

**Case study of commonage use in the Khai Ma municipality,  
Pofadder, Northern Cape Province, South Africa**

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December 2003

Unpublished report

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## **1. Introduction**

Municipal commonage is an essential tool towards economic development of communities and especially in poor rural areas it presents an opportunity to subsidise household income and acts as a sustainable food source. For many inhabitants, owning a few stock units on the commonage is a secure asset for the rural poor.

The Department of Land Affairs (DLA) became involved in commonage in 1996 when it realised the potential of using municipal commonage as a means to achieve land reform at a local level. It bought out an existing commonage lease from a white commercial farmer in Pofadder, Northern Cape, and obliged the municipality of Pofadder to make the land available to small scale farmers of previously disadvantaged background. Subsequently, the DLA helped the towns of Pella and Concordia to acquire land for commonage purposes.<sup>1</sup>

Since Pofadder was the first commonage that was made available for the previously disadvantaged community, it provides for an interesting case study to determine the successes, pitfalls and developments on the land and investigate to what extent the land is managed effectively and what roles the different stakeholders such as the municipality, the extension officer and the emergent farmers are playing.

Because Pofadder is the oldest commonage in the area, several NGOs such as the Surplus Peoples Project (SPP), Farm Africa and the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) have been involved in the town in a supportive capacity. The LRC and SPP, for example, have developed templates for grazing agreements for the municipality and have developed a Declaration for Cooperation and Land Release between the municipality and the users.

Additionally, the NGOs have been cooperating in establishing the municipal commonage committee as a municipal entity in terms of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 in the Pella municipality. In terms of this a service delivery plan has also been developed for Pella as well as a constitution for the Pella municipal entity.

Currently, Farm Africa is involved in a similar process: they are developing a commonage management plan for the Pofadder municipality which will form the basis for the establishment of a functional commonage committee in terms of the Municipal Systems Act.

Farm Africa initiated their involvement in commonages in 1998, when they developed proposals in collaboration with the DoA and the DLA for the development of management capacity of ten groups throughout the Northern Cape who had received land under the land reform programme.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Land Affairs (2000) Commonage Manual.

The project started in 1999 after which six towns groups were identified : Witbank, Pofadder, Prieska, Strydenburg, Warrenton and the #Khomani San. The aim of the projects were to “strengthen the capacity of land reform beneficiaries to manage their natural resources and this in turn is expected to lead to wealth accumulation and a reduction in poverty.”<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Emergent farmers and commonage users**

There are four commonages in the Khai Ma municipality:

- Witbank
- Onseepkans
- Pofadder (x2)
- Pella.

The following section provides an overview of the different issues that arose from the interviews with the stakeholders in the Khai Ma municipality.

### **2.1 Nature of SSU and type of farming practice**

*Pella:*

Pella has two kinds of commonage: the old Act 9 land, which comprises 60 000 ha and the new commonage that consists of several farms that have been acquired by the DLA after 1994 and which amounts to approximately 40 000 ha.

There are approximately 110 small-scale farmers in Pella, of which 60 are members of the representative organisation, the Pella Boerevereniging (farmers association). The association has only recently been established; currently, therefore, not all interest groups or emergent farmers are represented. The chairperson stated, however, that the organisation welcomes the inclusion of emergent farmers with other interests such as irrigation farmers and the poultry group. The organisation is currently in the process of registering as a Closed Corporation in order to participate in the Kalahari Kid project (see Section 2.14 for more details on the project).

The emergent farmers organisation plays a marketing and education role but does not really function in a managerial capacity. Emergent farmers stated that management is the responsibility of the commonage committee.

The commonage committee manages the land and consists of members of the Pella emergent farmers union, the emergent farmers, the municipality and the community (non-farmers). The commonage committee used to meet on a regular basis but due to the dispute between the municipality and the commonage users about turning the Pella

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<sup>2</sup> Farm Africa (2003) “Key Lessons Learned from Working with Six Land Reform Communities in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa”. Downloaded on 21.11.2003.  
[www.farmafrika.org.uk/publications/NCape.Lessons.Aug03.pdf](http://www.farmafrika.org.uk/publications/NCape.Lessons.Aug03.pdf).

commonage into a Community Property Association (see section 2.16), the frequency of the commonage meetings has decreased.

Internal cohesion within the group seems to be good. There are, however, logistical problems such as the need for offices, facilities, kraals, a hall where the farmers can meet and storage facilities. Management structures meet once to twice a month.

Farming practices are mostly subsistence farming or family farming. Often animals are traded in for other commodities. Farming expertise has in most cases been developed out of own experience, family heritage and courses presented by the DLA and NGOs. It is mostly older generations who are farming, although there are also a few younger farmers. The emergent farmers stated, however, that only very few of the children are interested in farming and taking over the farming practice from their parents. Gender distribution is equal with an equal ratio of men and women using the commonage.

#### *Onseepkans:*

The Onseepkans Klein Boere-vereniging is comprised of 46 members and represents all emerging farmers in Onseepkans.

The membership fee is R 10/month/farmer. The membership fee is used to purchase dipping agent in order to dip the animals collectively. The organisation accommodates those who are unable to pay the fee by allowing them to form a group and pool their resources and pay R 10 collectively.

The Onseepkans Klein Boere-vereniging has a constitution that was compiled together with the municipality. Internal cohesion is good and despite minimal internal friction, management is secure. The organisation has a cash pool, and at the time of interviews was in the process of opening a bank account. Meetings take place once a month and in case of emergencies.

The commonage in Onseepkans is in walking distance from the residential area and comprises 12 780 ha. Animals are brought back into kraals during the night of which some are in the residential areas. Problems with stock theft and stray dogs have been reported.

The age patterns are a bit more diverse in Onseepkans than in Pella where some of the young residents are farming alongside the older generations. The gender ratio is slightly skewed towards the male farmers with 60% of the users being men. In most cases, farming knowledge was handed down directly from the parents: "Ons het saam met die bok groot geword" ("we grew up knowing about goats").

#### *Pofadder:*

The Khai Ma Kleinvee Boere-Vereniging represents the emergent farmers of Pofadder. The organisation is split into two emergent farmer groups due to the fact that they occupy

different tracts of commonage, namely the Pofadder commonage and the Kourries commonage. The Pofadder commonage is located adjacent to the town, whereas the Kourries commonage is located 75 km away.

**Table 1: overview of the emergent farmers in Pofadder:**

	<b>Kourries</b>	<b>Pofadder</b>
<b>Number of farmers</b>	15 farmers	46 farmers
<b>Fee structure</b>	Per head: 50 c/head/month	Per member: R 50/year for maintenance fees and R 50/year for grazing fee. This amounts to R 100/ year
<b>Size</b>	14 000 ha	1488 ha
<b>No of stock</b>	756	Approximately 600
<b>Grazing cap</b>	Still within limits	Way above grazing capacity

The emergent farmers hold separate meetings due to the fact that they occupy different tracts of commonage. Despite this they still fall under the same management structure, the Khai Ma Kleinvee Boere Vereniging, which deals with the municipality. The emergent farmers association has not been experiencing any internal problems. The emergent farmers association does have a bank account and some financial security.

Most of the commonage users range between 20-65 years of age. Half of the emergent farmers are women in Pofadder but there are only two women out of the 13 users on the Kurries commonage. Most of the users learnt farming practices from the parents. Farming serves as a security especially for older people whose only income is their pension money.

Currently, the emergent farmers association is only representative of the small stock farmers. There is a group that wants to conduct vegetable farming which would require standing off 50 ha of the Pofadder commonage. This would, however, place the land under even more strain concerning overgrazing. The stock farmers have thus not agreed to sacrifice land for the vegetable farmers. If the commonage was expanded, accommodating the vegetable farmers would be considered.

## **2.2 Produce use:**

In Pella the stock reared on the commonage is both sold in order to buy other commodities and used for household consumption.

In Onseepkans and Pofadder, emergent farmers are mostly farming for household consumption. Emergent farmers in Onseepkans stated that they are striving towards commercial farming and thus to rely to a larger extent on the income accrued from farming. Currently, however, farming practices are not enough to support the households. The farmers sell their stock amongst one another and those who have stock with better quality sell the meat to butchers.

Similarly, in Pofadder most stock is used for household consumption. Some of the emergent farmers sell their stock on the market. The current stock to user ratio is not sufficient to solely depend on farming as an income.

### **2.3 Communal vs individual grazing:**

Stock is grazed individually in Pella and in Pofadder: In Pella the farmers have identified separate tracts of land for each user. The farmers decided on the allocation amongst themselves and allocation is informal (i.e. the land is not officially allocated to specific farmers.). Similarly, in Pofadder the stock is managed separately. Each farmer has an individual kraal where his animals can graze.

