

CFS Policy Convergence Process on Sustainable Agricultural Development and Livestock

Comments from New Zealand

New Zealand submits the following comments for your consideration on the recommendations of the HLPE Report on *Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: what roles for livestock?*

As a general comment, we feel the report is well balanced and does a good job of setting out the benefits of different livestock farming systems as well as the specific challenges and issues they are facing. We expect the CFS decision and policy recommendations to contain the same balanced approach in recognition of the diverse range of farming systems that exist around the world and the important contribution they can make to SAD for FSN. We acknowledge that the HLPE Report places a greater focus on livestock systems than was perhaps anticipated. Nevertheless, we feel the CFS policy decisions should be based on the content of the report and its recommendations. Specific comments on the report's recommendations are as follows:

Rec 1 Elaborate context-specific pathways to SAD for FSN

We welcome the articulation in the report of a common approach to elaborate context-specific pathways to sustainable agricultural development (SAD) for food security and nutrition (FSN). The approach provides a useful analytical tool through which to address both the general and specific challenges highlighted in the report.

Rec 2 - Strengthen Integration of livestock in national SAD strategies

This recommendation seems obvious and does not add significantly to the discussion. It could be excluded from the Rapporteur's decision text with little effect.

Rec 3 : Foster coherence between sectoral policies and programmes

We agree with this recommendation as important for ensuring achievements in one sector are not undermined by a lack of awareness or understanding in others. We feel it should be reflected in the decision text.

Rec 4 : Develop gender sensitive livestock policies and interventions

We agree with this recommendation and would note that while rec 4(a) asks for data to be gathered as to where gender asymmetry persists, there is nothing about analysing why it persists and how those causes might be addressed. This would be a useful addition.

Rec 5 : Better integrate SAD issues for FSN in trade policies

This is an important recommendation reflecting critical steps that need to be taken to ensure countries are able to maximise the social and economic benefits from agricultural production, including through trade of those products.

Rec 6 : Limit and manage excessive price volatility

While we agree with the need to take steps to limit and manage excessive price volatility we wish to emphasise a number of points in relation to this recommendation as follows:

- Climatic variability and diseases are the main determinants of price variability in agricultural markets so tools should be focussed on mitigating these factors to the extent possible. Innovation policies can play an important role in assisting farmers to cope with price variability by improving their productivity;
- Risk management tools should focus on helping farmers cope with unavoidable and unpredictable risks and should avoid stifling or dis-incentivising farmers' own risk management strategies such as diversification of outputs/income sources;
- Research work carried out for the G20 by OECD and other international organisations has clearly shown the benefits that more comprehensive and timely market information can have for assisting producers and consumers to manage price volatility – this should be mentioned;
- We believe the reference to “import surges” is potentially misleading and should be deleted as it ignores situations where surges in imports can play an important role in reducing price volatility and ensuring food security – for example in the context of a shortfall in local production due to climatic events, diseases, conflict etc;
- Removal of barriers to trade including export restrictions and termination of subsidies for first generation biofuels will also assist in reducing price volatility.

Rec 7 : Protect, preserve and facilitate the sharing of livestock genetic resources

This is an important recommendation and we support its inclusion. However we would like to ensure that this recommendation takes into account and is consistent with existing international mechanisms and agreements for protection of and access to genetic resources.

Rec 8 : Surveillance and control of livestock diseases

This is an important recommendation and we support its inclusion in the decision text.

Rec 9 : Promote research and development

We are strongly supportive of inclusion of a recommendation promoting research and development. However, it is unclear to us exactly what is meant by the references to a ‘participatory approach’ to research. Certainly we feel there could be stronger language on global collaboration and cooperation in the area of research given the global nature of the challenges being faced and the wide applicability of knowledge across agricultural systems.

We would like to see inclusion of language that encourages transfer of knowledge to farmers and implementation of research outcomes on the ground (otherwise what is the purpose of research?).

We also support rec 9(d) on ICT but wonder if it could be widened to include reference to the opportunities provided by ‘big data’ and ‘precision agriculture’ to improve SAD for FSN, including through the use of mobile technology to ensure broad and fast access to information.

Rec 10 : Review and improve indicators and methodology and identify data gaps

We agree that a review of data sets, indicators and methodologies is long overdue in the agriculture space. We also agree with the reference to using existing tools and processes including work under way to develop indicators for the SDGs – duplication of effort must be avoided.

We are not fully convinced of the need for rec 10(b) on improving monitoring of changes in grasslands and their biodiversity. This is work that should be carried out by CBD.

With respect to rec 10(c) – in our experience such inventories are often suggested but they require significant resources and effort to set up, they also need to be regularly updated in order to remain relevant, and they are seldom used.

Rec 11 -14 on different types of livestock farming system

While we feel that the distinction and categorisation of different livestock farming systems in the report is useful, many of the recommendations apply equally to multiple farming systems and not just the ones under which they are listed (this point was also noted by Ireland on behalf of EU members in the consultation meeting on 25 July).