



## PRODUCTION OF APPROPRIATE FOOD: sufficient, safe, sustainable

### TECHNICAL TRAINING OF DRAFT ANIMALS SHEET LINE

#### Introduction

The dressage of draft animals is a set of successive learning, based on repeat orders and constraints imposed on animals to obtain a docile and voluntary behavior both for the execution of the work.

#### Qualities of a trainer

A good trainer must be patient, attentive to the signs of fatigue, calm and firm.

#### Duration of training

The duration of training is about a month. It also depends on the qualities of the trainer and character of animals. The training can start three or four years, even without rushing animals two years. The best time is the end of the dry season, which allows the perfect dressage at the first plowing. The animals trained for the traction become fully operational after two to three crop years.

#### Methods of dressings

Three training methods are used for cattle.

- The first is to develop two new young bulls under the same yoke. This is the most common, but the most difficult.
- The second method called "**Parrain**" is to educate a young animal with an experienced one. Those two young animals then are gathered under the same yoke.
- The third so-called "Sandwich" is done with a yoke of three places; the candidate dressage is in the middle of an experienced pair.

#### How to Train:

The user must perform hitch himself straightening his team or at least participate actively. So we have to:

- Talk to the animals;
- Give to the animal a very short name (two syllables, for example);
- accustom the animal to respond to the following orders: advancer, stop, turn left, right, back. Each order must be accompanied by an effective stress;



Fig. 1: Use of a stress mean (a stick thin) for an unexecuted order.

- Use immediately after stress means an unexecuted order, but gently (stop the stress means just after an executed order). A wooden stick thin, flexible and brutal voice can be used.

**Stages of training:**

The training involves several stages, each about a week:

1) **Habituation to a dresser man:** allows to approach and touch the animal without causing his concern. Piercing the nasal septum with a special clamp and trimming horns (3 to 5 cm at the ends) can help dressing. Restraint can be total while immobilizing the animal to the ground (often standing) to perform delicate operations such as: treatment and care of the nasal septum piercing. For piercing nasal septum, use the nose clip easy to use and much more secure (Figure 2);



Fig. 2: Approach your animal from the front and call his name

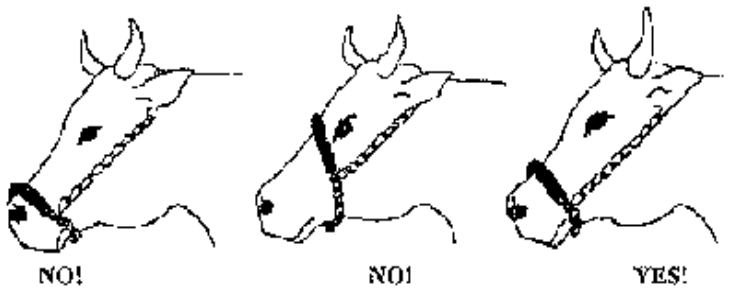


Fig. 3: Correct adjustment of the halter chain

The harness consists of the following parts : halter chain or nasal ring, yoke, head joint rope, steering rope. Adjust your Halter Chain correctly to the animals to avoid wounds at the eyes, muzzle or mouth (Figure 3).

The head joint and steering ropes are attached to the halter chain or nasal ring to control the oxen. The steering rope is 12 mm thick and 20 m long, head joint rope is 6 mm thick and 2 m long (Figure 4). Avoid wrong adjustment of the head joint. Figure 5 and 7 show the wrong way to make the head joint. Despites, Figure 6 shows the right way.

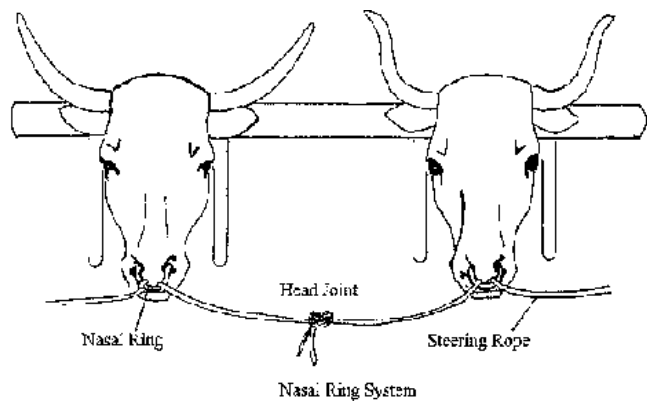


Fig. 4: The Head Joint joins the two animals and the Steering Rope leads round their rears to the driver.

