – preference for living in solitude, in pairs or in a group.
 - 3) Psychological needs – appropriate stimulation and activity to prevent boredom/frustration.
 - 4) Environmental needs – suitable home, space and territory.
 - 5) Behavioral needs – e.g. climbing, digging and scratching along with interactions with caretaker/owners.
27. The Tshethar Tshogpa or the Custodian of the animals should consider the welfare of animals in terms of five freedoms:
 - 1) Freedom from hunger and thirst - The animals should be provided with access to fresh water and feed that maintains health and vigor;

- 2) Freedom from pain, injury and disease – by prevention through rapid diagnosis and treatment of the sick and injured animals;
- 3) Freedom from fear and distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering;
- 4) Freedom from discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting and sleeping area; and
- 5) Freedom to express normal behavior – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and appropriate company of the animals' own kind.

3.9 Health care & management of Tshethar animals

28. The care and management of the Tshethar animals should be done by the caretaker designated by the Tshethar Tshogpa.
29. The caretaker should undergo training on animal behavior to be able to identify weak, ill or injured animals
30. The routine veterinary health services such as vaccination, deworming and treatment shall be provided by LECs/ RNRECs/DVHs under the Department of Livestock. However, such activities should be organized by the Tshethar Tshogpa.
31. Only competent person certified by Drug Regulatory Authority for handling of veterinary drugs and biologicals should be allowed to manage medicines and vaccines in the animal shelter.
32. Tshethar Tshogpa in collaboration with Department of Livestock should take necessary measures to prevent breeding of Tshethar animals by conducting sterilization.
33. In the event of any mortality of the animals in the animal shelter, the Tshethar Tshogpa should take responsibility in reporting to the livestock extension staff/ BAFRA staff for proper investigation and management of disease
34. Sick animals should be isolated for providing treatment and proper care until recovery and to prevent the spread of infection.
35. In case of death of Tshethar animals, either due to illness or natural causes, concerned Tshethar Tshogpa/ caretaker should report and facilitate a postmortem examination by a livestock official to ascertain the cause of death.

36. In the event of any notifiable disease outbreak in and around the premises of Tshethar animals, all disease control activities will be carried out as per the national disease prevention and control plan developed by DoL in collaboration with BAFRA.
37. The Tshethar Tsogpa or custodian of the Tshethar animals should submit bi-annual report about the status of Tshethar animals and Tshethar activity to Department of Livestock/ BAFRA Offices in the locality.
38. DoL/ BAFRA officials shall jointly monitor the Tshethar complex/ shed on a regular interval and collect relevant information. The data/record shall be maintained with DoL/ BAFRA.
39. As stated in Chapter X (Welfare of Animals) of the Livestock Act of Bhutan 2001 and Chapter IX of Livestock Rules and Regulations of Bhutan 2017, Inspectors shall visit any location where livestock is kept to ensure compliance with animal welfare standards.

3.10 Fines and penalties

40. Any individual or agency importing animals for Tshethar purpose is liable for a fine double the value of the animal based on the existing market value as required by Section 188 of the Livestock Rules and Regulations of Bhutan 2017. The animal shall be quarantined and if found free of diseases shall be auctioned and proceeds shall be deposited in the government revenue. In the event, the animal is found to be diseased, they shall be either treated or humanely destroyed and disposed as per the disease prevention and control plan for specific disease.
41. A person who transports Tshethar animals from one Dzongkhag to another without obtaining the in-country movement permit is liable for a fine of Nu. 200/- per animal, and in case of birds Nu. 100 for up to 50 birds as provided in section 194 of the Livestock Rules and Regulations of Bhutan 2017. The animals shall be allowed to move to their destination if the animals are healthy and are brought from disease free areas and vaccinated against the notifiable diseases. In the event, the animals are not vaccinated, the owners should compulsorily vaccinate within one week of arrival of animal at the destination. The animal shall be returned to its source in case they are brought from an area with a known disease outbreak.
42. If the Tshethar Tshogpa or custodian of animals fails to comply with the prescribed animal welfare standards for rearing (feeding, watering and shelter), handling and transport, BAFRA shall issue formal notice requiring Tshethar Tshoga or the Custodian of animal to improve the welfare of

animals within one week, failing which, the authorized officer shall impose a fine of Nu. 500/- per animal or for up to every 50 birds as per Section 217(1) of the Livestock Rules and Regulations of Bhutan, 2017. If any individual is found inflicting harm, injury or unnecessary suffering to the Tshethar animals, BAFRA shall immediately intervene and stop the act of cruelty to the animals and impose a fine of Nu. 500 per animal or up to every 50 birds as provisioned in Section 217(2) of the Livestock Rules and Regulations of Bhutan, 2017. Depending upon the severity of the injury and nature of sufferings to the animal, the BAFRA shall refer the case to the nearest animal health facility. The owner or the custodian of the animal shall bear the costs associated with the treatment and care of affected animals.

4. Definitions

43. The following terms used in this Guidelines shall have the meaning ascribed to them in this clause, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

- a) Tshethar means a religious practice in Buddhism where animals are rescued and let free from the point of slaughter.
- b) TshetharTshogpa-means a group or agency involved or committed to Tshethar activity.
- c) Registered Tshogpa-means a TshetharTshogpa which is registered with the Civil Society Organization Authority (CSOA).
- d) Civil Society Organization Authority-means an independent authority established under the CSO Act of Bhutan, 2007 for the purpose to register an agency / entity as CSO.
- e) Animal shelter-means an area or premise where an animal is kept by the Local Authority or a premise where an animal is kept by an individual or agency for commercial purpose or humanitarian reasons. It includes open grazing area, animal sheds or houses, and ponds.

5. Acronyms

BAFRA	Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority
CSOA	Civil Society Organization Authority
DoL	Department of Livestock
DVH	Dzongkhag Veterinary Hospital
LG	Local Government
LRRB	Livestock Rules and Regulations of Bhutan 2017
LECs	Livestock Extension Centres
MoAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NCIS	National Cattle Identification System
RNRECs	Renewable Natural Resource Extension Centres