In contrast, in Onseepkans, all animals are grazed communally. Each group has their own 'veewagter' who all graze the animals communally.

In most cases, dipping takes place in the group. Other sicknesses are tended to on an individual basis.

### **2.4 Infrastructure:**

Infrastructure provision and maintenance remains problematic on the commonage.

In Pella windmills are only partially functional, dams are leaking and water is becoming increasingly scarce. A suggested solution is the establishment of a pipeline from the Orange river. This would mean, however, that the commonage users would have to pay for the water. The infrastructure on the commonage is supposed to be repaired with the money collected in the Pella maintenance fund but due to low payment rates, it lacks the funds to repair the infrastructure. In some cases the users repair the infrastructure and the expenses are then subtracted from their fees by the municipality. It was emphasised that training on infrastructure maintenance and repairs for the farmers is needed.

According to the emergent farmers in Onseepkans there is, currently, very little infrastructure on the commonage. When the group accessed the commonage there was only one windpump and a few dams that were broken. The fences will also have to be upgraded. Infrastructure that has been implemented includes a solar pump that has been installed to pump water up to the commonage, which borders on the river. The Land Care grant will also be establishing infrastructure on the land (see section 2.14).

Currently, the municipality is responsible for infrastructure repairs in Onseepkans.

As mentioned above, the emergent farmers on the Pofadder and Kurries commonage only pay R 1000/year under the condition that they maintain the infrastructure on the land themselves. Currently, however, both emergent farmers associations are not making sufficient money to finance repairs. Hence the associations still approach the municipality for large infrastructure replacements.

The emergent farmers have the necessary knowledge and expertise, however, to do minor repairs themselves due to the training provided by Farm Africa.

## **2.5 Contracts:**

There are large discrepancies in terms of contracts and tariff structures in the Khai Ma municipality. The reason for this, as has been demonstrated throughout the Northern Cape, is the municipal amalgamation process. Inflexible tariff structures that prescribe uniform fees irrespective of number of stock grazed are also problematic as they create the incentive to increase numbers of stock without risking having to pay an increased fee. This practice can easily lead to overgrazing.

### *Pella:*

Due to the fact that it is on the old Act 9 land, farmers did not have to pay fees in the past. With the establishment of lease fees, users payment culture remains weak. Emergent farmers, however, stated that there is a movement towards improving the payment rate.

A grazing agreement has been established for the Pella commonage, which requires that each farmer is registered. Contracts are signed between the individual farmers and the commonage committee. The service agreement has, however, not been signed yet.

The current rates are 30 c per SSU/month and R 1.80 per LSU/month.

The individual users pay their fees to the municipality directly (by-passing the Pella emergent farmers union). The income from the commonage is ring-fenced by the municipality in the "Pella instandhoudingsfonds" (Pella maintenance fund) and is used for infrastructure maintenance. The account forms part of the commonage committee but the money generated is not sufficient to maintain the commonage.

### *Onseepkans:*

There is no official contract between the municipality and the Onseepkans commonage users yet. The emergent farmers do, however, have a letter of approval from the municipality, which affirms their use of the commonage. The letter will be in effect until the necessary infrastructure has been established on the commonage through the Land Care project (see below), after which a contract will be signed between the parties.

Therefore, due to the lack of contractual binding the emergent farmers are using the land for free. The agreement with the municipality is that they will be able to use the land for free for another three years until the Land Care grant has been implemented. The fees chargeable will be determined per head of stock unit grazed. It will be calculated

according to the amount that the municipality charges for the whole commonage divided by the total number of users.

The group stated that it would prefer long-term (10 year) lease contracts.

*Pofadder:*

The municipality signs contracts with two parties: the individual and the emergent farmer association. Similarly, individuals sign contracts with both the municipality and with the Khai Ma Kleinvee Boere-Vereniging. The emergent farmers association is responsible for the collection of the fees from the individual farmers, which is payable to the municipality. In the case that an individual farmer does not pay his/her fees, the municipality can hold him/her accountable.

This method has two implications: Firstly, it relieves the municipality from collecting individual fees as this function has been delegated to the emergent farmers association. This way of withdrawing from being the watchdog fosters internal cohesion within the group and self-organisation. Secondly, the municipality prevents individual non-payment. In fragile institutions such as emergent farmers associations, non-payment by one member could create an incentive for other members also to avoid payment, which ultimately could lead to the collapse of the organisation and a "free for all". The individual contracts signed with the municipality prevents this, since in the case of non-payment, the individual can still be held accountable.

The contract signed with the municipality allows emergent farmers to use the commonage for 30 years

Since the emergent farmers association is responsible for the collection of the R 1000 per annum and infrastructure maintenance, the fee structure for the commonage is determined internally by the organisation. In Kourries, the users pay 50c per head of small stock unit (SSU) per month. In Pofadder, however, the users pay a R 100/year membership fee (R 50/year for maintenance of the commonage and R 50 for grazing). This amount is paid irrespective of the number of animals grazed.

Initially, with the acquisition of the land, the fee payable to the municipality was pegged at R 6000 per annum. This included infrastructure maintenance on behalf of the municipality.

In 2001 a new contract was established, which decreased the rate to R 1000/year excluding VAT (total thus R 2000/year + VAT) on the condition that emergent farmers would have to cover for the infrastructure costs and maintenance themselves.

This kind of contractual arrangement has two implications for the municipality: Firstly, it relieves the municipality from the burden of providing for infrastructure maintenance through the provision of labour the physical capital; Secondly, the municipality does not have to deal with individual users for the collection of fees on a monthly basis. Rather fees are collected from the overarching organisation once a year.

Both these practices ensure minimal involvement of the municipality in the commonage.

Of the membership fee, R 1000 plus VAT is paid to the municipality and the rest is kept of inoculation purposes and infrastructure repairs.

Despite the low tariffs, payment culture is very weak. One of the reasons is that the most of the users do not have any income and the stock that they have is their only security. In both commonages there are a few users who have joined recently and who have not signed the contracts with the municipality yet.

## **2.6 Municipal and extension support:**

Emergent farmers in Pella stated that support from the municipality to the commonage users has been limited. The users stated that the municipality is poor and thus apart from the income generated from the leases from the commonage, it cannot really help emergent farmers since it cannot use the tax-payers money to subsidise the commonage. Problems experienced on the commonage are directed to Marcellinus Gall, who is a councillor and emergent farmer at the municipality. He reports to the council on a monthly basis on commonage issues.

Support from the extension officer to Pella has been good: the DoA provides training, education and acts in an advisory capacity. The extension officer visits Pella on a regular basis and the users can contact him if there is a problem after which he provides assistance as soon as possible. The DoA is also part of the commonage committee meetings. Lately, however, the meetings have been less frequent due to reasons mentioned in section 2.16.

Similarly, extension support, according to the emergent farmers in Onseepkans has been very helpful. The extension officer supervises the commonage occasionally and the emergent farmers can call on him when they need him.

The municipality also provides good support to the users: Mr Vries, the commonage manager, is available when needed, does inspections of the land and allocates Land Care funds. He was also involved in inspecting the new farms that will be acquired for commonage purposes. Emergent farmers report to the municipality if they are experiencing problems and turn to him for assistance.

Pofadder emergent farmers stated that the support from the municipality is limited as the institution is financially weak. Consequently, the users try to solve problems on the land themselves. Where they are unable to do so they turn to the municipality, which is very supportive and helpful. The extension officer visits the commonage on a weekly basis and the DoA also provides an animal health officer which has been a great support to the users.

The Land Bank has visited the commonage users on several occasions to inform them about the kinds of loans that they provide. Some of the emergent farmers have made use of these facilities and have borrowed money from the Land Bank already.

## **2.7 Interaction with commercial farmers unions**

In none of the towns have lasting relationships been established between the emergent farmers associations and the commercial farmers unions.

The Onseepkans emergent farmers association is in contact with the commercial agricultural union but the relationship is strained due to stray stock of the emergent farmers grazing on the adjacent agricultural land of commercial farmers. Emergent farmers are attempting to improve the relationship and prevent stock from grazing on the commercial land.

In Pella good relationships have been established with individual commercial farmers: They shoot jackals for the emergent farmers and have provided training in terms of Boerbok farming. Similarly, commercial farmers in Onseepkans provide emergent farmers with advice and support and commercial farmers are described as friendly and helpful.

Emergent farmers in Pofadder are currently investigating their inclusion in the commercial agricultural union. They have been invited to union meetings but have not yet had a chance yet to attend meetings. Support from commercial farmers in Pofadder has been forthcoming: they are willing to provide advice and help and have helped emergent farmers in setting up a windmill on the commonage.

