

March 2008



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

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

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

TWENTY-NINTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt, 1 - 5 March 2008

Provisional Annotated Agenda

(A) SENIOR OFFICERS MEETING

1- 3 March 2008

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Opening of the Senior Officers Meeting
2. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

II. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Near East Agriculture Towards 2050: Prospects and Challenges

This item will assess prospects for food and agriculture, including fisheries and forestry, in the Near East over the years until 2050. It will present the global long-term prospects for trade and sustainable development and discuss the issues at stake in these areas over the next 50 years.

In assessing the prospects for progress towards improved food security and sustainability, the key factors shaping global and regional food and agriculture will be analysed. These range from issues pertaining to the overall economic and international trading conditions, and those affecting rural poverty, to issues concerning the status and future of agricultural resources and technology. The increasingly high dependency of the region on food imports and the unfavourable arid and semi-arid climatic conditions will make the future development of agriculture in the region both unique and challenging. However, agricultural policy-making in the next 25 to 50 years will face new and uncertain global scenarios, including new actors strongly influencing the global economy such as China and India; climate changes; the growing importance of bio-energy, to name a few of the main challenges. Other developments could provide a positive stimulus to agriculture development in the region, including possible technological advancement leading to development of drought and salt tolerant crops, improvement in water saving techniques, etc.

5. Socio-economic Impacts of Transboundary Animal Diseases in the Near East with Particular Emphasis on Avian Influenza

The Near East is an animal protein-deficit area that relies on the imports of meat and live animals to satisfy the needs of its people. Culturally, there is also a demand for animals to be slaughtered in the

region. This has created a need to import live animals and also develop poultry product value chains, where many birds pass through live bird markets. Such systems of marketing, sale and processing of animals create value chain biosecurity problems that are acceptable with low volumes of animal throughput.

The increasing demand for animal protein across the region has led to increases in the number of animals and poultry that move through import points and live animal markets which amplify animal health and transboundary risks. The most recent examples of this have been: the outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) type A in some countries of the region; the movement of FMD type A from west Asia into Turkey and Jordan in 2005 and 2006; the movement of a new type O strain of FMD into some Near East countries in 2006; and the outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in Egypt. This document will assess the socio-economic aspects of these diseases with a particular focus on avian influenza.

Demand and trade in livestock and livestock products therefore play an important role in the risk of introducing animal diseases and their spread once inside a country. There is a need to assess the internal and external disease risks in a multi-disciplinary context involving all its socio-economic impacts. Overall, the demand for animal products and live animals will continue to rise in the Near East and therefore additional measures are required to prevent future bio-security risks. Raising bio-security is a major challenge - the actors involved range from state to private sector. Given the porous nature of borders, disease introductions will continue for some time - therefore reducing impact of new shocks will be essential, and must involve reducing the rate of spread through bio-security and through increased attention at national level to contingency planning.

III. OTHER ITEMS

6. Report on the Outcomes of the Regional Commissions and Other Relevant Regional Meetings in the Near East

This item discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the regional Commissions and other relevant regional meetings in the Near East.

IV. INFORMATION NOTES

a. Pesticide Management in the Near East Region

Pesticide management is an activity carried out by FAO in order to assist member countries to introduce sustainable and environmentally sound agricultural practices that reduce human health and environmental risks associated with the use of pesticides. This is carried out through the implementation of the FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, which is the first voluntary Codes of Conduct in support of increasing food security and is globally accepted as a standard for pesticide management. Many activities were carried out in the region in relation to pesticide management, based on the Code's provisions.

Rotterdam Convention is another tool for pesticide management in the region to promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in order to protect human health and the environment from potential harm and to contribute to their environmentally sound use. FAO, through a number of Technical Cooperation Projects, is assisting the countries in the region in their efforts in management and disposal of obsolete pesticides.

This item will synthesize the experience with pesticides management in the Near East Region and outline needed future actions.

b. Strengthening and Reform of National Agricultural Research and Extension Systems: Global Trends and Regional Developments

Challenges of globalization, market liberalization, climate change, and degradation of natural resources are having critical impact on the agricultural sector worldwide, with specific implications for the national research and extension systems. Farmers, especially small and resource-poor are in need of appropriate knowledge, timely information and new skills to achieve competitiveness and to sustain their livelihoods in a changing environment. Moreover, increased decentralization of government structures, reduced public funding, changing roles of the public/private actors and emergence of multiple service providers in the rural sector are calling for transformation of agricultural research and extension institutions to adopt new structures, expand their scope and foster new partnerships with a broad range of actors from both public and private sectors. As a result, national research and extension institutions in most Near East countries are facing several challenges and increased pressure from financial, institutional and technical aspects.

