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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Twenty-fourth Session

Rome, 29 September - 3 October 2014

The Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock

Executive Summary

Livestock are critical to building sustainability in food and agriculture. Sustainability is a process of continuous practice change that addresses social, economic and environmental objectives simultaneously. To be sustainable, the sector needs to (i) respond to the growing demand for livestock products and enhance its contribution to food and nutritional security; (ii) provide secure livelihoods and economic opportunities for hundreds of millions of pastoralists and smallholder farmers, 70 percent of which are women; (iii) use natural resources efficiently and address climate change; and (iv) enhance human, animal, and environmental health.

Ensuring current and future development of the livestock sector addresses the above issues and reconciles the needs of different stakeholders and potential trade-offs simultaneously. It also requires the exploration of new approaches that capitalize on the strength of different actors by building consensus and commitment among all concerned to action and on-the-ground improvements. The Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (formally known as the Global Agenda of Action in Support of Sustainable Livestock Sector Development, in short, the Agenda), a multi-stakeholder partnership committed to sustainable livestock sector development, is one example of these new ways of working.

The Agenda partnership is a direct response to a request by the 22nd Session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) to investigate suitable options for stakeholder dialogue and concerted action in support of sustainable livestock sector development. It builds consensus on the path towards sustainable food security through dialogue, consultation and joint analyses to catalyze innovation and investment in sustainable sector development.

This paper reports on the Agenda's progress and clarifies that in order to ensure the livestock sector's contribution to sustainable food and agriculture, the Agenda requires a more comprehensive perspective, concurrently addressing global food security and health, equity and growth, and resources and climate change. This adjustment in the Agenda's focus and functions is accompanied by the development of a partner-endorsed guiding mechanism that combines representation from relevant stakeholder clusters, thematic areas, and other Agenda-associated activities.

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a FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



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Suggested action by the Committee:

The Committee is invited to provide guidance on:

- a) The suitability of the proposed shift in perspective to ensure the Agenda comprehensively addresses the sector's contribution to sustainable food and agriculture;
- b) The proposed Agenda contribution to managing health threats at the human-animal-environment interface, including antimicrobial resistance (AMR);
- c) The appropriateness of the Agenda set-up and governance system;
- d) The options to mobilize additional Member Nations, other partners and resources for the implementation of the Agenda.

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

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I. Introduction

1. The projected increase in animal protein consumption is likely to maintain livestock's position as one of the fastest growing sub-sectors of agriculture, particularly in middle and low income countries, for the foreseeable future. Much of this demand growth has mostly been met by rapidly expanding modern forms of intensive livestock production. Despite such developments, traditional systems continue to exist in parallel and to contribute significantly to the provision of livestock products and services.
2. The vast diversity in livestock systems and the different demands and expectations placed on the sector have contributed to the difficulties in public policy and investment comprehensively addressing the sector. It has also led to a poor understanding of how the sector, in the context of an increasing world population, growing scarcity of natural resources, and accelerating climate change, can best contribute to sustainable food and agriculture. Given the size and complexity of these challenges, joining forces is a necessity. FAO and its partners are therefore, working together in new ways to address sustainability in food and agriculture.
3. The Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (formally known as the Global Agenda of Action in Support of Sustainable Livestock Sector Development, in short, the Agenda), a multi-stakeholder partnership committed to sustainable livestock sector development, is one example of these new ways of working. The Agenda partnership enhances the shared understanding of livestock sector development issues and builds consensus on the path towards sustainable food security through dialogue, consultation and joint analyses. Finding common ground is at the core of the Agenda. Consensus forms the basis of policy and operational coherence, and stakeholder commitment to innovation and investment in practice change.
4. The Agenda integrates perspectives across scales and actors, and facilitates knowledge sharing on technology, good practices, policies and institutions by building networks and accompanying knowledge exchange infrastructure. Within FAO, Agenda-related activities cut across all Strategic Objectives (SO) and contribute to increased food security and sustainable diets (SO1), and the transition to sustainable agricultural sector production systems (SO2). In addition, its results also support the reduction of rural poverty (SO3), more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems at local, national and international levels (SO4), and the resilience of livestock-dependent livelihoods (SO5).
5. The Agenda partnership is a direct response to a request by the 22nd Session of the FAO COAG in June 2010, for FAO to investigate suitable options for stakeholder dialogue and concerted action in support of sustainable livestock sector development. It was subsequently endorsed by COAG during its 23rd session in May 2012 as a valid mechanism to inform, guide, and enrich FAO's inter-governmental processes. COAG also endorsed FAO's central role in the Agenda. At its 23rd Session, COAG also requested the Secretariat to: (i) report on progress of the Agenda and on any requirements for related intergovernmental action at its next session; (ii) establish a novel and functional governance system for the Agenda, requesting further information on its development and its relation to COAG; and (iii) organize a donor meeting to explore the potential to mobilize additional extrabudgetary resources. More recently, the 38th FAO Conference¹ in its report '(i) supported the Agenda as a multi-stakeholder initiative; (ii) invited Member Nations to broadly participate in this initiative; (iii) stressed the need for concrete results in the field; (iv) further recommended that FAO continue its central engagement, act as its Secretary; and (v) requested that a governance system for this initiative be elaborated, in line with the FAO strategies on partnership with the private sector and civil society, and defining its relationship to COAG, to be presented at the Session of COAG in 2014.'