## **2.8 Access criteria**

Within a common pool resource situation, the question remains as to how to determine who may have access to a limited resource and who not. Determining access criteria for commonage users is even more difficult since everyone in the town should be able to use the land since it is a public resource.

Emergent farmers in the Khai Ma municipality have identified access criteria for commonage users and although they are very broad, they do limit random use of the land by all town inhabitants.

In Pella access to the commonage is determined by the following criteria:

- The prospective commonage user has to be an inhabitant of Pella
- He/she has to be registered as a farmer
- He/she has to apply at the commonage committee for land and determine where he/she want to farm
- He/she has to buy stock from existing farmers on the commonage in order to keep the numbers of stock more or less stable. The farmer who sold the animals is not allowed to increase his/her stock numbers again.

- Decendants who want to farm need to attain their stock from their families and farm with them. The family is not allowed to increase its stock numbers again.

On the one hand this model provides a useful means to limit resource exploitation and ensures a stable number of stock on the land. The model, in essence, limits number of stock but allows for an increased number of users, which means that more people can benefit from the commonage without exploiting it environmentally. On the other hand, however, it does not allow for users to increase their stock numbers and thus limits the capacity for users to become commercial farmers.

In contrast to Pella, access to the commonage in Onseepkans is determined by only one criterion, namely that the prospective commonage user has to be an inhabitant of Onseepkans. The number of stock grazed on the commonage is not limited and the users try to accommodate all stock-owners. Farmers who have larger groups of stock are located further away from the residential area on the commonage and those with smaller numbers of stock and lack of transport are located on the land adjacent to the residential area.

Similar to Onseepkans, emergent farmers in Pofadder are subject to only one access criteria and that is that users have to be tax paying residents of Pofadder. The emergent farmers association stated that it is open to newcomers but limited space on the land limits access to the land. Currently, there are 12 people on the waiting list to access the Pofadder commonage who will have to wait for someone else to move off the land before they can be granted access.

## **2.9 Responsibility to the land: tragedy of the commons?**

Garret Hardin, who sparked the debate around common property management, states that it is in each users best interest to maximise his or her own use of the commons. Adding one additional stock unit to a tract of communal land will provide a total individual benefit to the user. The negative impact of this, additional overgrazing, is, however, shared by all herdsmen and the cost is thus carried by the group.<sup>3</sup>

Emergent farmers in Pofadder, however, generally have developed a sense of ownership and responsibility for the land that they are utilising. In Pella, for example, commonage users protect the land and look after it. They realise that it is not their property but their responsibility. For example they are locking the gates to the commonage in order to prevent vandalism. Similarly emergent farmers in Onseepkans stated that they they are managing and tending to the land as if it is their own. They take great pride in their land and state that it is well looked after despite overgrazing. Emergent farmers in Pofadder stated that they need to look after the land because of the long lease period that they are renting the land for and if they neglect the land they will be left with nothing. This demonstrates that long leases cultivate a sense of ownership and responsibility amongst commonage users.

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<sup>3</sup> Hardin, G. (1968) "The Tragedy of the Commons". *Science*, 162: 1243- 1248

## 2.10 Profits made from farming

Emergent farmers were asked to give an indication of what the income and the expenditure is from farming. Surprisingly, it seemed as if emergent farmers had not calculated the profits or the losses that they were making from farming before. This demonstrated that most emergent farmers still do not treat farming as a business.

In Pella, farmers provided an approximation of the expenditure on farming for a commercially oriented emergent farmer who has accumulated quite a few number of stock:

**Table 2: Profits made from the commonage in Pella**

<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Dip: 1/year plus help with dipping	R 460
Slaughter	R 200
Veewagter	R600/month x 12: R 7200 (see reasons for these figures below)
Transport	R200
Animal medicine	R 50
Total expenditure	R 8110
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	
Sell approximately 60 SSU @ R 200	R 12 000.
<b>PROFIT</b>	R 3890

This amount does not include animals used for household food supplementation, which also counts as a kind of income.

In Onseepkans the following approximations were made:

**Table 3: Profits made from the commonage in Onseepkans**

<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Dip and medicine: R 100/month	R 1200
Feed: R 200/month	R 2400
R 500/month for the veewagter x12	R 6000
Petrol: R 50/ month	R 600
Total expenditure	R 10 200
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	
67 stock units sold at R 200	R 13 400
<b>PROFIT</b>	R 3200

In Pofadder calculations were made both for the Pofadder and for the Kourries commonage as there are different circumstances determining overall expenditure and income.

**Table 4: Profits made from the commonage in Kourries:**

<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Approximately R 1800/ month: (because Kourries is 75 km away and because sheep need more attention in terms of medicine)	R 21600
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	
Total income approximates	R 52 000
<b>PROFIT</b>	
	R 30 400

**Table 5: Profits made from the commonage in Pofadder**

<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Approximately R 900/month (because it is mainly goats, and therefore less maintenance costs are involved)	R 10 800
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	
Total income approximates	R 25 000
<b>PROFIT</b>	
	R 14 200

The imposition of minimal wages has had severe implications for emergent farmers profit margins. Most of the commonage users have hired herders or “veewagters” who tend to the stock on the field. With the implementation of the minimal wage, the “veewagter” has to be paid a minimum of R 600/month, which decreases the profit margin of emergent farmers.

It should be noted that the figures provided above are based on the subjective opinions of the interviewees and should thus not be seen as guidelines for cost calculations for emergent farmers. Furthermore, a purely monetary value has been attached to the utilisation of the commonage. Many of the benefits, however, that accrue from keeping stock are non-monetary such as livestock presenting a risk aversion mechanism, a safety net and in the context of the sustainable livelihoods approach it fosters the development of social capital. Furthermore the multiplier effects of stock keeping (such as the sale and barter of milk, meat and other products) are important factors for the stimulation of the local economy.

### **2.11 Progression off the commonage:**

In most cases the commonage users are neither progressing nor regressing in their farming practices, which refutes the idea of commonage being a stepping stone for emergent farmers.

In only one case, in Pella, has a commonage user moved off the commonage and acquired her own land through the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development programme (LRAD). Although there are users who have accumulated sufficient numbers of stock to be able to farm on their own land, land acquisition is restricted through delays in the LRAD programme. In Pella, the interviewees were under the impression that LRAD had been

stopped. Emergent farmers have applied for the grant but have not received any feedback from the DLA. The emergent farmers stated that the bottleneck is at district level at Calvinia. At the time of the interview in August, 2003, some emergent farmers had not received feedback concerning their applications since May. Emergent farmers stated that they would prefer to work through the Upington office because there LRAD applications are processed much more rapidly compared to Calvinia.

In Onseepkans none of the emergent farmers have moved off the commonage by acquiring new land yet. Emergent farmers farm for household consumption but most are striving towards emergent farming and commercial farming. Currently, however, there are no commercial farmers amongst the emergent farmers yet.

During the interviews the question arose as to how does one define a commercial farmer: when he/she has attained 300 stock units or rather 500 stock units? Guidelines will have to be established to indicate to emergent farmers when they have reached a point where they can be self-sustained. Currently, farming is a security especially for those who have no other income.

A possible increase in commercial farming is foreseeable, however, with the involvement of the Kalahari Kid programme as the programme creates a stable market and will create an incentive for emergent farmers to increase their stock numbers.

Currently, the farmers sell their stock amongst one another and those who have stock of better quality sell the meat to butchers. Current farming practices are, however, not sufficient to support the households. Emergent farmers diversify their activities by doing odd jobs in order to subsidise household income.

## **2.12 Needs of users: training and skills**

All of the emergent farmers interviewed stated that they are lacking training and skills development as well as physical capital. The emergent farmers expect government to process LRAD applications faster and to make more money available for land acquisition.

Emergent farmers in Pella stated that their most important needs are transport related, equipment and knowledge. They are in dire need for capital in order to acquire vehicles, due to the difficulty of accessing the farms. For example, there is commonage close to Witbank, which is over 80 km away from Pella<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, some of the other farms are difficult to access due to difficult terrain. Emergent farmers stated that they also need tools and equipment, for example droppers, windmill equipment and poles. Additionally, they stated that they need training on how to repair the infrastructure on the land. The emergent farmers added that government often imposes programmes on farmers without consultation with the beneficiaries. Farmers are then expected to implement a process in which they did not have an input.

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<sup>4</sup> There were eight state farms that were handed to Concordia, Steinkopf and Pella as commonage. The state farms are close to Witbank, which explains the distance between Pella and the state land/commonage

Similar to the emergent farmers in Pella, those in Onseepkans are in need for land, infrastructure and training. The primary priority for the emergent farmers is training so that they can become self-sustained and not depend on external assistance.

