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منظمة  
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# COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## Twenty-seventh Session

28 September - 2 October 2020

### Proposal for the establishment of a COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock

#### Executive Summary

In accordance with the criteria set out in Conference Resolutions 13/97 and 11/2015, and in line with the request by the 26th Session of the COAG (October 2018)<sup>1</sup>, this document reviews the current working arrangements of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in relation to livestock issues and provides information on the possible establishment of a Sub-Committee on Livestock (Sub-Committee) including the administrative and financial implications of its establishment. It also provides, in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, respectively, draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for the proposed Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee would serve as a dedicated intergovernmental forum for addressing global and complex livestock issues, and optimizing sustainable livestock production and health, with particular attention to small-scale livestock production systems, in accordance in with the Organization's mandate and its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Sub-Committee would have the mandate to address the careful planning, implementation, monitoring, and enhancement of synergies and trade-offs related to livestock management, and would enable COAG to better advise the FAO Council and FAO Conference on technical and policy measures required to enable the livestock sector to fully contribute to the UN 2030 Agenda.

#### Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to review the present proposal and take such action and provide such guidance as it deems appropriate concerning the:

- Establishment of a Sub-Committee on Livestock;
- Review and adoption of the draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee on Livestock contained in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, respectively, of this document;
- Establishment of the timing and duration of the first session of the Sub-Committee on Livestock, subject to the availability of the necessary funds; and
- Call for adequate budgetary support for sessions of the Sub-Committee on Livestock.

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<sup>1</sup> C 2019/21 Rev.1/paragraph 29

## I. Introduction

1. At its Twenty-second Session in June 2010, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) reaffirmed the crucial role of livestock in food security and livelihoods, especially for pastoralists and small-scale farmers.<sup>2</sup> COAG “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>3</sup> COAG 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>4</sup>
2. At its Twenty-fifth Session in September 2016, COAG 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 COAG.<sup>5</sup>
3. At its Twenty-sixth Session in October 2018, COAG discussed the background document entitled "FAO's activities on livestock, including the proposal for the establishment of the Sub-committee on livestock",<sup>6</sup> and requested the Secretariat to prepare a report on the administrative and financial implications of its establishment, 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.<sup>7</sup>
4. The 164th Session of the Council "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 related matter before the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) pertaining to the creation of the subcommittee on livestock, and requested the discussion to move forward within COAG".<sup>8</sup>
5. This document reviews COAG's current working arrangements for issues related to livestock, discusses the need for a Sub-Committee on Livestock in the light of the criteria established by the Conference<sup>9</sup> and describes the administrative and financial implications of its establishment. It also provides draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee on Livestock contained in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, respectively, of this document.

## II. The role of Livestock in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

6. The livestock sector can contribute directly or indirectly to each of the SDGs, and in particular to SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 13 and 15. This section briefly reviews the contributions of the sector and the challenges it faces.
7. One in nine people in the world suffers from hunger, and micronutrient deficiencies affect some two billion people globally. Animal-Source Foods (ASFs) are rich in energy, provide high quality and readily digested protein, and readily absorbable and bioavailable micronutrients. These nutrients are more easily obtained from ASFs than from plant-based foods. The provision of adequate amounts of ASF in a diet can add much-needed nutritional value. Globally, livestock provide 34 percent of protein intake and 18 percent of dietary energy, but this is not equitably distributed.

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<sup>2</sup> CL 140/3, paragraph 10.

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

<sup>4</sup> CL/140/3, paragraph 13.

<sup>5</sup> C 2017/21, paragraph 58.

<sup>6</sup> COAG/2018/11.

<sup>7</sup> C 2019/21 Rev1, paragraph 29.

<sup>8</sup> CL 164/REP, paragraph 18 k.

<sup>9</sup> Resolutions 13/97 & 11/2015

8. One in eight people in the world lives in extreme poverty. About 600 million of the world's poor keep livestock as an essential source of income. Livestock also supports the creation of employment opportunities and can provide opportunities to empower rural women, increase the resilience of households to cope with climate and market shocks, and support sustainable economic growth. The value of livestock production accounts for 40 percent and 20 percent of total agricultural output in developed and developing countries, respectively.

9. Along with these benefits come a number of challenges. Livestock and their products pose risks to human health. Zoonoses are responsible for an estimated 2.7 million deaths a year, mainly among the poor. Inappropriate use and overuse of antimicrobials in livestock production contributes to an increase in antimicrobial resistance in pathogens causing human infections. Today, approximately 700,000 people die of drug-resistant infections every year. Ensuring collaboration between stakeholders in animal production, health specialists, public health officials, and the commercial sector, including the feed industry, through a "One Health" approach is crucial to achieving an integrated and preventive strategy on livestock-associated human health risks.