¹ C 2013/REP; para. 43b)

II. Livestock in development

6. Far reaching changes in the cost and availability of natural resources, combined with demands for product diversity, food safety and quality, and increasing social, environmental and animal welfare concerns are changing livestock production. The growing reach of international value chains has not only diversified rural livelihood options, but also exposed production to rapidly changing patterns of competition, market preferences, and rules and standards, including animal welfare. Furthermore, the impact of emerging diseases, concerns on the overuse or misuse of antimicrobials and accelerating climate change mean that the livestock sector needs to tackle an ever-evolving set of production, pests and diseases threats, often in rapidly declining environmental conditions. Global livestock production is thus, for better or for worse, linked to the markets, technologies and diseases that are transforming the sector. The need to cope with, and indeed exploit these challenges therefore presents the context in which livestock sector development needs to contribute to the social, economic and environmental aspirations of societies.

7. No other sector is more important to the lives and livelihoods of the poor than livestock. An estimated one billion people derive at least part of their livelihood from livestock. Livestock are often the last resort for people that lack other assets and forms of income. Global poverty and inequality cannot be addressed without livestock.

8. Livestock are critical to maintaining and improving human health. Livestock products are an important component in healthy diets and provide food security particularly for low income people. Livestock connect wildlife and environmental health to human health, and are an important element in disease emergence and transmission. Seventy percent of all new diseases have their origin in animals. Global food security and health cannot be addressed without livestock.

9. Livestock are an important user of natural resources (e.g. land, water, nutrients, and biodiversity) and contributor to climate change. Livestock convert large amounts of by-products and waste material, for which there is no alternative use, into valuable products. Global environmental issues cannot be addressed without livestock.

III. The Agenda – for people, for the planet

10. Following the recommendations of the 23rd Session of COAG, the Agenda Support Team (AST) hosted by FAO has continued to facilitate the global dialogue in support of sustainable livestock sector development through numerous events and interactions (www.livestockdialogue.org). Chief among these are two Global Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) meetings held in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2013, and in Ottawa, Canada, in October 2013. The MSP meetings have been accompanied by other international gatherings that have allowed the Agenda to mature further its strategy and activities, but also, for example, the implementation of a mechanism that has made the involvement of social movements and community-based constituencies more systematic and coherent.

11. These activities also contributed to the AST mobilizing additional extra-budgetary resources for its facilitation and coordination activities until 2015 from France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland, in addition to FAO core programming. Extra-budgetary resources have also been obtained for the Agenda Partnership to accelerate practice change and innovation in integrated manure management in the global livestock sector through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)-hosted Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) Agriculture Initiative.

12. In June 2014, the AST facilitated a preliminary international roundtable on investing in sustainable livestock, which was hosted jointly by the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland to focus on incentives for investment in livestock sector practice change and to explore opportunities for the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources, and how public and private sector investments might be aligned with sustainable livestock sector development.

A. Reframing the Agenda

13. Livestock are critical to building sustainability in food and agriculture. Sustainability is a process of continuous practice change that addresses social, economic and environmental objectives simultaneously. Five broad principles determine the sustainability of the sector: (i) increase efficiency; (ii) enhance livelihoods and human well-being; (iii) protect resources; (iv) increase resilience; and (v) improve governance.
14. A sustainable livestock sector contributes to food and agriculture through viable growth in value chains that have access to all necessary resources and services, and in which the poor can find secure livelihoods, participate in growing markets, or take up other opportunities outside the sector.
15. It has an inclusive approach to managing health threats at the human-animal-environment interface, and involving producers at every level in the development and implementation of animal disease and food safety programmes. The Agenda will also address and respond to emerging challenges surrounding the growing concern over excess antimicrobial use and abuse and the potential for drug resistance development. The trend for developing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is likely to increase with increased antimicrobial drug use as a result of production intensification and urban/peri-urban livestock keeping. Mitigation of AMR resides in developing sustainable models for intensification, including better animal husbandry, hygiene, health and management practices and the promotion of responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in livestock, so as to preserve their therapeutic efficacy and prolong their use in both animals and humans.
16. Sustainable livestock production is mainly based on materials not competing with direct use as human foods, and provides incentives for more resource use efficiency and reward environmental stewardship. It considers policy reform within a broad development context, and has robust actor-linkage networks for sector surveillance and learning, as well as institutional capacity.
17. The Agenda partnership integrates these perspectives across scales and actors, facilitates knowledge sharing on technology, good practices, policies and institutions by building networks and accompanying knowledge exchange infrastructure. It builds consensus on the path towards sustainable food security through dialogue, consultation and joint analyses to catalyse innovation and investment in sustainable sector development.
18. The Agenda has initially focused on catalysing and guiding the sustainable development of the livestock sector through the continuous improvement of natural resource use. Whilst this remains central to the Agenda, its continuous analysis of livestock sector sustainability issues has clearly indicated that a more comprehensive perspective is required to ensure the sector's contribution to sustainable food and agriculture. Consequently, during the Agenda's most recent MSP meeting in October 2013 in Ottawa, partners requested to pursue sustainable livestock sector development by concurrently addressing: food security and health; equity and growth; and resources and climate.
19. To ensure the Agenda supports countries to address the multiple objectives and constraints in shaping the livestock sector they want, it is also evident that the Agenda's global policy dialogue needs to facilitate practice change at local level. To this end, Agenda partners have agreed to:
 - i) facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue at international, national, and local level;
 - ii) implement and support joint analyses and assessments, including the development of harmonized metrics and methodologies (e.g. through the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership);
 - iii) identify and provide tools and guidance; and
 - iv) promote and support innovation and local practice change (e.g. through UNEP's CCAC's Agriculture Initiative).

