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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA)

Executive Summary

The FAO Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA) was initiated by Asian nations at the 5th FAO Regional Conference on Animal Production and Health in 1971. APHCA's mission is to enhance levels of nutrition and standards of living of livestock keepers, livestock producers and livestock value-chain actors through equitable, sustainable and safe livestock sector development. Furthermore, APHCA supports sustainable improvement in rural livestock agriculture and resource use through information-sharing and capacity development for Members. Some of the most important areas currently addressed by APHCA relate to the development of climate-smart livestock, dairy production, animal feeding, transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases, One Health, and antimicrobial resistance. APHCA has been instrumental in the establishment of Dairy Asia.

Suggested action by the Regional Conference

The FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) is invited to consider this information item and provide comment under "Any other matters". In particular, APRC:

- a. may wish to note that APHCA continues to be a regional body with a mandate to convene the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Pacific Community countries on animal production and health-related issues;
- b. may note that the recent spread of transboundary animal diseases (TADs) such as African Swine Fever, Foot and Mouth Disease, and Lumpy Skin Disease across large parts of Asia highlights the increasing need to collaborate, coordinate and exchange information among countries regarding cross-border issues and to establish linkages between regional secretariats and countries;
- c. may note that in alignment with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, including the new Programme Priority Area on One Health, APHCA offers an ideal platform for addressing specific issues related to sustainable and climate-smart livestock production,

This and other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

safe livestock-based food production, transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases, One Health, and antimicrobial resistance (AMR); and

- d. may wish to invite additional countries in the region to become members of APHCA.

Furthermore, APHCA members may choose to use APRC as a forum to renew their commitment and ongoing participation in APHCA.

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

APRC Secretariat

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Introduction

1. The FAO Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA) was initiated by Asian nations at the 5th FAO Regional Conference on Animal Production and Health in 1971. APHCA became operational in December 1975, and its membership currently comprises 18 countries: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Iran, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
2. The mission of APHCA is to enhance the health, level of nutrition and standard of living of livestock keepers, livestock producers and livestock value-chain actors through equitable, sustainable and safe livestock sector development. This mission is closely aligned with FAO's overall vision to support the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.
3. APHCA generates and promotes exchange of information, provides normative guidance, and facilitates joint action among Members and other stakeholders. APHCA supports sustainable improvement in rural livestock agriculture and resource use through information-sharing and capacity development in the areas of disease control, enhanced organizational efficiency, farm production diversification and value-chain development, among others. APHCA works on the principle of collective self-reliance and mutual assistance among developing countries.
4. APHCA is an Article XIV FAO Regional Body, established by FAO at the request of its Members. The APHCA Secretariat is provided and supported by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP), and the Senior Animal Production and Health Officer has the function of APHCA Secretary. The Members pay yearly contributions; there are three different levels of contributions, determined by the gross domestic product, and the Member's livestock numbers, productivity and economic value.
5. The Executive Committee of APHCA meets annually and is composed of a Chair, a Vice-Chair, three additional members and an ex-officio member, all of whom are elected for a one-year term. The executive committee discusses the work plan and budget, which are presented to all APHCA Members for their endorsement.
6. APHCA business meetings are organized regularly and are open to all APHCA Members. These meetings are normally scheduled back-to-back with APHCA workshops or relevant international/regional events. Usually, the emphasis of an APHCA workshop will be on an animal production-related topic one year and on an animal health-related topic the next year.

Discussion

7. APHCA supports sustainable improvement in rural livestock agriculture and resource use in the areas of disease control, farm production diversification and value-chain development. Some of the most important areas that are being addressed by APHCA are climate-smart livestock (CSL), dairy and other relevant livestock production, transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases, One Health, and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).
8. **Climate-smart livestock:** Climate change manifests itself in the form of extreme weather events, which negatively affect yields from crop production, livestock-rearing and fisheries, particularly in low- and middle-income APHCA member countries. The livestock sector is a major contributor to climate change, playing an important role in the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs). This has led FAO and APHCA to further develop the concept of CSL, recognizing that livestock can make a significant contribution to climate-smart food supply systems. Mitigation options exist along the entire supply chain to reduce GHG emissions, including in feed production, enteric fermentation and manure management. Practices are being developed to ensure the adaptation of livestock to climate change – for example, through animal husbandry interventions and breeding to boost livestock production. CSL production guidelines for Asia and the Pacific region were recently published to provide solutions that can contribute to a reduction in GHG emissions through improved livestock

productivity, efficient use of natural resources, carbon sequestration, and integration of livestock into the circular bioeconomy.

9. **Dairy and dairy production:** The growing demand for meat and dairy products and the consumption and market conditions in Asia and the Pacific provide an attractive opportunity for developing Asian nations to invest in measures to enhance productivity, product and process quality, and market access. The region is home to nearly 60 percent of the world's undernourished people, and milk is a key source of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals, to significantly boost nutritional levels. Furthermore, over 80 percent of dairy animals in the region are raised by small-scale farmers, who increasingly need to be included in dairy development initiatives. The growing pressure to increase the efficient use of natural resources in the agricultural sector to meet society's growing food demands and prevent or mitigate environmental damage requires the dairy subsector and the entire dairy value chain to adopt technologies to improve dairy production efficiency and reduce post-harvest losses. FAO and APHCA actively supported the development of Dairy Asia, a multistakeholder partnership committed to building a sustainable dairy sector in Asia and the Pacific region, and contributing to the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL)¹ established in 2011. GASL provides a platform to share experiences, debate issues of concern, and provide country guidance. Furthermore, it has established strong partnerships among relevant actors in the dairy sector in Asia, currently having national focal points from 13 member countries.