To meet these challenges, structural, fiscal and managerial reform of agricultural research and extension institutions is needed. The institutional reform options are several and a number of strategies for extension reform are being implemented in a broad range of countries. There is also an urgent need for reform of not only research institutions, but also of education systems towards a concerted vision for innovative development in the agricultural sector. The paper examines viable reform options for national research and extension systems, to cope effectively with global trends and harness new technologies towards sustainable development and food security.

c. World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010

This item briefs the Conference on the latest World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (WCA 2010), presented in the publication "A System of Integrated Agricultural Censuses and Surveys, Volume 1, World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010", (SDS No. 11) provides flexible approach to the collection of structural agricultural data on a variety of subjects.

d. Summary of the Recommendations of the Regional Commissions and Other Relevant Regional Meetings in the Near East

A brief summary will be provided on the outcome and recommendations of the regional commissions and other relevant regional meetings in the Near East, including the Agriculture and Land and Water Use Commission (ALAWUC), Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC), the FAO Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) and the Desert Locust Commission and EMPRES.

e. Agricultural Marketing in the Near East: Challenges and Policy Issues

Progress towards the MDGs and the WFS targets, as they relate to improving incomes and reducing hunger and extreme poverty, is impeded in many countries of the Near East region by the absence of a well-functioning marketing system.

Because of severe scarcity of water resources, the agricultural production mix in the majority of the Near East countries is increasingly shifting to high value crops such as fruits and vegetables for which efficient and competitive marketing systems and supporting market and post harvest infrastructure are required. With the growing integration of markets due to globalization and liberalisation, the Near East economies not only face a more competitive external trading environment especially in relation to European markets which

have increasingly demanding market entry and quality requirements, but also in their domestic markets.

On the domestic front, marketing systems and infrastructure in many countries of the region are outdated and fail to handle in a safe and appropriate manner the increasing volumes of produce entering the expanding cities. Better market linkages and integration of farmers into more efficient value chains is required. As modern food distribution systems such as supermarkets, which demand safe and quality produce, expand, there is an increased need to train local producers in the required techniques to meet the requirements of supermarkets and their customers. Traditional wholesale and retail markets also require improvements in order for them to be able to compete with supermarkets. Food quality and safety standards and control systems have to be introduced and certification regimes for organic and specialised products put in place.

In terms of promoting agro-industries for both local and export markets, more efficient value chains need to be built up. The feasibility of promoting clusters, where specific crops are identified to meet both agro industry and export demand and specific services and infrastructure are introduced to serve these clusters of producers and processors or exporters, needs to be considered as a potential development model.

Recent experience tends to suggest that while these countries have been provided with opportunities to expand production and trade in their agricultural products, particularly in the context of the EU-Mediterranean Agreements and the EU Neighbourhood Policy, their internal marketing systems and supporting infrastructure generally fail to support such developments. Policy-related and systemic constraints that affect the marketing systems in many of countries of the region need to be tackled.

This document will attempt to address the major challenges facing agricultural marketing in the Near East countries, emphasising the policy and technical requirements, and will provide a brief set of recommendations for consideration by governments of the region as well as FAO.

V. CONCLUDING ITEMS

7. Adoption of the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting

8. Closure of the Senior Officers Meeting

(B) MINISTERIAL MEETING

4 - 5 March 2008

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

- 1. Inaugural Ceremony**
- 2. Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur**
- 3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**

II. STATEMENTS AND DEBATES

- 4. Statement by the FAO Director-General**
- 5. Statement by the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council**
- 6. Matters Arising from the 34th Session of the FAO Conference**

Discussion under this item will present relevant matters arising from the 34th Session of the FAO Conference, particularly on FAO reform, and their implications for the Near East Region.

- 7. Round Table Discussion on “Climate Change: Implications for Agriculture in the Near East”**

This topic will be open to debate, offering the opportunity to exchange experiences and views on climate change and implications for agriculture and food security in the Near East region. Climate change will directly affect future food availability and compounds the difficulties of feeding the world’s rapidly growing population. This item will highlight the greater attention needed to be given to the impact of climate change on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and on mitigation and adaptation measures required in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

In order to have a focused debate, the Secretariat will provide Member Nations with a background information note outlining key issues for the debate. In view of the expected significant transition toward biofuels during the next 50 years, with agriculture and forestry among the leading sources for both liquid and solid fuels, bio-energy has a role to play in both climate change adaptation and mitigation. Better forest management also has a key role to play in global efforts to deal with climate change. Working to adapt to climate variability and to strengthen the resilience of crop systems to climate variability is a key priority.

- 8. Global and Regional Emergency Issues**

This item would address issues relating to emergencies and their impact at the global, regional and national levels and FAO's role in dealing with such issues in support of Member Countries. The Near East Region is exposed to frequent occurrences of natural disasters such as droughts, earthquakes, floods, epidemics, etc., as well as man-made disasters such as wars and armed conflicts. The item will address the immediate actions needed to alleviate the serious negative effects of such disasters on the local populations.

III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 9. Report of the Senior Officers Meeting**

10. Report on FAO Activities in the Region with a focus on the Achievement of the World Food Summit (WFS) Target and the Millennium Development Goals

This document will report on the actions taken on the recommendations of the previous Conference and will also report on the follow-up to the WFS recommendations and its Plan of Action. The document will concentrate on regional aspects in terms of salient follow-up actions taken in the Near East Region to implement the Plan of Action, highlighting the Region's particular needs, opportunities and weaknesses.

11. Report of the NGO Consultation

IV. OTHER MATTERS

12. Proposed list of Topics to be Considered at the 30th Regional Conference

V. CONCLUDING ITEMS

13. Date and Place of the 30th Regional Conference for the Near East

14. Adoption of the Report of the 29th Regional Conference (including the Senior Officers Meeting Report)

15. Closure of the Conference.