Emergent farmers have, however, not received any training yet; although they have had workshops presented by the DoA where stock farming, herd management and stock sicknesses were discussed. The workshops were very helpful but more of them are necessary and that they should be more intensive.

The primary need identified by the emergent farmers in Pofadder is access to more land, which is followed by the desire for better technical support, such as animal health support. Additionally, in the light of the current drought, emergent farmers requested that government help them financially and with the provision of feed for the animals.

### **2.13 Support from FARM Africa**

Farm Africa's involvement in the commonage has made a significant impact. It has provided financial training to the emergent farmers, grazing management and animal health training.

Farm Africa also provided several projects such as the "Wentelfonds" or rotational fund. The NGO donated R 110 000 to Pofadder emergent farmers from which the fund was established. The money was used for the buying 200 units of stock for starting a stock bank, which is located on the Kurries commonage. The animals are used for reproduction purposes and placed back into the bank. The emergent farmers can keep the offspring. The stock is of good quality and well-bred rams have been bought for the herds, which improves the quality of the herds of the commonage users.

Farm Africa also provided for a "course fund", which funds courses and "Boeredae" or "farmers days" and also paid for the herder ("veewagter") to guard the animals in the stock bank. The money in the course fund has already been spent, which entails that the emergent farmers now have to pay for the stock banks veewagter themselves.

Although the emergent farmers voiced their fears that when Farm Africa leaves in March 2004 they will no longer receive their support, they have learnt a lot and hope that they will be in state to provide for themselves.

In Pella, however, the emergent farmers complained that interaction with Farm Africa has been weak. Pella emergent farmers feel that Farm Africa should not only focus on one community (i.e. Pofadder) but should include them all.

The commonage committee in Pofadder is in the process of being established through Farm Africa's establishment of the Commonage Management Plan.

Although the plan will be piloted in Pofadder, representatives from the other towns, however, are also included in the process as it will have to be replicated in Pella, Witbank

and Onseepkans. The commonage committee will include two representative emergent farmers from each the Pofadder- and the Kurries commonage, the extension officer, the commonage management official and the LED official.

#### **2.14 Projects: Landcare and Kalahari Kid**

There are currently two initiatives that are running in the Khai Ma Municipality concerning commonage.

Firstly, a Land Care programme is currently being implemented in Pofadder and Onseepkans that deals with infrastructure improvements and maintenance on the commonage. The Kurries commonage has received R 300 000 over three years. The first R 100 000 has been used to sink boreholes. R 300 000 has also been allocated to Onseepkans of which R 100 000 has been used for the establishment of a solar pump to pump water from the river onto the commonage.

Pofadder commonage users have also applied for Land Care grants since their infrastructure is in a very bad condition. Fencing has been stolen due to the fact that new houses have been provided within the community. The yards are, however, not fenced in, which leads to the community stealing the commonage fences in order to fence their own yards. There are only two water points on the commonage which leads to a concentration of herds near the water. A better distribution of water points is needed in order to prevent overgrazing and soil erosion in the areas.

Pella has been excluded from the Land Care grant allocation due to regulations that a tract of land cannot be subsidised twice. Prior to 1994, the Pella commonage was subsidised with a grant, which was used to implement certain infrastructure on the land. According to the emergent farmers, however, the improvements were only done on paper (on maps) but they were not physically done on the land. Hence the commonage's infrastructure was in dismal state when the emergent farmers accessed it after 1994. The commonage users cannot apply for a further Land Care grant because they have already been subsidised previously.

The second project in the area is the Kalahari Kid programme, that exports goats to the Middle East. The Onseepkans emergent farmers are involved in this project as most of their stock are "boerbokke" which is what the company is seeking for export. The agreement between the emergent farmers and the company is still in process but the Onseepkans Klein Boere-Vereniging has already registered itself as a CC in order to fulfil the company's requirements. Constant demand by the company would provide a stable market for goats meat and thus a stable income for commonage users. Additionally, the organisation will be providing business training to maximise outputs of emergent farmers.

## **2.15 Grazing capacity and environmental maintenance**

In all the cases, the commonage is overgrazed. Although the emergent farmers are aware of the grazing limitations and they try to keep to the limits, the limited amount of land and the large numbers of stock lead to the degradation of the land.

In Pella overgrazing has occurred in several instances due to the above-mentioned problem. Emergent farmers proposed expanding the land for emergent farmers since it is difficult to tell a farmer to limit his/her stock numbers.

In Onseepkans, at the time of the interview, there were approximately 1500 stock units on the land, although the grazing capacity only prescribes the grazing of 800 units. The DoA is in the process of buying two farms adjacent to the commonage that are 7200 and 6500 ha in size. Farmers with the larger herds will move onto the land that is further away and the smaller farmers continue to graze their stock on the commonage that is closer to the residential areas.

As mentioned in Section 2.1, the Pofadder commonage is 1488 ha big and accommodates 600 stock units and 46 users. This is far above the grazing limitations and the land is overgrazed with double the amount of stock allowed. Comparatively, the Kourries commonage is 14 000 ha big and grazes 756 stock units where the grazing capacity is still in its limits. It has been suggested that commonage users should move from Pofadder to Kourries by the latter has a water problem and is 75 km from Pofadder. New land acquisition for Pofadder, however, is in the pipeline.

## **2.16 Establishment of a CPA in Pella**

There are several political tensions between the Pella commonage users and the Khai Ma municipality.

The community held a referendum in which it was decided to establish a CPA on the commonage. The municipality, however, does not support this. Both parties have thus forwarded contradicting requests to the Minister without consulting one another. The request by the Pella community states that they want the land registered in their name as a CPA and the other by the municipality state that the land should remain in the hands of the municipality. Due to their contradicting nature, the Minister has rejected the requests. This dilemma would have been prevented if a functioning commonage committee had been in place where these issues could have been negotiated internally.

If Pella did establish a CPA, administration and management would then no longer be the responsibility of the municipality. The CPA would have to be included in the IDP in order to be eligible for LED funds. The municipality would still, however, be responsible for the delivery of certain services, namely electricity, roads and water.

## **2.17 Involvement in IDP process and commonage in the IDP**

Pella emergent farmers stated that they were not really involved in the IDP process and did not provide significant inputs. In contrast to this, emergent farmers of Onseepkans were included in the IDP process. A draft plan was provided to the community on which it could make its inputs and add/discard what they felt was applicable/not applicable.

### *Commonage in the IDP:*

The municipal IDP makes several references to commonage development in the municipality.<sup>5</sup>

- For the provision of more land, the following alternatives are available:
  - Applications with the DLA for the acquisition of commonage that is leased out to town residents
  - Residents who need land, are to apply for the necessary funds themselves to acquire the land by, for example, approaching the DLA, a commercial bank, Landbank, Business Development Corporation etc.
  - Application will be done to the DoA to attain the necessary water rights for irrigation purposes. (pg 44)
- Environmental conservation programmes for commonage farming and other farming activities have to be developed (pg 25)

### Economic aims in terms of Agriculture:

- Water provision to the commonage farms for purposes of stock farming. This will be able to be achieved through the following alternatives:
  - Existing infrastructure is upgraded (windmills are provided, existing wells are deepened, existing pipes are replaced etc)
  - New infrastructure is developed by, for example, digging new wells, developing new water distribution lines, etc
- The provision of water for irrigation purposes for all towns through the following alternatives:
  - The creation of a new water provision network, consisting of a pipe system
  - The creation of a new water provision network, consisting of a channel system
  - The utilisation of the existing network, where irrigation water is extracted from the water purification plant
- Assistance with the attainment of funds for the acquisition/ hire of land for stock farming in Aggeneys, Onseepkans, Pofadder and Witbank through following alternatives:
  - Funding from the DLA
  - Funding from a commercial bank
  - Funding from the Landbank
  - Funding from the Business Development Corporation

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<sup>5</sup> Khai Ma Municipal IDP, 2002.

