



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

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Animal products

Ensuring access, safety and quality



Access to sufficient, safe and high quality animal products is key to the health, nutrition and wellbeing of the global population. This can only be achieved by establishing efficient, sustainable, inclusive and safe livestock chains, from the farm to the table. To this end, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) works to develop sustainable livestock systems that produce safe and healthy animal products, in an economically viable and humane manner.

What we do

FAO supports small-scale livestock producers by developing and promoting guidelines, manuals, tools and best practices to add value to their products and improve animal productivity and animal welfare. These improvements will also reduce the environmental footprint and resource use, while conserving biodiversity. For example, farmers are trained on the use and importance of good hygiene, improved housing and feeding, biosecurity measures, breeding strategies and heat stress management.

FAO contributes to improving food safety and quality by facilitating the adoption of appropriate practices along the value chain, such as livestock



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identification and traceability, and feed quality and safety control systems, which are often preconditions for animal products to access export markets. These systems contribute to ensuring animal and human health at the global level.

FAO also advocates for a more sustainable livestock sector by promoting the use of sustainable animal diets including the use of novel feed resources (e.g. insect meals, co-products of the biofuel industry, seaweeds, vegetable and fruit waste) which decrease fuel-food-feed competition and the adverse impact of livestock production on the environment. Today, livestock is the world's largest user of land resources, with grazing land and cropland dedicated to the production of feed representing almost 80 % of all agricultural land.



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Moreover, FAO acts as a knowledge platform to support better human nutrition by delivering information and practices for ensuring adequate consumption of safe and nutritious animal-sourced foods to consumers. For example, FAO promotes the supplementation of cattle diets with minerals, tree leaves, oil seed meals and additives because this practice not only increases animal productivity and producers' income but also the nutritional value of animal products. In addition, FAO globally advocates adequate consumption of animal products as a part of its effort to combat malnutrition. Milk, meat and eggs contribute to optimal nutrition by providing micronutrients such as vitamin A, iron, iodine, calcium, zinc and vitamin B12 (not available in



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plant-based diets). They are especially important for the nutrition of growing children and pregnant and lactating women.

Understanding the context



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The livestock sector has been undergoing change at an unprecedented pace over the past few decades. Booming demand in the world's most rapidly growing economies for food derived from animals has led to large increases in livestock production, supported by major technological innovations and structural changes in the sector. This surging demand has been mostly

met by commercial livestock production and associated food chains. However, millions of rural people still keep livestock in traditional small-scale production systems, where they support livelihoods and household food security. Today, the livestock sector as a whole contributes 40 % of the global value of agricultural output and supports the livelihoods and food security of almost 1.3 billion people.

The growth and transformation of the sector offer opportunities for poverty reduction, food security gains and improved human nutrition, but the rapid pace of change risks marginalizing smallholders and also increases systemic risks to the natural resources and human health. This calls for coordinated action at the international level to ensure that the sector can sustainably meet the rising global demand for safe and nutritious animal products.

Partners

International organizations, governments, the private sector, civil society, and research and academic institutions.

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CONTACT US

Animal Production and Health Division
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla – 00153 Rome, Italy
E-mail: AGA-Director@fao.org

MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.fao.org/animal-production>