



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

E

# COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## Twenty-sixth Session

Rome, 1 - 5 October 2018

### FAO's work on livestock and proposal for a sub-committee on livestock

#### Executive Summary

Sustainable livestock production and health are core part of FAO's mandate. Optimizing livestock's contribution to sustainable development and meeting the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires careful planning, implementation and monitoring. There are synergies to be optimized and trade-offs to be managed.

Currently, FAO has no dedicated forum with a mandate to address these trade-offs and synergies and to advise the Committee on Agriculture, and through it, the Council and the Conference on technical and policy measures needed to optimize the contribution of the livestock sector to the UN 2030 Agenda. A sub-committee on livestock could play this important role and would be the intergovernmental forum addressing global and complex livestock issues identified by the Committee.

The document discusses the need for a sub-committee on livestock in the light of the criteria established by the FAO Conference.

#### Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to review the relevant technical and policy aspects of the proposal to establish a sub-committee on livestock and to provide such guidance and comments, as deemed appropriate.

*Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:*

Badi Besbes  
Senior Livestock Officer and Head of the Animal Production and Genetics Unit  
Tel: +39 06 5705 3406

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;  
an FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.  
Other documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)*



COAG 26

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on Agriculture (the Committee), at its 22<sup>nd</sup> Session in 2010, reaffirmed the crucial role of livestock in food security and livelihoods, especially for pastoralists and small-scale farmers.<sup>1</sup> The Committee “confirmed that FAO, within its capacity and mandate, is in a position to address in a balanced and holistic manner the complex social, economic and environmental issues and trade-offs associated with the sector, including climate change considerations”.<sup>2</sup> The Committee agreed that “FAO actively engage in consultations to continue the global dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders to sharpen the definition of the sector’s objectives [...]”. It expressed the hope that “such consultations should help identify issues that could require intergovernmental action.”<sup>3</sup>

2. At its 25<sup>th</sup> Session in 2016, the Committee noted the proposal for the creation of a sub-committee on livestock, and requested that a background document be developed and presented to the next session of the Committee.<sup>4</sup>

3. This document summarizes the challenges and opportunities of the livestock sector and provides an overview of FAO’s work on livestock and presents for Member’s consideration the proposal for the creation of a sub-committee on livestock in the light of the criteria established by the Conference<sup>5</sup>.

## II. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR

4. Over the past three decades, consumption of meat, milk and eggs in low- and middle-income countries has more than tripled, fuelled by population and income growth and urbanization. The growth in consumption brings not only opportunities but also challenges.

5. About one in nine people from world’s population suffer from hunger.<sup>6</sup> Micronutrient deficiencies affect some two billion people globally. Animal-source foods are dense in essential micronutrients. Globally, livestock products contribute to the human diet with 34 percent of protein intake and 17 percent of calorie intake but this is not equitably distributed.

6. Livestock contribute to poverty alleviation and employment creation - globally up to 1.3 billion people are employed in livestock value chains. Globally, about 600 million of the world’s poorest households keep livestock as an essential source of income. However, there is an increasing dichotomy between large and small-scale producers. Large number of low-income livestock keepers are women, yet they often have less access to productive resources than men do.

7. The human health burden of zoonotic diseases falls heavily on the poor. More than 70 percent of all human infectious diseases can be traced back to animals. Zoonoses are responsible for an estimated 2.7 million of deaths a year. Many high impact animal diseases, foodborne diseases and production limiting diseases are not zoonotic but negatively affect food security, quality nutrition and livelihoods.

8. With the intensification of animal production comes an increased use of antimicrobials. Inappropriate use in livestock exacerbates the development of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which is a threat to human and animal health and the environment. Today, approximately 700,000 people die of drug-resistant infections every year. Veterinary drug and other residues are eliminated into the

---

<sup>1</sup> CL 140/3, paragraph 10.

<sup>2</sup> CL 140/3, paragraph 11.

<sup>3</sup> CL/140/3, paragraph 13.

<sup>4</sup> C 2017/21, paragraph 58.

<sup>5</sup> Resolutions 13/97 & 11/2015

<sup>6</sup> The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017.

environment contaminating soil and water which can have public and animal and environmental health impacts.

9. Livestock contribute to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, leach nutrients into water and air and generate large volumes of manure. Greenhouse gas emissions from livestock represent about 41 percent of total emissions from agriculture or 8 percent of total anthropogenic GHG emissions. Agriculture uses approximately 70 percent of the world's freshwater, and livestock production uses roughly 30 percent of that. Conversely, if managed sustainably, livestock can contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and important ecosystem functions.

