

Livestock sector case studies: Summary report of the ABDC-10 parallel session¹

Thirty delegates attended the session. Two case studies were presented. The first one focused on introgression of the Fec B gene to enhance the reproductive efficiency of sheep in the Deccan plateau of India. The second one described the impact of community-based artificial insemination combined with veterinary and milk marketing services in Bangladesh. There was general consensus that both the case studies are good examples of how biotechnologies could help improve the income and quality of life of smallholder farmers. The commonalities between both the case studies were that a) biotechnologies played a vital role but their impact at the farmers levels could not have been generated without the presence of support mechanisms such as marketing, veterinary services, feeding, capacity building, and management, to name a few; and b) 10-15 years of time were needed to generate substantial impact at the end users level. Based on this it was recommended that biotechnologies should not be used in isolation; they should be integrated with conventional technologies and complimented with the provision of adequate logistic, infrastructure and institutional supports. National and international donor agencies should have a long term vision for the livestock sector and they should realize the need to support and fund programmes for longer duration, although they should integrate activities to eventually aim for self-sustainability of the activities.

Additional recommendations were:

- farmer participation in the development and adaptation of a biotechnology must be considered;
- mechanisms should be put in place to sustain biotechnologies;
- governments need to develop national breeding policies to reap the benefits of cross breeding programmes. However, it was realized that such programmes may endanger local genetic resources, and proper measures must be taken to avoid it;
- OIE and other international agencies should consider giving more emphasis to the production diseases;
- for implementing biotechnologies and taking a successful biotechnology from one livestock production system to another, due consideration should be given to local conditions since biotechnology under reference might not be applicable in all situations; and
- indigenous knowledge and practices should be integrated into the development and use of animal biotechnologies.

¹ This is the summary report of the roundtable organized by FAO on livestock sector case studies on the first day of the FAO international technical conference on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries (ABDC-10) that took place in Guadalajara, Mexico on 1-4 March 2010 (<http://www.fao.org/biotech/abdc/paralle/en>).