- Acquisition of funds for the provision of infrastructure on all places except for Witbank: Funding alternatives for the provision of infrastructure:
  - Funding from a commercial bank
  - Funding from the Landbank
  - Funding from DBSA
- Provision of programmes for training, capacity building and research. Training and capacity building programmes can be put in place through the following alternatives:
  - Programmes through relevant government departments
  - Programmes funded by the municipality
  - Programmes donated by the private sector
  - Programmes that are donated by DBSA
- Agricultural research in the whole area. Agricultural research can be done through the following alternatives:
  - Draw in the DoA, other research agencies and the private sector (pg 49-50)
- Assistance with facilitation for the creation of the necessary structures to represent agriculture in Pella, Onseepkans and Pofadder. (pg 42)
  
- Spatial and land reform aims: The acquisition of more land for stock- and crop farming within the Khai Ma municipality and a land audit (pg 40)  
Spatial development and land reform:  
In the short term a land use development plan has been identified as a priority in which the needs of all other sectors are to be addressed concerning land. Parts of the rural areas fell under the Act 9 of 1987 and the transformation process was completed during December 2002. This land will get special attention in the land use development plan. (pg 52)
- Projects identified for Pella:
  - Agricultural development
  - Land acquisition
- Projects identified for Onseepkans:
  - Land acquisition
- Projects identified for Witbank:
  - Acquisition of farms  
(Pg 68)
- Funds set aside for training of commonage committees: R 52 000

### **3. Service delivery to commonage users**

Service delivery occurs to the commonage in two ways: through the municipality and through agricultural extension officers. Both parties' capacity and roles in service delivery are discussed below.

#### **3.1 Department of Agriculture**

Mr Leon October is the agricultural extension officer for the Khai Ma municipality.

### **3.1.1 Functions and services**

Functions fulfilled by the extension officers include the following:

- Assistance with acquisition and transfer of land identified by commonage users
- After-care and development of the grazing management plan
- Implementation of the grazing management plan
- Landcare: implementation of infrastructure
- Capacity coordination
- Technical support: technical design and land use planning. Implementation of solar points, wind pumps
- Skills development and infrastructure, organisation of 'farmers days' or 'Boeredae' with the Land Bank, land use and stock management.
- Organising the commonage committee
- Food security

### **3.1.2 Extension services- demand or supply driven?**

The provision of extension services is both a demand- and a supply-driven function.

Extension services are supply-driven in that the extension officer visits the commonage on a regular basis. Extension services are also demand-driven in that emergent farmers can demand extension services and assistance, which the officer tries to provide as soon as possible.

One of the issues that has repeatedly emerged in the provision of extension services to commonage is that since the demarcation of the municipalities, the extension services have not been coordinated with the new municipal boundaries. Extension services should be coordinated within municipal boundaries so as to prevent cross-cutting activities. This will enhance cohesion amongst commonages within a municipality and prevent fragmentation such as is the case in Onseepkans where it remains unclear as to which extension officer is responsible for the towns commonage: Uppington extension officers and Springbok extension officer are disputing who is responsible for the commonage at the expense of the users who are not attaining the required services. It is for this reason that the extension officer from Sprinkbok, who is responsible for the rest of the commonage, Mr October, does not go there regularly. In Onseepkans extension service provision is thus demand driven.

In Pella, however, visits take place on a regular basis so there service provision is more supply driven.

The DoA also provides a full-time animal health officer (Mr Andries Matys) in Pofadder who spends the majority of his time and efforts on assisting and advising emergent farmers. Farmers supply the vaccines, medicines and tattooing kit and the health officer assists in administering the medicines and the tattoos. He made a dosing and injection

programme available to emergent farmers and does monthly monitoring inspections if the programme is being followed.

### **3.1.3 Livelihoods contribution of commonage**

Commonage users can be classified into several groupings: subsistence farmers, emergent farmers and proto-commercialists.

Subsistence farmers keep a few livestock units for supplementing household food provision and as a safety net for unbudgeted expenses such as funerals or school fees. They are not necessarily interested in expanding their livestock numbers as they are sufficient for their current needs. Keeping livestock is seen as a means towards diversifying income and expanding livelihood strategies.

The second kind of commonage users are emergent farmers who have acquired a few livestock units and are intent on expanding their stock, but who are still reliant on non-agricultural income.'

The third kind of commonage user is the "proto-commercialist" who has accumulated a sufficiently large flock to move off the commonage and apply for additional land in order to develop his/her own farming practice.

The extension officer stated that the dominant type of commonage user in Khai Ma are emergent farmers. The two groups in Pofadder, however, can be classified as subsistence farmers.

The number of commonage users has increased over recent years. In the past, people worked in the mines but due to the low price of minerals and consequent low incomes, people started to turn to farming practices as a means to diversify income. They invested their small pay-outs from the mines in acquiring a few stock units as this was the only livelihood option available.

Commonage in the region does not operate as a stepping-stone for most of the users but is rather seen as a permanent provision or arrangement on which to keep a few stock units as a means towards livelihood diversification. Additionally, high land prices and the pit-falls of the LRAD programme prevents commonage beneficiaries using the land for "stepping stone" purposes.

### **3.1.4 Infrastructure provision**

As stipulated in the contract with the municipality, infrastructure repairs are to be done by the emergent farmers association. They are financially relatively strong; institutionally, however, they are weak. They fail to, for example, enforce grazing regulations. In emergency situations they are very well organised, however. For example, if the wind pump breaks, the emergent farmers will each donate an animal to be sold in order to

finance the repair of the windmill. Day to day operation is thus well organised. The overarching management structures such as marketing, financial management and administration are, however, neglected. This demonstrates that for most users the commonage just presents an opportunity for subsistence farming and not as a long-term investment opportunity.

The municipality plays a monitoring and inspection role on the commonage concerning infrastructure and it can approach the user committee about the maintenance of the infrastructure.

One of the main problems on the land is theft of fencing. Recently, 35 000 RDP houses were erected- however, without fences. This entailed that the new homeowners steal commonage fences in order to build their own fences around their yards.

The DoA is providing Land Care funds for the improvement of infrastructure and upgrading of water provision in order to ensure optimal use of the land and environmental sustainability.

The total amount of R 1.2 million will benefit the commonage users of Onseepkans, Pofadder and Witbank (See section 2.14).

### ***3.1.5 Relationship between the department and the municipality***

The relationship between the DoA and the municipality seems to be problematic. The extension officer stated that the department is getting below average support from the municipality. Despite the fact that the department and the municipality communicate well, cooperation is lacking. The extension officer networks with the municipality on a regular basis. The municipality, however is not very active in commonage issues and at the time of the interview was not actively involved in the development of the commonage management plan as initiated by Farm Africa. The municipality had not contributed to previous meetings despite the fact that there is a commonage manager (Mr Vries) and a local economic development (LED) official (Mr Nel). The reason for this is that agricultural development is not that high on the municipality's priority list.

In the past the DoA used to operate independently, without interacting with the municipalities in terms of extension services. Currently, the municipality is not informed about the working strategies of the DoA.

According to the DoA the municipality does not have sufficient capacity to manage the commonage effectively. Commonage management is a new function for the municipality and insufficient skills and financial restrictions prevent the effective management thereof. Cooperation with- and assistance from other role-players, such as the extension services, is essential for the effective management of the commonage.

Another issue that was raised is the lack of role clarification of the different stakeholders. The municipality is the generalist institution and thus needs to provide basic training skills

and basic knowledge while the extension officer should tend to specialist training and skills provision to the emergent farmers.

Three approaches were suggested to improve the interaction between the department and the municipality and to enhance role clarification.

1. According to the extension officer, the roles of the municipality and the department should be clarified by the national DoA in terms of land reform and commonage use. Although this is partially done by the commonage manual, confusion remains as to what the role of the municipality really is: for example to what extent should it become involved in the community issues such as emergent farmer development?

2. According for Farm Africa, role clarification and specification should be drawn up and clarified by the extension officers since they are the extended arms of the national DoA and are familiar with the interactions that take place between the stakeholders.

3. Role clarification should ideally take place through the commonage committee since the roles can be customised according to each municipality's unique situation. Currently, however, there is no commonage committee in place and the four emergent farmers groups in the municipality do not form an overarching group.

Effective commonage management depends on the following issues

- Cooperation of stakeholders.
- Clarification of the roles and responsibilities.
- Emergent farmers should have a group of well-organised committee members who can represent their interests.
- The commonage committee should consists of relevant structures, a clear programme, an overarching plan (the management plan) and a mission and vision.

### **3.1.6 Environmental degradation and overgrazing**

There are several cases of overgrazing in the area that can be ascribed to the following reasons:

1. Weak water distribution and infrastructure which entails that the animals concentrate on few water points and overgraze the land in that area, although the land on the rest of the farm is in a good condition.
2. There are insufficient marketing channels and opportunities for the stock and the animals are not in a good condition, which makes it difficult to sell them.
3. The extension officer provides environmental awareness, but the people fail to comply to the grazing regulations.
4. Emergent farmers do not provide the real numbers of their stock on the commonage which makes it difficult to enforce grazing regulations

With the local elections coming up in 2005 the municipality does not want to enforce grazing regulations out of fear for losing their voters. Extension officers cannot do anything about overgrazing. Their intervention is limited to informing the users that they

are overgrazing but emergent farmers cannot be expected to reduce their already limited stock numbers.