### **III. FAO's activities on livestock**

10. FAO's objective is to optimize the contribution of livestock to the UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). FAO's work on sustainable livestock contributes to FAO's five strategic objectives (SO), and falls into three main areas: (i) food security, livelihoods and economic development; (ii) animal and public health; and (iii) natural resource use, climate change and the environment.

#### **A. Food security, livelihoods and economic development**

11. The livestock sector can contribute significantly to the eradication of hunger and micronutrient deficiencies, poverty reduction, and economic development. However, the achievement of some of these goals may conflict with the accomplishment of others meaning that trade-offs are unavoidable. FAO supports member countries to better address and manage these trade-offs.

12. FAO supports capacity development to identify, prepare, monitor and evaluate evidence-based policies, investments and programmes; and facilitates multi-stakeholder dialogues, for example through the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL).

13. With a view to increasing efficiency in small-scale, extensive and pastoralist production systems, FAO produces guidelines and manuals to improve the management of livestock genetic resources, animal feeding, and husbandry practices and animal health

14. Emergencies triggered by animal diseases or natural and human-made disasters can severely affect livelihoods.

15. FAO's work on animal genetic resources management covers a broad range of technical, policy and institutional issues. FAO assists countries in the assessment of the status of their animal genetic resources and the calculation of related SDG indicators 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, in the implementation of global policy instruments, in particular the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, and facilitates global and regional collaboration and networking.

#### **B. Animal and Public Health**

16. FAO supports the establishment of policies and best practices for the prevention and management of priority diseases.

17. FAO's work in mitigating their effects focuses on preparedness, prevention, detection, response and recovery, provision of veterinary medicines/vaccines and feed, and replacement of stock. During the last biennium, the total monetary value of FAO's related procurement amounted to approximately USD 61 million.

18. Global health threats should not be seen in isolation, but as interlinked with agricultural intensification, land utilization, globalization, climatic change and natural resource management. For this reason, FAO works closely with the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World

Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to jointly pursue the ‘One Health’ approach that seeks to comprehensively address the disease threats at the animal-human-environment interface.

19. FAO established a number of systems and coordination mechanisms to foster the Organization’s capacity to prevent and respond to animal diseases, such as the Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES-Animal Health), which develops strategies and policies for improved prevention, detection and response to transboundary animal diseases.

20. FAO hosts the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD) and the FAO/OIE Global Secretariat for the control and eradication of the peste des petits ruminants (PPR), which coordinates the implementation of the PPR Global Eradication Programme. FAO assists in the development of regional PPR control strategies and supports countries in the development of their PPR National Strategic Plans.

21. FAO and the United States Agency for International Development established a new strategic partnership for 2015-2019. Under this partnership, FAO contributes extensively to the Global Health Security Agenda and the Emerging Pandemic Threats programmes to build capacity to prevent, detect and respond to priority zoonotic diseases.

22. While rinderpest was officially declared eradicated in 2011, FAO continues to lead the process of reducing the number of laboratories keeping the rinderpest virus.

23. In a Memorandum of Understanding signed 30 May 2018, FAO, OIE and WHO agreed to strengthen their long-standing partnership, with a strong focus on tackling AMR. As part of this collaboration, FAO supports the design and implementation of National Action Plans addressing the threat of AMR in 35 countries. FAO also develops best practices that reduce the use of antimicrobials, and support to regulatory officials in developing coherent legislation to tackle their use for non-therapeutic purposes and promote good governance.

### **C. Natural Resources, climate change and environment**

24. FAO provides knowledge and methods to quantify natural resource use in livestock systems and to assess practices that improve their efficiency. For example, FAO has developed assessments, guidelines and tools for inventories of feed use, nutrient use and GHG emissions.

25. FAO supports countries to build resilience and identify climate change adaptation strategies. For example, FAO is leading projects on climate smart livestock in seven countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia, and is coordinating a Climate and Clean Air Coalition project on enteric methane in 13 countries. FAO is addressing the need of pastoralists especially vulnerable to climate change risk and loss of natural resources in the rangelands.

## **IV. CONSIDERING THE NEED FOR A SUB-COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK**

26. The Conference, conscious of the continuing need to enhance the efficiency of the Organization and its governance in a time of financial challenge, adopted in 1997 and reaffirmed in 2015 the validity and relevance of a range of “factors” that should be taken into account in establishing new technical bodies and in the establishment of new subsidiary bodies<sup>7</sup>, including:

---

<sup>7</sup> Resolutions 13/97 & 11/2015.