20. The adjustment in the Agenda's focus and functions is accompanied by the development of an Agenda partners endorsed novel and functional governance system consisting of:

- i) an open MSP for dialogue and consensus building on priority issues and actions;
- ii) a Guiding Group to advise on overall direction, guidance, and monitoring, including an Executive Committee;
- iii) Focus Area Groups to develop and implement thematic work programmes; and
- iv) An Agenda Support Team (AST), providing the secretariat, currently hosted by FAO.

21. The Guiding Group will have up to five representatives from each of the following constituency clusters: a) public sector; b) private sector and producers; c) academia/research; d) donors; e) non-governmental Organizations (NGOs); and f) social movements and community-based organizations. The clusters, with the facilitation of the AST, are currently going through a process that is enabling them to structure themselves and decide on their representation at the Guiding Group. In addition, Focus Area Group Chairs and Chairs of Agenda-supported regional, national or local MSPs will have a seat on the Guiding Group. Following the selection by their respective clusters, representatives serve on the Guiding Group for a two-year term. Members may be reappointed by their constituency for subsequent terms. The Chair of the Guiding Group will be selected from and by its members and appointed for a two year term, renewable once.

22. The Guiding Group: (i) advises on and establishes the overall framework, procedures and activities of the Global Agenda; (ii) contributes to the continuous development of the vision and strategy of the Global Agenda; (iii) provides overall direction and guidance; (iv) supports the functioning of the MSP (and its constituency clusters); (v) reviews Focus Area and AST activities; (vi) monitors and reviews the activities of the Executive Committee; (vii) represents the Agenda in different fora and promotes the Agenda and its objectives; (viii) facilitates the mobilization of resources; and (ix) establishes ad hoc working committees to explore particular issues, as appropriate. The role of the Guiding Group is thus one of Agenda partnership policy development, provision of advice (guidance) and monitoring/oversight of the Executive Committee. Decisions are made by consensus.

23. The Guiding Group may initially have up to 34 members. This is too large for rapid implementation of MSP and Guiding Group directives. For this reason the establishment of an Executive Committee was endorsed by the MSP. The Executive Committee will be appointed by the Guiding Group and headed by its Chair. The Executive Committee will be responsible for implementing the decisions and advice of the Guiding Group, in close consultation with the AST. Specifically it will: (i) implement and administer decisions of the Guiding Group; (ii) manage the preparation of position papers and background documents for consideration by the Guiding Group and MSP; (iii) prepare an Agenda monitoring and learning mechanism; (iv) supervise the use and contribute to the mobilization of Agenda resources; and (v) report regularly to the Guiding Group.

24. The AST supports the building and implementation of the Agenda in particular by: (i) facilitating stakeholder interaction, coordination and consensus building; (ii) providing and coordinating expertise and analysis; (iii) assisting in the preparation of guidance for technology and policy development. The AST is also responsible for updating COAG on Agenda progress and any possible requirements for related intergovernmental action emanating from the Agenda processes.

B. The role of FAO

25. The livestock sector needs an integrated but distinct profile within FAO. In addition to hosting the ATS, FAO makes a number of other important contributions to the Agenda, including:

- i) information and analysis on livestock, diseases and other threats to health, genetics, natural resource use, economics, policies and institutions; metrics and methodologies;
- ii) policy dialogue through multi-stakeholder partnerships and inter-governmental agreements; and

- iii) practice change through policy and institutional change, pilots, capacity development, tools and approaches, emergency response and contingency planning.

26. Within FAO, the Agenda cuts across all Strategic Objectives (SOs). In delivering on its Strategic Framework, the Agenda ensures that FAO provides the necessary support to enhance the sector's contribution to sustainable food and agriculture. The Initiative also directly contributes to the objectives of the emerging Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, which equally focuses on concrete opportunities for sustainable development and the improvement of economic and social well-being, while protecting the environment.

IV. Guidance sought from COAG

27. The Committee is invited to provide guidance on:
- a) The suitability of the proposed shift in perspective to ensure the Agenda effectively addresses the sector's contribution to sustainable food and agriculture;
 - b) The proposed Agenda contribution to managing health threats at the human-animal-environment interface, including antimicrobial resistance (AMR);
 - c) The appropriateness of the Agenda set-up and governance system;
 - d) The options to mobilize additional Member Nations, other partners and resources for the implementation of the Agenda.