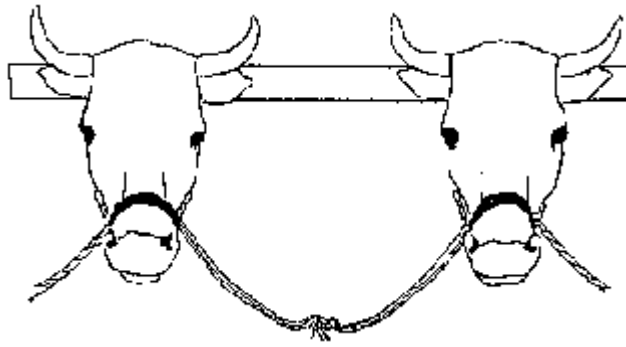


Fig. 5: No! The head joint is too long.

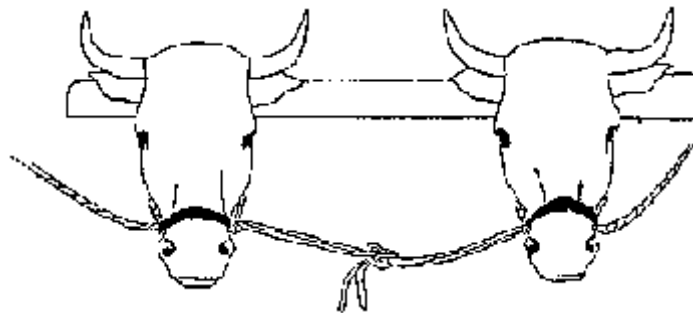


Fig. 6: Yes! Head Joint and Steering Rope are correct

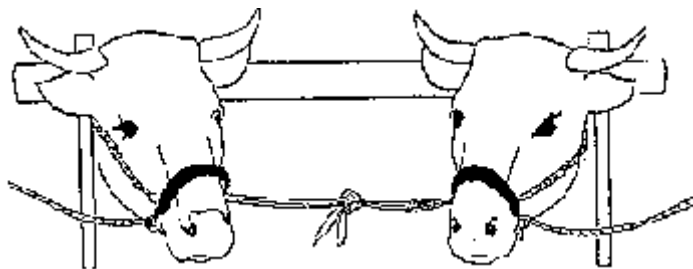


Fig. 7: No! The head joint is too short

2) **Installation and safety of yoke:** animals are tied by the horns to the horizontal rod to familiarize them with human activities. The yoke connects the two draft animals. All traction implements are attached to the yoke by the pulling chain (prow, harrow) or the beam (cart, roller cutter). The yoke consists of the yoke beam, the yoke pegs and the peg beam. You have two kinds of yokes:

- The short yoke with a length of about 1.3 m, used for plowing, harrowing, transport, clearing.

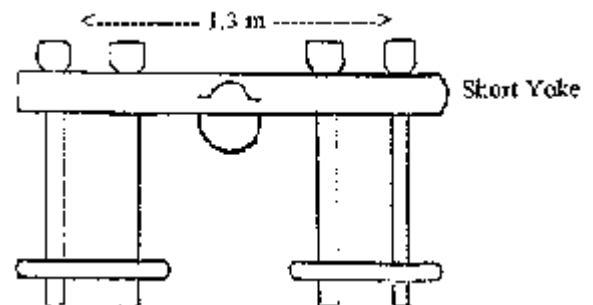


Fig:8: Use the short yoke for plowing and weeding rice and wheat (40 cm rows)

- The long yoke with a length of about 1.7 m and adjustable to different working distances, used mainly for ridging, weeding and molding.

- For weeding or Ridging use the maximum distance between the animals. Leave central holes of the yoke free (80 cm ridges). For plowing, reduce the distance between the animals by changing the pegs Weeding: of 60 cm ridges.