**A. Centrality to the FAO mandate and the Organization's current priorities as expressed by FAO Members and reflected in planning documents**

27. Livestock and all social, technical, economic, institutional and structural aspects related to livestock are at the core of FAO's mandate. Because of the complex interactions among the SDGs, optimizing livestock's contribution to sustainable development requires careful planning, implementation and monitoring. Currently, FAO has no dedicated forum with a specific mandate to address trade-offs and to advise the Committee, and through it, Council and Conference on technical and policy measures needed to optimize the contribution of livestock to the UN 2030 Agenda. A sub-committee on livestock could play this role.

**B. Clarity of the definition of the task, which should normally be of limited duration**

28. The sub-committee could provide a unique intergovernmental forum for consultation and discussion on livestock and advise the Committee on technical and policy matters related to livestock. The sub-committee could, in particular:

- a) identify and discuss major trends and issues in the global livestock sector, and advise and make recommendations to the Committee on these matters;
- b) advise on the liaison with other relevant bodies and organizations with a view to promoting harmonization and endorsing policies and actions, as appropriate;
- c) collaborate with existing partnerships and establish communication channels among multiple stakeholders;
- d) monitor the progress made in implementing the Committee's programme of work on livestock related issues, as well as any other matters referred to it by the Committee;
- e) report to the Committee on its activities.

29. The Committee would define, at each of its sessions, specific tasks for the sub-committee. The sub-committee would only meet at the Committee's request.

**C. Positive impact of the body's work at the level of FAO Members**

30. The livestock sector is central to food systems' development. The value of its production accounts for 40 and 20 percent of agricultural GDP in developed and developing countries, respectively. FAO's work on livestock contributes to its five strategic objectives. From about 260 ongoing projects on livestock since 2014; or that include a livestock component, currently implemented by FAO, 17 percent address SO2 and 14 percent address two or more of the SOs. Almost half of the projects are related to SO5, with about 60 percent of the total budget mobilized by these projects (USD 756 million).

31. The establishment of a sub-committee could provide Members and observers with a mechanism to discuss and build consensus on livestock priorities, and advise, guide, monitor and review FAO's policies, programmes and activities relevant to the livestock sector.

**D. FAO's comparative advantage, thereby avoiding overlap and creating synergy with the work of other bodies**

32. There is no permanent UN body specifically dealing with livestock issues. While other intergovernmental fora, such as the Committee on World Food Security, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Codex Alimentarius, occasionally touch upon issues of relevance to livestock production and health, there is no FAO global intergovernmental forum that specifically deals with all livestock issues.

33. While a number of multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogues exist at global and regional levels, which promote sustainable growth in livestock production, these partnerships and dialogues are of an informal nature.

34. The establishment of a sub-committee on livestock could confirm and strengthen FAO's role as:

- Key forum for dealing with complex livestock issues in a comprehensive, open, transparent and participative manner;
- Neutral platform for the exchange of information and views among governments and key stakeholders on all matters relevant to sustainable livestock production; and
- Provider of knowledge and facilitator of knowledge exchange

#### **E. Benefits for FAO Members**

35. The establishment of the sub-committee would provide Members with a mechanism to discuss and agree on livestock matters with a view to advice and guide the Committee and FAO Programmes of Work.

#### **F. Financial implications and support**

36. The convening and servicing of sessions of a sub-committee, as well as the preparation and distribution of documentation and follow-up work, will involve additional staff time and contractual services. Based on experiences of other subsidiary bodies adequate resource for the operation of the secretariat of a sub-committee need to be secured.

### **V. Procedures for the establishment of a sub-committee on livestock**

37. Pursuant to Rule XXXII.12 of the General Rules of the Organization, the Committee may, on an exceptional basis, establish subsidiary or ad hoc bodies where it considers that such action is conducive to facilitating its own work and will not adversely affect the multidisciplinary consideration of questions submitted to the Committee for examination.<sup>8</sup> Before taking a decision on the establishment of any subsidiary or ad hoc body, the Committee examines the administrative and financial implications of such a decision, in the light of a report to be submitted by the Director-General.<sup>9</sup>

38. Should the Committee decide that a sub-committee on livestock would provide the benefits set out above, and that it should accordingly be established, such a report would be prepared and submitted to the Committee for its consideration. In addition, draft Terms of Reference would be developed in light of Rule VII. 3 of the Committee's Rules of Procedure and following the established practices, and submitted for consideration by the Committee.

### **VI. Guidance sought**

39. The Committee is invited to review the relevant technical and policy aspects of the proposal to establish a sub-committee on livestock and to provide such guidance and comments, as deemed appropriate.

---

<sup>8</sup> Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Agriculture, Rule VII.1.

<sup>9</sup> Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Agriculture, Rule VII.2.