Additionally, the land available is limited: there are 32 to 37 users on 4000 ha land, which renders it impossible to make a living from farming. Larger farmers try to leave but their ability to do so through LRAD is limited.

### **3.1.7 Skills development and interaction with Farm Africa**

Skills levels of emergent farmers are weak to average. The DoA is in the process of initiating a training programme for 25 emergent farmers in grazing and stock management in the municipality. R 1.5 million has been made available for this and will be spent on three legs of the training programme:

1. Learner training
2. Short courses training: 1-2 week courses
3. Mentor farmer activities: A commercial farmer will be employed who will, on a monthly basis, speak to the community about infrastructure repair, stock management etc.

The relationship between the extension officer and Farm Africa is described as good as it utilises community participation techniques in developing the commonage management plan. It will also provide training to extension officers on community participation techniques.

Farm Africa has also enabled people towards sustainable development and empowerment through the stock bank. In 2004 Farm Africa will be withdrawing, however, and the community will take over the bank. Not only does the stock bank ensure an increased number of stock but also keeps the genetic line of the animal pure.

## **3.2 Municipal Capacity**

### **3.2.1 Development officials**

In the light of the Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000) municipalities are obliged to be developmental institutions that promote the well-being of local communities through their Integrated Development Plans.<sup>6</sup> Municipalities find fulfilling this function, however, very challenging as they do not have the necessary capacity in terms of financial, physical and human capital to promote local development. In most municipalities, the organograms are focussed around input-oriented functions with municipal capacity being highly skewed in the financial, administrative and corporate services departments. Developmental functions are either slotted into one of these line-department or are dealt with under a separate sub-directorate that is output driven and that focuses on service delivery. These output driven departments, however, are not supported with the

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<sup>6</sup> Republic of South Africa. *Municipal Systems Act No 32 of 2000.*

necessary capital inputs such as qualified staff and financial support to be able to promote development.

Mr Vries, who is the head of administration, used to do all the development projects in addition to being responsible for administration of the municipality. Mr Nel, who used to be the old town clerk (stadsklerk) was consequently employed on a contract basis to ease the work-load of Mr Vries.

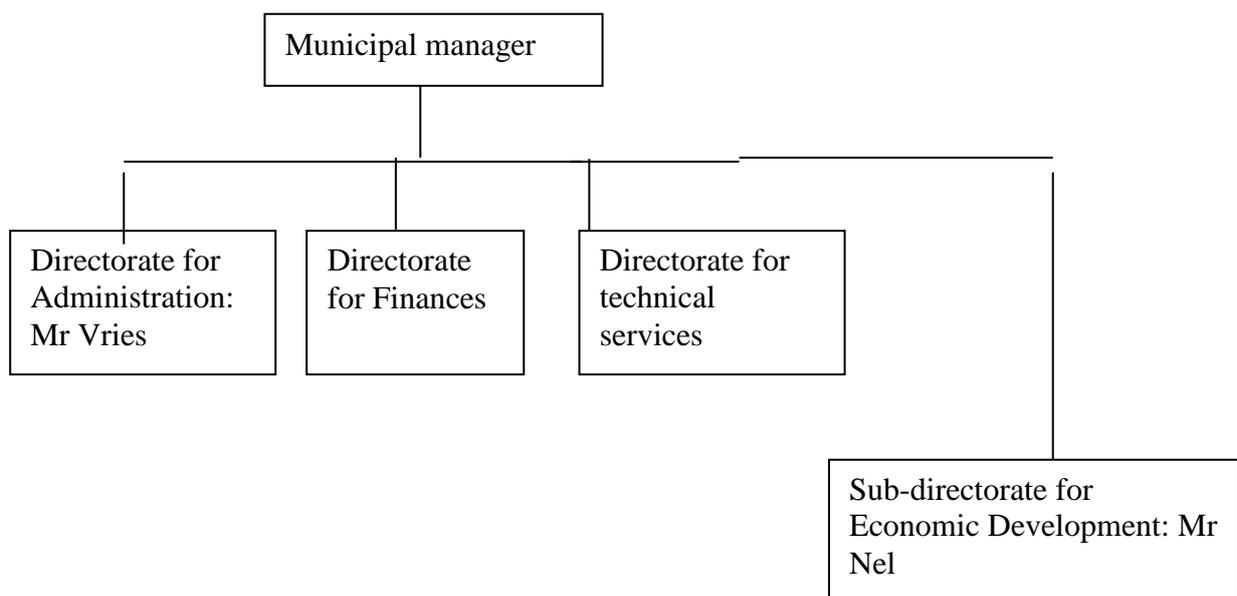
Mr Vries is a member of the emergent farmers association and thus he retains the function of commonage development. He monitors the commonage on behalf of the municipality after hours when he tends to his personal commonage commitments.

In Pofadder, there is only one development official, Mr. Nel who is responsible for Local Economic Development (LED). He is located in the sub-directorate for economic development and is accountable to the municipal manager. He is responsible for the economic and social development projects set out in the IDP (management and implementation) in all the towns in the Khai Ma municipality.

In the interview with the municipal manager, it emerged that the sub-directorate will have to be transformed into a separate line department that will be responsible for developmental issues.

The municipality currently, however, does not have personnel that is trained in strategic development management. This is mostly the municipal manager's function. Mr Nel does not have the necessary skills to be able to manage and implement development in the whole municipality. He has attended several training workshops and will have to undergo training as well as a project management course.

Organogram:



The current IDP does not specifically make provision for a development official and at the time of compilation of the IDP, the organogram had not yet been finalised.

Currently, Mr Nel is employed on contract basis. The municipality cannot employ him on a permanent basis since the salary proportion of the municipal budget already exceeds 35 %. This is a problem in rural municipalities where the income base is very small. In Pofadder, for example, there are 70 % indigents and the income generated is very low which does not allow for additional expenditure in terms of staff.

As an alternative to employing development officials, the municipal manager made the suggestion to implement project committees in each of the towns. Community members should be trained to run development projects in the towns. Each community runs its own projects and reports back to the council. The municipality plays a managerial and facilitative role and monitors the process. Other role-players could be involved in the process to provide assistance such as the DoA for commonage as community project leaders would have to be trained in terms of financial and project management.

Currently, projects are run from and by the municipality. The municipal manager stated that they would prefer to only monitor the projects and manage them financially.

Farm Africa is planning to test the community development model and will provide the institutional and the planning framework for the community project committees. Farm Africa will also provide for an agricultural specialist who will provide the technical expertise. Financial and IT education will also be provided.

### **3.2.2 Satellite towns:**

Most municipalities are comprised of a head office in the main town and outlying offices in the satellite towns. In most cases, the municipal functions in the satellite towns have been minimised and the outlying offices simply deal with the collection of tariffs and basic operations and maintenance functions. With municipalities becoming increasingly pressured to be developmental institutions, development functions tend to be driven from head offices, since the outlying offices lack the staff or budgets to do this. This has two implications. Firstly, due to understaffing, existing staff at the head office increasingly take on developmental activities, along with their existing strategic functions. Secondly, satellite towns are further marginalized as development is driven from the central town.

In the main town (the “seat” of the municipal head offices), the municipal head offices often drive the operational functions as well as the strategic functions such as policy-making, monitoring and evaluation and the management of municipal programmes. This type of situation is problematic, since it confuses head office functions (strategic functions) and outlying office functions (operational/delivery functions).

There are thus two problems:

- The centralisation of decision-making at head office level, and the corresponding decline of outlying offices
- A confusion of strategic and operational functions at head office level.

In order to remedy this dilemma outlying offices should be provided with the necessary capacity in terms of staff and resources to become the developmental hubs and concentrate on the operational outputs of the municipality. Furthermore, the equivalent to the outlying offices should be created in the main town. The main office would then be relieved of its developmental obligations and concentrate on the strategic functioning of the municipality, where the administrative, corporate services and financial services are located.

In the Khai Ma municipality, the head office is located in Pofadder, with regional offices located in Pella, Onseepkans and Witbank and Aggeneys. In Pofadder the regional- and head office has been collapsed into one. The municipality in Pofadder does not have the manpower to be able to implement an additional regional office in the town. Currently, the regional offices are only responsible for the collection of the funds and for water and sanitation provision. The regional towns are not decentralised offices but are merely satellite offices. The municipality does not foresee a movement towards more decentralised satellite offices.

