

27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture

Item 2.3: Proposal for the establishment of a COAG Sub-Committee on livestock

Introduction notes

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At its 26th session, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) discussed the proposal for the establishment of a Sub-Committee on Livestock (Sub-Committee), and requested the Secretariat to prepare a report on the administrative and financial implications and to develop terms of reference that include rationale, function, structure and implementation modalities to be considered by its Bureau for submission to the next session of COAG. The proposal was also discussed at the 164th session of the Council, which acknowledged the importance of the livestock sector and its role in supporting Members in achieving the SDGs, and FAO's work in this respect, as well as the matter before COAG concerning the creation of the Sub-Committee, and requested that the discussion be moved forward by COAG.

The document COAG/2020/7 reviews COAG's current working arrangements for issues related to livestock, discusses the need for a Sub-Committee based on the Conference criteria, and the implications of its establishment as requested.

Why is a COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock needed?

Because of its size, dynamic nature and the challenges it faces, the livestock sector deserves particular attention. However, due to the breadth of its mandate, COAG is unable to devote sufficient time and attention to matters related to the livestock sector. A review of past COAG meetings indicate that, with the exception of the 25th session, livestock issues have been poorly covered. COAG-26 included only 1 out of 15 agenda items addressing livestock-related matters, COAG-24 2 out of 19, and COAG-23 1 out of 14. A Sub-Committee would enable COAG to address livestock-related issues in a more consistent and coherent manner without compromising on other matters.

Other Technical Committees and Statutory Bodies of the Organization, such as the Committee on Fisheries, the Committee on Commodity Problems and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, have established subsidiary bodies to adequately consider important sub-sectoral issues. COAG would benefit from establishing a Sub-Committee by attracting specific expertise without undermining its overall multidisciplinary character.

What are its administrative and financial resource implications?

No additional human resources are required for the administration of a Sub-Committee. FAO's Animal Production and Health Division (NSA) will assign staff to provide the Secretariat. NSA's mandate and work includes the technical and policy issues to be covered by the Sub-Committee. The increased workload will be compensated by more targeted planning and programming, and reduction in ad hoc workshops and seminars.

A three-day meeting of the Sub-Committee would incur total costs of USD 130,000 for document preparation, their translation and meeting interpretation. It is proposed to cover these costs by extra-budgetary contributions for which a resource mobilization proposal is being developed.

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