New forms of pastoral mobility among sheep herders in the Algerian steppe; the case of pastoralists of Djelfa.

Dihia GACI 1*1, Jean-Pierre BOUTONNET 2

1ENSA, Algers, Algeria, Dihia@Yahoo.fr
2INRAE, UMR SELMET, Montpellier, France. Jeanpierreboutonnet@yahoo.fr

Introduction:
The objective of this study is to characterize, through the case of the breeders of Djelfa, the current forms of mobility of the breeders in the Algerian steppe and their reasons for transhumance. To understand their organizational strategies for their displacement and the choice of host areas. It is therefore a question here of bringing out the diversity of long-distance mobility practices in a more precise manner with a view to understanding their organization, operation and the factors that influence the decisions of breeders.

Matériel et méthodes:
Semi-directive surveys were made with 59 sheep owners registered in Djelfa as their homeland and operating long distance mobility (> 200 km) in different host areas (El Bayadh, Tiaret, Laghouat). Sampling of breeders was carried out using a combination of three: i) "reasoned convenience"; ii) "judgmental sampling"; iii) "snowball" method.

Results and discussion:
Three main types of long-distance mobility were described. They are distinguished by their routes, the distances travelled during an annual cycle and the transhumance calendar: 1) Medium amplitude displacement, 2) Large amplitude displacement, 3) Small amplitude displacement. The surveys carried out highlight the current existence of long-distance mobility practiced in a sustainable manner and in various ways on the part of breeders in the wilaya of Djelfa. This observation calls into question the proposals analysing the abandonment of large mobility as due to the reduction of routes, the narrowing of transhumance corridors and the adoption of a sedentary lifestyle by the pastoralists.

Conclusion:
It has been shown through this study that the mobilities are still relevant in the steppe territory and that the breeders adapt to their context by mobilizing material and human means to achieve it. At present, large-scale mobility is a means of maintaining livestock farming systems and a way to manage the socio-ecosystem of Algerian steppe.