10. Livestock contribute to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, leak nutrients into water and air, and generate large volumes of manure. Conversely, wider adoption of existing best practices and technologies in feeding, health and husbandry, and manure management could help in cutting GHG emissions by as much as 30 percent. If managed sustainably, livestock can contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and important ecosystem functions, including nutrient cycling, soil organic carbon sequestration, seed dispersal and maintaining agricultural landscapes.

11. To enhance the contribution of the livestock sector to achieving the SDGs, a number of complex interactions need to be addressed. For example, increasing short-term production through the overuse of resources can result in lowered productivity in the long term; although emission intensity from the livestock sector is declining, a rise in production would lead to higher overall GHG emissions; competition over land for the production of feed can constrain the availability of resources to produce food; promoting greater competition with higher levels of market concentration will likely keep many small producers from participating in markets. Failure to address these interactions could result in positive synergies being precluded and in the predominance of negative trade-offs. In other words, enhancing the contribution of livestock to the SDGs will require a transformation of the sector.

12. Despite the size and dynamic nature of livestock systems, there is no dedicated intergovernmental mechanism that deals with the issues described above. Considerations of livestock issues take place in different fora like the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGFA), Codex Alimentarius, etc., and in multi-stakeholder platforms, but often remain disconnected at country level. Therefore, there is a need for an intergovernmental forum to address the complexities of livestock development in a more coherent manner.

### **III. The Committee's current working arrangements for Livestock**

13. While other Governing Bodies of the Organization, such as the Committee on Fisheries (COFI)<sup>10</sup> and the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP)<sup>11</sup>, have established various subsidiary bodies, COAG, notwithstanding its broad mandate, currently lacks subsidiary bodies for any of its areas of competence, which include "agriculture and livestock, food and nutrition, with emphasis on the integration of all social, technical, economic, institutional and structural aspects related to agricultural and rural development in general."<sup>12</sup>

14. Experiences of other bodies of FAO demonstrate how COAG may benefit from the establishment of the proposed Sub-Committee on Livestock by attracting relevant expertise without undermining its multidisciplinary character. COFI, for example, benefits from the expertise of two

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.fao.org/fishery/about/cofi/en>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.fao.org/ccp/igg/en/>

<sup>12</sup> General Rules of the Organization, Article XXXII.6.

sub-committees: the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. CCP benefits from its subsidiary intergovernmental groups established to focus on trade issues for individual commodities, such as rice, grains and tea. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is supported by four intergovernmental technical working groups on plant, animal, forest and aquatic genetic resources. Government representatives and observers attending the sessions of these subsidiary bodies are distinctly different from those attending sessions of the parent Committees. The establishment of a Sub-Committee on Livestock might therefore expand the expertise COAG may draw upon and, thus, strengthen COAG's capacity to deal with all livestock-related matters. The fact that a Sub-Committee on Livestock would act upon COAG's requests and would report back to COAG ensures that any action taken by the Sub-Committee on Livestock will be coordinated and in line with other actions taken by COAG.

15. A review of the agendas of past meetings of COAG indicates that, due to the breadth of its mandate, COAG is not in a position to devote sufficient attention to sustainable livestock production and related issues. New and emerging issues often require COAG to spend less time on its traditional mandate, including livestock. With the exception of its Twenty-fifth Session, where COAG addressed livestock-related matters under 5 of the 20 agenda items, livestock is poorly covered. For instance, at its Twenty-sixth Session, only 1 out of 15 items on COAG's agenda was related to livestock, while only 2 out of 19 items and 1 out of 14 items, respectively, were on the agenda for COAG's Twenty-fourth and Twenty-third Sessions. Aware of such limitations, COAG decided, at its Twenty-sixth session, that the special theme of its Twenty-seventh Session in 2020 would be "Sustainable Livestock for SDGs".<sup>13</sup> Through the establishment of a Sub-Committee on Livestock, COAG would be enabled to address livestock-related matters in a more consistent and coherent manner without having to pay less attention to other matters relevant to its mandate.