**Table 6: Municipal officials in the regional towns:**

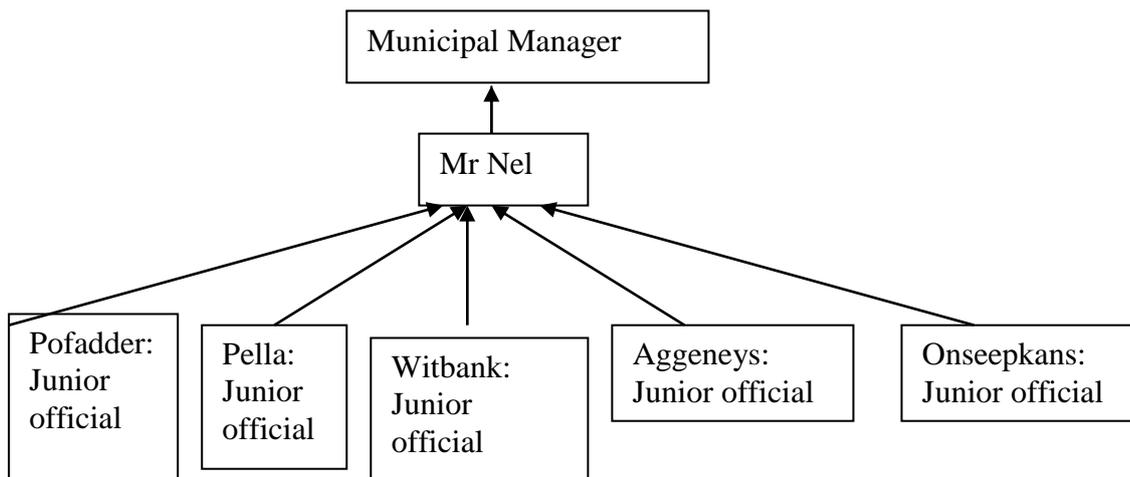
<b>Pella</b>	<b>Onseepkans</b>	<b>Witbank</b>	<b>Aggeneys</b>
4 sanitation workers	2 cashiers	One water worker	1 library assistant and no cashier.
1 water systems worker	2 general water and sanitation workers	(No cashier)	
1 Cashier			

The officials in the regional towns have low skills levels. There is no technical staff in the regional towns, except for the water and sanitation experts.

In Pofadder there is one foreman and one infrastructure assistant. Electricity provision for the town has been contracted out which means that the municipality is relieved of electricity provision and the municipal technical staff is only there for backup purposes.

Under ideal circumstances, if there were no financial constraints, there should be one developmental official in each town.

The line department should consist of senior staff ( Mr Nel ) and one junior official in each of the towns. The junior officials would be accountable to Mr Nel and he would report to the municipal manager.



The cost of employing additional development staff was quoted as follows:

- A junior assistant would be employed at R 45 586/year and a senior official in a permanent post would be employed at R 142 000/year.
- Five junior officials for each of the towns would thus cost the municipality and additional R 227 930 a year in salaries. This excludes petrol costs and other developmental assets needed.

The total package for a developmental line department in which a permanent post has been created with one junior official in each town would cost R 369 930 a year.

### 3.3 LED official

Mr Dennis Nel is the acting LED officer. His job description encompasses the following issues:

- The development and marketing of tourism, agriculture and mining
- The development and marketing of local economic development as set out in the IDP
- Initiation and Coordination of housing projects
- The development and marketing of an integrated economic development plan
- Other functions such as skills development, development of business plans, SMME development and any other issues that arise with the municipality that need addressing.

Projects not only include economic projects but also social projects such as HIV/Aids. For example Mr Nel works in cooperation with the VCT (Vaccination, Counselling and Treatment) site and an awareness programme, the Aids Brigade (Vigs Brigade).

He has been involved in several projects:

- Development of SMMEs eg Northern Security Patrol Services, which tends to the security needs of the community.
- Ubuntu construction: coordinated SMME construction company
- Helped in the development of hairdressing salon together with NAMBIA (Namaqualand Besigheids Informasie Diens Sentrum)
- All builders who get state tenders are required to register at the National Home Builders Council. There is a fee for registration that needs to be paid that the LED officer is negotiating with council to subsidise the fee.

The LED officer's skills are limited due to lack of training. He does not have any background in project management and the only training that he has received is SMME development skills, which he has transferred to the community.

Additionally, he does not have a drivers-license, which means that he has to get a lift with other officials in order to visit Pella, Witbank and Onseepkans. At the time of the interview, he also lacked access to a computer and printer. Business plans and reports are thus written by hand.

Monitoring and evaluation of the LED officials' activities are conducted by the municipal manager. He compiles the memos and the timeframes according to which the LED officer has to operate. He also checks if the assigned job has been completed in the set timeframe and checks the outcomes and reports.

Mr Nel has to report in written form to the council once a month at the council meetings.

The LED official receives guidelines on what tasks to fulfil but is also allowed a certain amount of discretion. For example, he is working on the idea of producing low-cost coffins, which could then be sold cheaply to the community by the municipality. Mr Nel expressed his frustration that he often identifies viable projects but many of them are not receive acknowledgement. One example is the creation of a PPP with the Granite works, which has been rejected by the municipality. A Korean firm, however, has now voiced its interest in this.

The LED officer is not supported by any other staff members in his task and is solely responsible for the whole municipality. He stated that if he had his drivers license he could be able to visit Pella and Pofadder (where LED projects are) on his own and would not need additional assistance. LED projects in Pella include a Vegetable garden project, a brick making project and the Oasis and Wildernis guesthouse.

Additional resources that he stated he would need to function effectively is a computer, a drivers license, a vehicle and a cell phone. Skills development will also have to be promoted. Mr Nel stated that although the municipality is part of the SETA they have not yet sent him on a project management course. Mr Nel used to be a councillor and thus has no experience in writing business plans.

Due to the lack of municipal involvement in the commonage as stipulated in the contracts, the commonage currently does not require any management inputs. Mr Nel stated that

one should focus more on sustainable communal farming and would like to get involved in commonage issues to a larger extent. He also stated that currently, government programmes are not filtering through to the commonage users since the commonage manager is not transferring the information to the community. More interaction between the commonage users and the municipality is needed. For example, the stock bank could have been managed more effectively.

Currently, commonage and LED projects are not linking although small stock farming presents an economic opportunity that needs to be recognised.

Support from FarmAfrica has been very good. The organisation has also been involved in community upliftment and LED projects in the community. In collaboration with the municipality, FARM Africa is piloting two community gardens where grey water gets collected, which by means of drip irrigation, waters adjacent vegetable garden.

They are also thinking of implementing a water recycling project: Pofadder's water is very expensive and thus they are piloting to put up a plant where drainage sieves sieve the sewerage water until it is clean enough to water a lucerne field which will be used as feed for commonage animals. This project will be run on the commonage.

Up until now, projects have been implemented successfully and they are running and sustainable. Problems have not yet been experienced and none of the projects have collapsed.

### **3.4 Interview with the administrative head/ commonage manager:**

Mr Vries is responsible for the commonage by default as he is the chairperson of the Pofadder emergent farmers committee. His main occupation is being the administrative head. He is also responsible for various other jobs such as credit management, the vehicle testing station and disaster management. <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Mr Vries' formal job description includes the following responsibilities:

- Head of administration and report to the municipal manager
- Management of human resources that includes: General personnel administration, Employment Equity, Development of human resources, and Skills development
- Coordination of library services
- Effective management of satellite offices
- Management of special projects as determined by the Municipal manager
- Delivery of effective administrative support services to the other departments within the municipality
- Dealing with general correspondence that is not covered by the municipality
- Coordination of the municipal car fleet.
- Rezoning of land
- Handling tenders and contract administration and the management of provision administration
- Control cleaning and tea-services
- General supervision: human resources and support services, library services and coordination
- Disaster management and coordination
- Commonage issues of the Khai Ma municipality
- Housing
- Environmental health
- Minutes and Agendas.

One of the big problems is the lack of role-clarification amongst the officials: everyone is a “jack of all trades” and take on several roles and responsibilities.

Mr Vries voiced the concern that Mr Nel should be employed on a permanent basis in contrast to his current contract employment. Once his contract expires, a new employee will have to be trained by Mr Vries. Mr Nel was employed to ease Mr Vries’ workload, but they cooperate only to a very limited extent. Mr Vries used to be responsible for project management and implementation. Now Mr Nel has taken over this function. When Mr Nel’s contract expires in December, Mr Vries will be responsible for LED and development again.

Mr Vries added that ideally, an additional person should be employed to assist him with his work. Skills development and the necessary transport facilities need to be improved to provide development officials with the developmental capacity needed.

There has been no significant linkage taking place between LED and commonage despite the necessity for this to ensure sustainable development.

Commonage issues are reported to council once a month together with Mr Marcellinus from Pella. Mr Vries reports in written form, while Marcellinus reports orally to council.