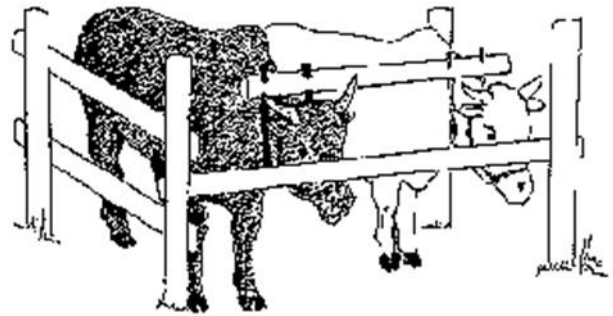


Fig. 9: A pair of draft animal should be equal in size, weight, height and temperament. Here a new pair is tied in the dressing room or stock

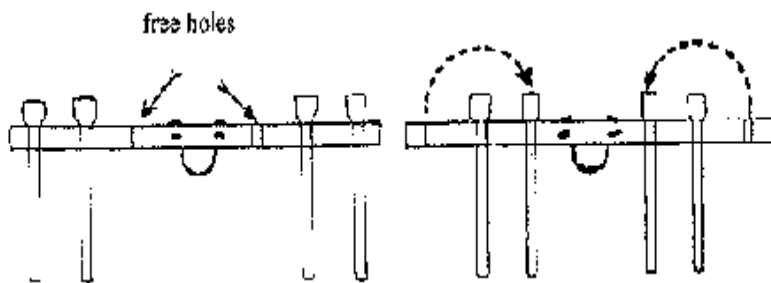


Fig. 10: Use the long yoke for ridging, weeding and molding

obeys the voice and guides. Allow short rests from time to time. Avoid shouting, give clear commands, go slowly and steadily, never beat the animals, be patient, show no anger.

### 3) The practices to walk:

often requires the presence of three persons (one in front of animal, two on the sides). It allows to the herdsman to give the voice command. Initially, the animals are kept closely (if necessary, by means of ropes), in the end, the animals walk alone without the presence of aid and

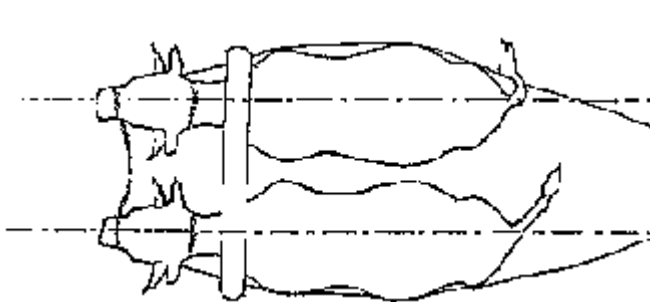


Fig. 11: Teach them to go in line!

