Rangeland Restoration Awards 2026

GAOLAO BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

From Talegaon Raghuji, Wardha District, Maharashtra, India



ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

- Community-led organization conserving the Gaolao cattle breed and restoring Vidarbha grasslands.
- Rooted in the traditional knowledge of the Nanda-Gaoli pastoral community.
- Focuses on grassland restoration, breed conservation, forest rights, ethno-veterinary medicine, and women & youth empowerment.
- 288 active members working across 74 villages in Vidarbha.
- Awarded the ICAR National Breed Conservation Award 2025 for indigenous breed conservation and ecological restoration.

THE LAND THEY RESTORES

- Traditional grassland landscapes of Vidarbha, Maharashtra.
- Includes grassland and forest buffer ecosystems surrounding the Bor Tiger Reserve.
- Supports indigenous livestock breeds adapted to dryland ecology.
- Critical grazing lands for pastoral livelihoods, biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

- **Revived Indigenous Breeds:** Increased pure Gaolao cattle from **528** to **1,140** through community-led conservation.
- **Strengthened Community Governance:** Established **33 Biodiversity Management Committees** (BMCs) and trained communities in biodiversity conservation, People's Biodiversity Registers, and ethno-veterinary practices.
- **Restored Grasslands:** Restored **11 hectares** of grassland in Wardha District using traditional pastoral management, significantly improving fodder production.
- **Expanded Fodder Security:** Initiated restoration of **1,000 acres** of fallow land through grass cultivation and community-managed fodder regeneration.
- **Policy Advocacy & Community Empowerment]** Established India's first Grassland School with the Animal Husbandry Department and promotes pastoralist youth and women's leadership.