Group contracts for the commonage users are currently being implemented. The same will count for Onseepkans once the infrastructure has been implemented on the land.

Mr Vries stated that there are no problems with the payment rate of the commonage users. There used to be problems in the past when the lease was R 6000/year but with the decrease of the rate and placing of the responsibility of infrastructure maintenance in the hands of the users, payment rates are no longer a problem.

The commonage committee is in the process of being established with the help of Farm Africa. Support from FA has been very good and they have made excellent contributions. Although work has been done on commonage development in the past (2001) by the LRC and SPP, Mr Vries is not aware of it.

At the time of the interview, Mr Vries had only been involved in the discussions around the development of the commonage committee to a very limited extent. Although he has been to emergent farmers meetings in the different towns, it seems as if the municipal staff has not been very much involved in the development of the commonage committee. This practice is highly questionable as the commonage committee will be managed by municipality.

The functions of the commonage manager are very limited. He is only responsible for the collection of the fees, which happens once a year. Mr Vries stated that this should, however, fall under someone else’s job description.

The municipality must, however, take on a monitoring function and someone must be employed to fulfil this function. For example, although the contracts with the emergent farmers in Pofadder state that they have to maintain the infrastructure themselves, they do not repair their infrastructure because the municipality is not monitoring the use of the land. The small-scale farmers should develop a committee that is responsible for the M&E of the land. Routine inspections should be done of the land and should be part of the council reports. Additionally, all the role-players need to be included in commonage management: the technical department must also be included.

Furthermore, the municipality should see to it that the commonage users have the capacity to operate and maintain the infrastructure themselves. A representative number of users should, for example, be taught how to do maintenance. The knowledge can then be transferred to the rest the emergent farmers.

The emphasis should be on prevention rather than on cure and the municipality should be responsible for this. The municipality thus just initiates the process and trains people to a certain level of self-sustained infrastructure maintenance. They then just have to report back to the municipality on a three-monthly basis.

### **3.5 Interview with Treasurer**

In the past the commonage was leased out by means of public auction for the use for 3 years. The lessee was obliged to maintain the infrastructure him/herself. The municipality got approximately R 66 000 in from the commonage per year. This did make a significant contribution with balancing municipal accounts.

Currently, commonage users are supposed to be paying R 2000 plus VAT a year for all the commonage. The commonage users have not paid the full amount this year: the municipality only attained R 1000. This money is used for the council's operational budget and is used for fixing fencing around the town (general repairs of fences which are not necessarily linked to the commonage). The money is thus not ring-fenced and is not used for commonage expenses.

The municipality cannot contribute to infrastructure maintenance firstly, because it is set out in the contracts that the commonage users have to do so themselves and secondly, because the municipality did not budget for commonage maintenance.

46% of the municipal budget is allocated to salaries.

## **4. Suggestions to the establishment of a commonage committee**

Currently, there is no functional commonage committee in the Kai Ma municipality. In most of the municipalities, commonage committees are established in an ad hoc fashion and act in an advisory capacity and thus has no executive powers within the municipality. The LRC and SPP suggest that commonage committees need executive powers instead of

operating in an advisory capacity in order to attend to the day-to-day functioning of the municipality. In the case of an emergency, such as breakage of a windmill, immediate service delivery is required, which cannot wait for council to convene before action is taken. (SPP and LRC, 2001: 1).

A commonage committee with executive powers can be established, as mentioned above, as a municipal entity as prescribed within the Municipal Systems Act No 32 of 2000. A “municipal entity” is defined as

“(a) a company, co-operative, trust, fund or any other corporate entity established in terms of any applicable national or provincial legislation and which operates under the ownership control of one or more municipalities, and includes, in the case of a company under such ownership control, any subsidiary of that company; or

(b) a service utility.”

(Municipal Systems Act, 2000).

According to this approach, the commonage is managed according to a service delivery agreement that has been agreed on with the municipality. (SPP and LRC, 2001: 2). Section 82 (2) (a) spells out the steps to be taken when “a municipality intends to provide a municipal service in the municipality through a service delivery agreement with a municipal entity” (Municipal Systems Act, 2000). The municipality may

“ (a) alone or together with another municipality, establish in terms of applicable national or provincial legislation a company, co-operative, trust, fund or other corporate entity to provide that municipal service as a municipal entity under the ownership control of that municipality;

(b) alone or together with another municipality, acquire ownership control in any existing company, co-operative, trust, fund or other corporate entity which as its main business intends to provide that municipal service in terms of a service delivery agreement with the municipality; or

(c) establish in terms of subsection (2) a service utility to provide that municipal service”

2(a) A municipality establishes a service utility in terms of subsection 1(c) by passing a by-law establishing and regulating the functioning and control of the service utility.

(b) A service utility is a separate juristic person.

(c) The municipality which established the service utility must exercise ownership control.

(Municipal Systems Act, 2000).

The term “service delivery agreement” is defined as

“an agreement between a municipality and an institution or person mentioned in section 76 (b) in terms of which a municipal service is provided by that institution or person, either for its own account or on behalf of the municipality.” (Municipal Systems Act, 2000).

A “service provider” is defined as

“ a person or institution or any combination of persons and institutions which provide a municipal service.” (Municipal Systems Act, 2000).

By “ownership control” of the municipality of the municipal entity, the municipality has the “ability to exercise any of the following powers to govern the financial and operating policies of the entity in order to obtain benefits from its activities:

- (a) To appoint or remove at least the majority of the board of directors or equivalent governing body;
- (b) to appoint or remove that entity’s chief executive officer;
- (c) to cast at least the majority of the votes at meetings of the board of directors of equivalent governing body; or
- (d) to control at least the majority of the voting rights at a general meeting in the case of a company, co-operative or other body having members. “  
(Municipal Systems Act, 2000).

For the purposes of the commonage committee, section (b) is of importance as it demonstrates the control that the municipality has over the management body of the entity.

Section 76 (b) (i) of the Municipal Systems Act confirms the above by stating that the municipality can “provide a municipal service in its areas ... through an internal mechanism, which may be...an external mechanism by entering into a service delivery agreement with a municipal entity”. (Municipal Systems Act, 2000).

The commonage committee thus becomes a municipal entity that subscribes to a service delivery agreement with the municipality. Ownership of the land remains with the municipality whereas the managerial and administrative functions have been decentralised to an external agency, that remains, however, linked to the municipality. The entity thus manages the commonage on behalf of the municipality. (SPP/LRC Presentation at the HSRC Kimberley Commonage Workshop, 2003: 6)

The advantages of this kind of commonage committee are numerous: Firstly, it eases the burden on the municipality in having to deal with day to day commonage administration and management. This function becomes the responsibility of the entity, which should have the necessary expertise and experience of the commonage. The municipality remains responsible for the commonage but delegates daily management to the

commonage committee, which has the executive powers to act independently as the need arises. The entity is compelled to work in cooperation with the municipality, which acts in a supporting and monitoring capacity and the entity still gets the administrative support from the municipality. Additionally, the municipality's infrastructure can be used and the entity has its own sub-budget, which is linked to the municipality's financial system. (SPP and LRC, 2001: 7).

Finally, the commonage committee's management plan that has been approved by the municipality should become part of the municipality's IDP. This formalises commonage as one for the primary developmental resources of the municipality and ensures that the management plan will be implemented effectively as part of the developmental framework of the municipality.

There are, however, also disadvantages to this approach of developing a commonage committee, namely that the municipality has the power to change the constitution of the committee. Moreover, the Act prescribes that a municipal official or a councillor is to be the chairperson of the committee. (SPP and LRC, 2001: 7). This can be problematic if either of the two do not have agricultural and land reform expertise.

In order to establish the municipal entity an in depth consultation process has to be conducted with the stakeholders. Farm Africa is currently conducting the process in the Khai Ma municipality in which the Pofadder commonage has been identified as the pilot study. Representatives from the other towns have also been drawn into the process and have been providing inputs towards the establishment of a commonage committee.

## **5. Conclusion**

The commonage of Pofadder presents an interesting case study as it is the first farm that was acquired by the DLA after 1994 for commonage purposes as part of the land redistribution programme. The interviews conducted with the emergent farmers, municipality and the extension officer revealed that the commonage programme is not without its flaws: the problems that are experienced on the commonage in Khai Ma are to be found across the Northern Cape. Municipalities do not have the capacity to deliver effective commonage management and administration, emergent farmers lack internal cohesion, and in many cases the rights that determine who may access the land how and when are not in place.

The study shows that without the correct institutional structures in place and without the determination of user- and access rights, the commonage programme is bound to fail. These structures will have to be put in place before significant progress can be made and organisations such as Farm Africa, the LRC and SPP make ground-breaking contributions to the establishment of these structures.