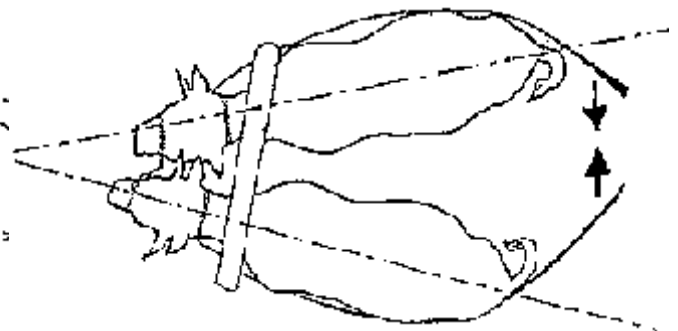
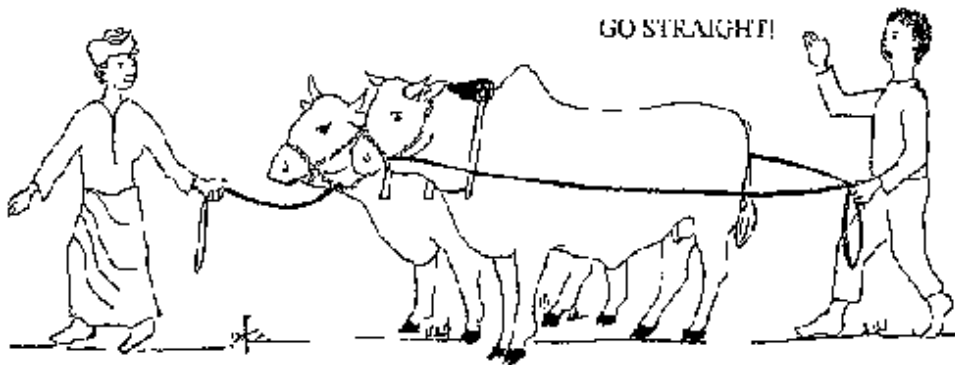
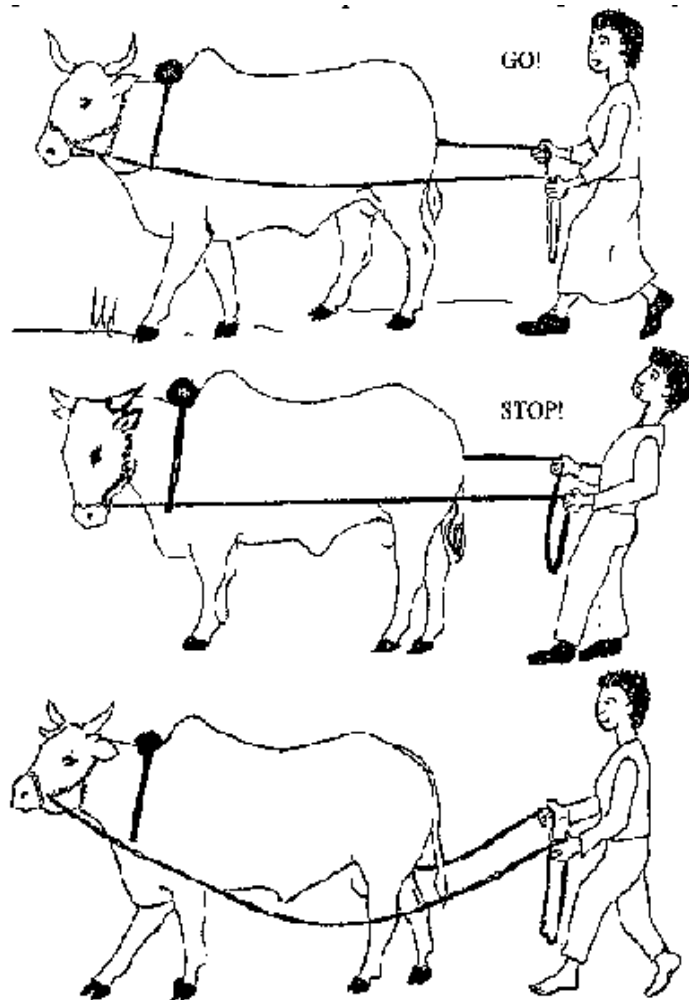


Fig. 12: Use the steering rope to keep them in line!

- a) Change positions from time to time. Allow both the farmers and the partner to learn the handling exercise

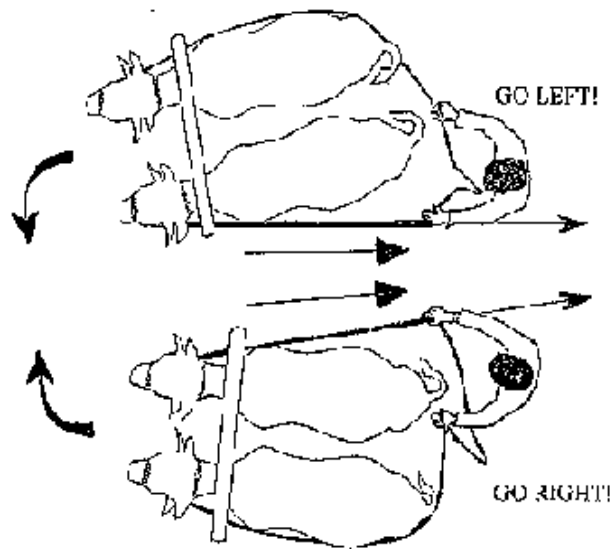


- b) Teach them to start and stop: use the commands "go" and "stop"



- c) Continue to call the names and the commands until the animal have learned to follow the commands

- d) Start to teach them to turn left and right by using the commands "go left" - "go right"



When the animal walk steadily and follow your commands you hook the pulling chain to the yoke and continue practicing for the first day.