#### **IV. Considering the need for a Sub-Committee on Livestock**

16. The FAO 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 new subsidiary bodies<sup>14</sup>, including:

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

17. Livestock and all social, technical, economic, institutional and structural aspects related to livestock are at the core of FAO's mandate. Due to the complex interactions among the SDGs, optimizing the contribution of livestock to sustainable development requires careful planning, implementation and monitoring to enhance synergies and manage trade-offs related to livestock production.

18. Currently, FAO does not have a dedicated forum with a mandate to address such trade-offs, which can advise COAG, and through it, the FAO Council and FAO 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 important role and could send a strong signal that the Organization is fully aware of, and committed to, its responsibility to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

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

19. The Sub-Committee on Livestock could provide a unique intergovernmental forum for consultation and discussion on livestock and could advise COAG on technical and policy matters related to livestock. The Sub-Committee could, in particular:

<sup>13</sup> C 2019/21 Rev1, paragraph 29.

<sup>14</sup> Resolutions 13/97 and 11/2015.

- a) identify and discuss major trends and issues in the global livestock sector, and advise and make recommendations to COAG 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 with multiple stakeholders, as guided by the Committee;
- d) monitor the progress made in implementing COAG's programme of work on livestock-related issues, as well as any other matters referred to it by COAG;
- e) report to COAG on its activities.

20. COAG would define, at each of its sessions, specific tasks for the Sub-Committee on Livestock. The Sub-Committee would only meet at COAG's request. At COAG's request, the Sub-Committee could also consider a programme for its work, for review and adoption by COAG.

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

21. Livestock systems are central to food systems' development. The value of their production accounts for 40 percent and 20 percent of agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in developed and developing countries, respectively.

22. Between 2016 and 2020, approximately 290 ongoing projects on livestock, or that include a livestock component, were implemented by FAO.

23. The establishment of a Sub-Committee on Livestock could provide Members and observers with a mechanism to discuss and build consensus on livestock priorities, and could also 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**

24. There is no permanent United Nations (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-related issues.

25. The sub-committee would provide an ideal forum for discussing critical topical issues, such as the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Current evidence suggests that this pandemic may have originated in wildlife. Its effects on the livestock sector are still largely unquantified and yet to be fully felt. Current observations reveal severe disruptions to livestock value chains that are likely to grow, along with their dire, socio-economic consequences. The sub-committee could facilitate and coordinate global assessments of the impact of such pandemics on the livestock sector, including related responses; allow countries to share their experiences and provide guidance on policies to mitigate these impacts as well as strategies to prevent new pandemics based on the One Health approach.

26. 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. By establishing a Sub-Committee on Livestock, COAG would leverage the key comparative advantage of FAO as a UN organization.

27. Under COAG's guidance, the Sub-Committee on Livestock should collaborate with existing partnerships and thus liaise with a wide range of stakeholders. The Sub-Committee should thus ensure close coordination of COAG's work on livestock with existing multi-stakeholder partnerships, including the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL), the FAO-OIE-WHO work plan addressing the threat of antimicrobial resistance, the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership, the Feed Safety Multi-stakeholder Partnership, the Global Soil Partnership

and the Water Platform, and provide expert advice to standard setting bodies such as Codex Alimentarius and The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

28. The establishment of a Sub-Committee on Livestock could confirm and further strengthen FAO's role as a:

- 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 on livestock matters.

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

29. The establishment of the Sub-Committee on Livestock would provide Members with a mechanism to discuss and agree on livestock matters with a view to advice and guide COAG and FAO Programmes of Work.

### **F. Human resources**

30. No additional human resources are required for the administration of the Sub-Committee. FAO's Animal Production and Health (NSA), through its different units, is already in charge of all technical and policy issues the Sub-Committee is proposed to cover. The Sub-Committee will allow NSA to inform Members on a regular basis and seek their guidance on relevant technical work and policy issues. Increased workload caused by the administration of the Sub-Committee is expected to be fully compensated by better and more targeted planning and programming of COAG's work on livestock, as facilitated by the Sub-Committee. While the Sub-Committee creates an additional workload in terms of preparation and organization of its sessions, it is expected to reduce the number of ad hoc consultations, information workshops and expert seminars held in the past to inform Members or seek expert advice on specific issues pertaining to livestock. At the same time, the Sub-Committee will increase transparency and improve the involvement of Members in the Organization's work, which will allow FAO to concentrate its work, with the informed support by its membership, on optimizing livestock's contribution to the achievement of the SDGs.

