

SEMONKONG Conflict Case Study

“Conflict over grazing land: Matebeng village”

The village community at the Matebeng has been engulfed in a conflict over illegal grazing of livestock in the “preserved” areas. The conflict has claimed a number of lives. The “progressive” livestock farmers are deliberately violating grazing management procedures. They have “unleashed” their livestock to graze on “preserved” land and instructed their shepherds (herdboys) to ensure that the livestock does not get impounded by law enforcement officers, i.e. the Village Development Councilors, (to the extent of using force where necessary).

As a result, the community has been factionalized. The body responsible for range (grazing) management (the VDC) is helpless since the local chief does not seem to cooperate in order to bring the situation under control. Some members of the community have aligned themselves with the VDC. To them appropriate measures need to be taken against the “progressive” farmers and their shepherds. The VDC has constantly requested the chief to no avail, to intervene in the matter. Other members of the community have aligned themselves with the village chief; they are the direct beneficiaries of such malpractice. The matter has been reported to the following higher level structures/administrators – the Ministry of Local Government, the District Level and Range Management Officers, and the district Principal Chief. 1