As soon as the oxen are accustomed to the chain

- attach a small light log to the end of the chain and pull
- teach the animals to pull straight
- give commands to turn left and right while pulling
- increase the size of the pulling log
- attach a harrow, first upside down and pull - then turn
- give a short break after some minutes

Try to control the animal alone as far as possible. Change with your partner, to allow him to learn the exercise as well.

- 4) **The development of a traction effort:** consists to accustom the draft animals to tow a load which is gradually and progressively increased in weight. Traction sequences are interspersed with many pauses (example 10 minutes of work and 30 minutes of pause). Check the adjustment of your harness before you start pulling. Wrong adjustment can hurt or wound the animal.
- 5) **The traction with agricultural tools:** consists of accustoming the draft animals to perform the agricultural work on a field. The traction with one cattle is less common than the use of two pair cattle. It is recommended for small work which require little effort, as the medium transport, weeding, hilling

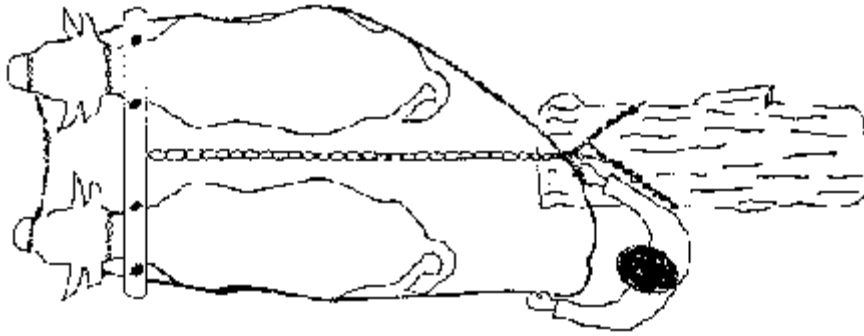


Fig. 16: Develop draft effort by pulling a log and accustoming of draft animals to cultivate

6) **The management of the Careers of draught animals (cattle):** The duration of use of draft cattle is highly variable. It depends on how the use of animals, but also market conditions fixing the purchase price of young cattle and the sale price of cull cattle. Several activities are performed to assure the effectiveness of animal traction including housing, food, health and hygiene.

