

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/Conference Title: IGC-IRC 2008 (XXI International Grassland Congress and the VIII International Rangeland Congress – Joint meeting).....

Travel Dates: 29 June 2008 – 5 July 2008 (conference), travel dates ~ 26 June 2008 – 18 July 2008

Location: Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China.....

Group Member(s): Gareth Hempson.....

Aims: To attend and present work from my PhD at the IGC-IRC 2008 joint meeting.....

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

This year's joint IGC-IRC conference in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, was the first occasion on which these 4-year events had been joined – a highly successful venture as it turned out! The choice of Inner Mongolia as the setting for the conference provided a rare opportunity to gain insight into the ecology and agricultural practices of this relatively remote region. A real success of the conference was to facilitate scientific discussion between Western and Eastern schools of thought. I undoubtedly benefited from the exposure to the ecological challenges faced in the region, as well as from the presentations and discussions detailing the suite of approaches that have been adopted to address these issues.

Due to the high profile of the meeting, many of the top scientists in the grassland / rangeland field of study were in attendance at the conference. It was most stimulating to be able to listen to the presentations by these prominent individuals, as well as to take part in the debate which their viewpoints generated. Discussions over the various topics presented were greatly enhanced by the broad range of interests represented at the conference – agriculturalists, ecologists, economists, sociologists & policy makers were all present to contribute ideas on how to ensure the sustainable future of people in agricultural, pastoral and conservation priority environments.

From a more personal perspective, the opportunity to present and discuss my PhD work with a broad range of individuals was most beneficial. I certainly gained many new perspectives and ideas which have already contributed to improving my research. One discussion with a leading figure in my field has in particular provided me with great encouragement. Attending the conference has also given me a far better sense of where my work fits into the greater scheme – the contribution it will make and the important areas to focus on have been gainfully refined. Beyond the academic scope of the conference, the opportunity to mix with

like minded people in a tailored environment was most enjoyable, and I made many new friends. The opportunity to travel to China and spend time outside the conference exploring its landscapes, customs and cultures were valuable life experiences.

The experience of attending a high profile, broad ranging conference in a far flung setting was most memorable and very beneficial. I am very grateful to the James Rennie Bequest for affording me this opportunity.



1. A warm welcome to the conference



2. Fieldtrip to an agricultural research station



3. Mongolian landscapes



4. Experiment to control wind erosion