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Abstract

Die Zerstörung natürlicher Ressourcen in der Autonomen Region Xinjiang der Uiguren

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The 'Autonomous Region' Xinjiang in NW-China is a dry region, characterised by extreme differences in temperature and a general shortage of water. Socioeconomic developments - especially the migration of Han-Chinese into this area since 1949 - have led to vastly increased demands on food-production and therefore on agriculture and the keeping of livestock. This resulted in the large-scale turning of grassland into cropland during the last 4 decades, which, however, caused a number of major environmental strains in this ecologically highly sensitive area. Together with the ever increasing number of livestock on the remaining pastures this development has resulted in problems such as overgrazing, degradation of natural pasture-vegetation and desertification. Moreover, the irrigation of wide agricultural areas (together with ill-suited irrigation-techniques) causes a serious shortage of water resulting on the one side in the slow reduction of rivers and lakes, and on the other side in the salinisation of badly irrigated fields. The effects of land-utilization types insufficiently adapted to the natural conditions of Xinjiang on the natural resources (water, soil, vegetation) are presented in this paper.