10. **Transboundary animal diseases:** Since the initial report in China in August 2018 of African Swine Fever (ASF), a high-impact infectious disease of pigs, the disease has continued spreading to many countries in Asia and the Pacific region and globally, causing severe negative effects on the economies and livelihoods of farmers. Since Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) was introduced into South Asia in July 2019, it has been spreading to most of the countries in the subregion and introduced in 2021 in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. The spread of ASF and LSD are a recent reminder that countries need to be prepared to detect and respond in a timely fashion to emerging and re-emerging diseases in order to mitigate their impacts. In addition, continued attention needs to be paid to other diseases with significant economic impacts, such as Foot-and-Mouth Disease, Avian Influenza, Peste des Petits Ruminants and Classical Swine Fever. Zoonotic diseases (e.g. zoonotic influenza, Rabies, Brucellosis, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, Nipah) require special attention because of their public health impact. In 2004, FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) established the FAO/OIE Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs), a facilitating mechanism which endeavors to empower regional alliances in the fight against TADs, provides for capacity-building and assists in establishing programmes for the control of certain TADs based on regional priorities. APHCA participates in GF-TADs and in the meetings of the regional and subregional committees of GF-TADs. In addition, regional guidelines on livestock transportation and slaughter practices are under preparation to provide guidance on welfare standards applicable in Asia and the Pacific region and aligned with global standards on humane animal practices associated with safe transportation and slaughter of livestock (cattle, sheep, goat, poultry).

11. **Zoonoses and One Health:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on livestock production, trade and food/nutrition security in the region over the past year. It is noted that COVID-19, and many other zoonotic diseases, pose a real threat to the health of people in the region, and to our livelihoods and economies. Food-borne zoonotic illnesses, vector-borne diseases and those that spill over from animals to people through direct contact are all elements that will require further commitment, resources and programming to mitigate the impacts of zoonoses. One Health has emerged as an important issue both globally (there is an FAO Programme Priority Area dedicated to One Health) and in Asia and the Pacific (see APRC agenda item on "One Health in Asia and the Pacific region"). FAO has significant capacity to support One Health in Asia and the Pacific region by strengthening multisectoral partnerships and networks including the Tripartite (FAO, OIE, World Health Organization (WHO)) with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and other relevant international organizations, FAO's large One Health capacity development programmes, and

¹ Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL). <http://www.livestockdialogue.org/>

One Health operationalization through the Emergency Prevention and Control of Transboundary Animal Disease programme established in ten countries in Asia.

12. APHCA serves as an excellent modality to share information among countries, and across regions, to mitigate the impacts of zoonoses and support the multisectoral collaboration needed to enhance prevention, control and response.

13. **Antimicrobial resistance:** AMR refers to the natural ability of micro-organisms – bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites – to develop resistance to antimicrobial substances. AMR is accelerated by inappropriate or excessive use of pharmaceutical products designed to treat diseases of humans, animals and crops, and increasing AMR is a major threat to human, animal and environmental health. Asia and the Pacific region is particularly at risk due to the rapid expansion of animal production and the lack of regulatory frameworks and implementation mechanisms related to the sale and use of antimicrobials in humans and animals. FAO assists countries in the region to develop integrated national action plans against AMR following a One Health approach. FAO also develops guidelines on surveillance of AMR in the food production sector. The Tripartite with UNEP work closely together as a consortium on AMR issues. The Multi-Partner Trust Fund on AMR was established to fund collective AMR tripartite activities at global, regional and country levels. The FAO Action Plan was updated for 2021-2025 to further align with the Global AMR action plan of WHO and integrate the lessons and experiences from the first phase of implementation.

14. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many APHCA activities could not be implemented, including workshops and the annual meeting, which for the first time ever was held virtually in December 2020. The FAO RAP recently established a Virtual Learning Centre with the potential for cross-benefits with APHCA by jointly assessing and addressing training needs in the region.

15. At the APHCA meeting in December 2020, its members decided on future areas to be considered which include:

- a. animal production and feed/biosecurity/waste management/alternative feed sources (e.g. insects, algae)/breeding and genetics (native breeds and cross breeds);
- b. production diseases (e.g. internal parasites, metabolic disorders) and trade of feed;
- c. CSL (e.g. natural disaster responses, water management);
- d. livestock trade and trade restriction – reliable certification and inspection systems to ensure quality of products and safe trade of livestock and livestock products;
- e. TADs and cross-border issues (e.g. Foot and Mouth Disease, African Swine Fever, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, Peste des Petits Ruminants, rabies, Lumpy Skin Disease);
- f. One Health – neglected zoonoses, antimicrobial resistance;
- g. training platforms and e-learning in collaboration with partners such as the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Pacific Community, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Pacific Community, Australia, New Zealand;
- h. resource mobilization, websites and information-sharing.