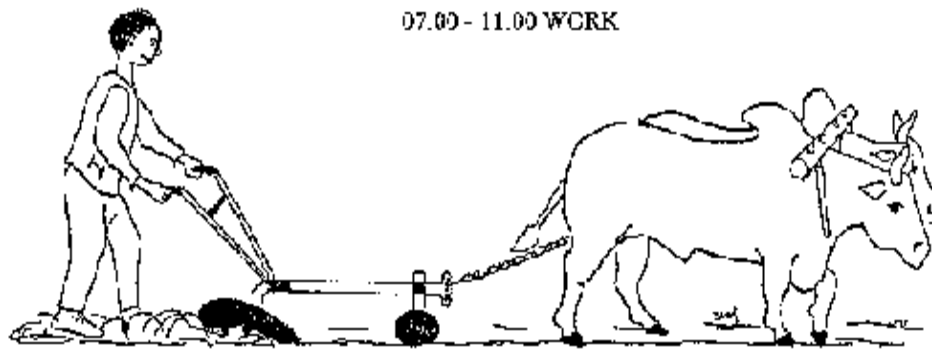


Fig. 18: Animal Work from 07:00 - 11:00

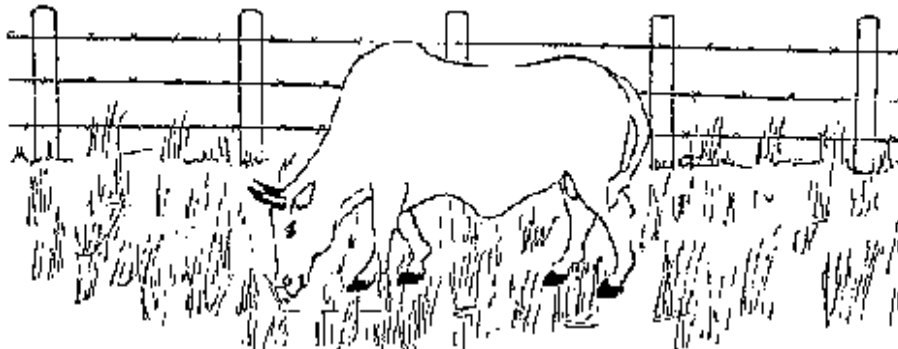


Fig 19: Animal Grazing from 11.00 to 18.00

**7) Housing of draft animals:**

located near the residence of the user, the housing must provide good comfort to the draft animal. Housing of draft animals must have a pen where animals are constrained or free, means of distributing water and food (buckets, troughs, racks and fodder troughs), a restraint system with simple poles of tie stall or corridor of contention, shelter against the weather or the sun, a system of concentration of dejections or manure. Then, for shelter, there should be 4-5 m<sup>2</sup> per cow to park at night and from 3.25 to 3.75 m<sup>2</sup> for the cowshed, plus a corridor of 1 to 1.5m behind the animals and an area of pause; for the pit, a volume of approximately 9 m<sup>3</sup>. Stabling must be

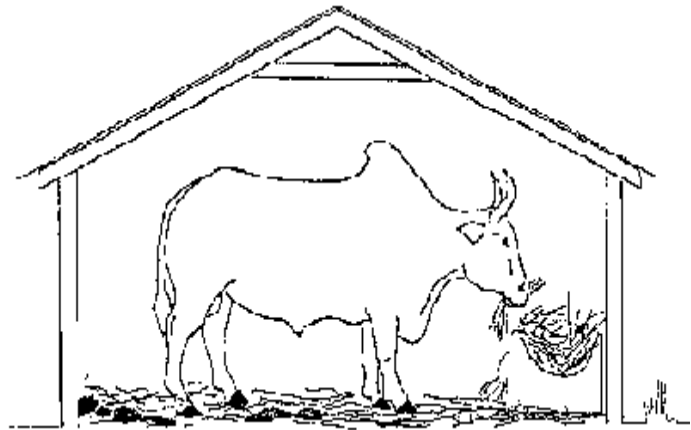


Fig. 19: A good cowshed. During the night feeding in the cowshed

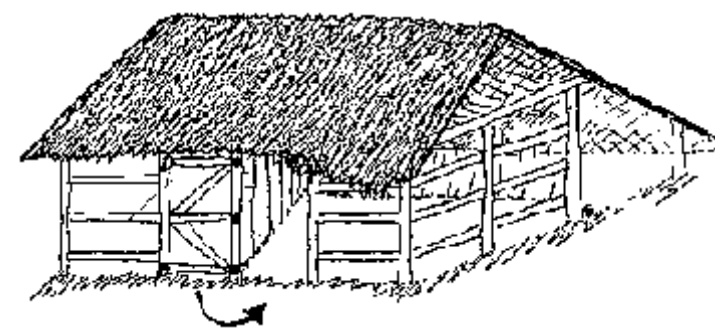


Fig. 20: A good COWSHED is made up of three rooms

maintained in a clean condition and not wet: setting pit regular litter, regular cleaning of troughs, buckets and feeders. During the night, your oxen are kept in a COWSHED. An oxen farmer without a COWSHED. An oxen farmer without a cowshed is no real oxen farmer. The housing of your oxen will give you a lot of advantages.

**8) Castration:** Castration makes the animal more gentle and docile. It is performed by a veterinarian or technician competent with Burdizzos kind. The age at which the animal is castrated is between two and three years because if the operation occur after 3 years, the character of the bull is already said, the effect is small; and if it is done before two years, it may limit muscle development of the animal. Castration must be made at least four weeks before the start of training.

**9) Health risks and prophylactic standards:** There is no specific pathologies for draught animals. However, their extreme use can exacerbate certain diseases and injuries: wounds, lameness, skin sores, joint damage ... Some diseases appear to be more severe in draught animals because they limit them to work (example: dermatophilosis). To maintain a satisfactory state of health, it is important to ensure compliance with the basic rules of hygiene and working conditions. It is even more important for draught animals as well as for others to do the mandatory vaccines in campaigns struggles against major outbreaks. It's the same regular internal and external deworming. All illnesses or injuries constants on a draught animal, you need to alert a near veterinary or technician for potential treatment advices.