## **V. Director-General's report on the administrative and financial implications of establishing a Sub-Committee on Livestock**

31. Pursuant to Rule XXXII.12 of the General Rules of the Organization, COAG 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 COAG for examination.<sup>15</sup> Before taking a decision on the establishment of any subsidiary or ad hoc body, COAG examines the administrative and financial implications of such a decision, in the light of a report to be submitted by the Director-General.<sup>16</sup>

32. It should be noted that COAG would decide on the timing and duration of the sessions of the Sub-Committee, as per Rule 4 of the draft Rules of Procedure provided in Appendix 2 to this document. No more than one session of the Sub-Committee should be held per biennium and the session should be held with timing that enables the Committee to take into consideration the report of the Sub-Committee.

33. As an example, a three-day meeting of the proposed Sub-Committee on Livestock would incur the following costs: i) interpretation USD 45 000; ii) document preparation USD 25 000; and translation USD 60 000. Therefore, the estimated total for running a three-day meeting would be about USD 130 000. It is expected that these costs would be covered by extra-budgetary contributions for

<sup>15</sup> Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Agriculture, Rule VII.1.

<sup>16</sup> Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Agriculture, Rule VII.2.

which a resource mobilization proposal is being developed. Funding options for future functioning of the Sub-Committee will be further explored.

34. Expenses incurred by representatives of members of the Sub-Committee on Livestock, their alternates and advisers, when attending sessions of the Sub-Committee, as well as the expenses of observers at sessions, would be borne by the respective governments or organizations. However, as far as representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition are concerned, FAO is committed to raising extra-budgetary resources with the aim to support their participation in the sessions of the Sub-Committee.

## **Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committee on Livestock**

The Sub-Committee shall provide a forum for consultation and discussion on livestock and shall advise the Committee on Agriculture (the Committee) on technical and policy matters related to livestock and on the work to be performed by the Organization in the field of livestock.

In particular, the Sub-Committee shall:

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

In order for the Sub-Committee to carry out this mandate, the Committee will assign specific tasks to the Sub-Committee.

## **Appendix 2 - Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee on Livestock**

### **Rule 1 - Membership**

To ensure maximum efficiency while maintaining balanced geographical representation, membership of the Sub-Committee shall comprise a subset of the Member Nations and Associate Members of the Committee on Agriculture (the Committee).

The Sub-Committee shall not exceed five members from each of the following regions: Africa, Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America and Southwest Pacific.

### **Rule 2 - Election and term of office of Members**

The Members of the Sub-Committee shall be elected at each regular session of the Committee and serve until the next regular session of the Committee. They shall be eligible for re-election.

Members are requested to confirm their participation to the Sub-Committee meeting. If a Member of the Sub-Committee is not able to attend the meeting, and informs the Secretariat accordingly, the Member shall be replaced in a timely manner by one of the elected Alternates from the same region.

In case a Member of the Sub-Committee does not attend the meeting, the Sub-Committee, in consultation with the region, may replace this Member, on an ad hoc basis, by a Member of the Committee from the same region that is present at the meeting.

Members of the Sub-Committee should, as far as possible, be represented by senior officers highly qualified to contribute actively to a consideration of the subjects on the agenda of the Sub-Committee.

### **Rule 3 - Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons**

The Sub-Committee shall elect, from among the representatives of its Members, a Chairperson and six Vice-Chairpersons, each coming from one of the following geographic regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America and Southwest Pacific. In electing the Chairperson, the Sub-Committee shall have due regard to the principle of rotation. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons remain in office until the next session of the Sub-Committee and shall be eligible for re-election for no more than one term.

The Chairperson, or a Vice-Chairperson in the absence of a Chairperson, shall preside over the meetings of the Sub-Committee and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work.

### **Rule 4 - Sessions**

The Committee shall decide on the timing and duration of the sessions of the Sub-Committee, when required. In any case, the Sub-Committee shall hold no more than one session per biennium and the session shall be held with timing that enables the Committee to take into consideration the report of the Sub-Committee.

### **Rule 5 - Observers**

Members of the Committee which are not Members of the Sub-Committee may participate, upon request to the Committee Secretariat, in the work of the Sub-Committee in an observer capacity.

Attendance by non-member Nations of the Organization at sessions is governed by the principles relating to the granting of observer status adopted by the FAO Conference.

The Sub-Committee, or the bureau of the Committee, on behalf of the Sub-Committee, may invite experts, as well as representatives of specialized international organizations, to attend its meetings.

### **Rule 6 - Rules of Procedure of the Committee**

The provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Agriculture shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to all matters not specifically dealt with under the present Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee on Livestock.