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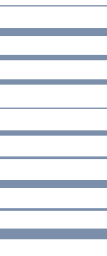
FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

# Gender Equality and Livestock Strategy for Europe and Central Asia 2021-2025



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and livestock strategy  
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# 1. The work of FAO REU on gender equality in the livestock sector

Extending from Lisbon to Vladivostok and from the Arctic Circle to the Pamir Mountains, the Europe and Central Asia region is one of the most diverse and extensive regions covered by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). More than half of the 53 FAO Members belong to the European Union or are candidates for accession. Since 1990, many of the national economies have been transitioning to an open-market orientation, encompassing the private ownership of farms and the agro-industrial sector.

The agricultural challenges of the countries vary greatly. Among many other key areas, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (FAO REU) works to collect reliable agricultural data, to improve nutrition levels, to fight animal diseases, to ensure food is safe to eat, to conserve genetic resources, and to combat climate change. All these key areas are also addressed via the technical work undertaken in livestock.

*In order to reach the full potential of livestock production in Europe and Central Asia, FAO REU focuses on<sup>1</sup>:*

1. improving animal health;
2. increasing the quantity and quality of animal feed;
3. establishment and development of breeding and breed management, including the improvement of artificial insemination (AI);
4. sustainable management of animal genetic resources;
5. securing smallholders and vulnerable livestock farmers' way out of poverty by providing access to viable solutions in livestock production.

None of the above, however, will be enough to attain the high effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of FAO's livestock initiatives unless gender inequalities and social exclusion within the sector are also addressed.

FAO has proved that social and economic inequalities between men and women undermine food security, hold back economic growth, and limit advances in agriculture (FAO, 2011). Consequently, FAO has committed to work towards gender equality via gender mainstreaming<sup>2</sup> in all areas of technical cooperation, at all levels of the planning and implementation processes, and throughout each strategic objective of the FAO Strategic Framework. In line with this commitment, and in

<sup>1</sup> Priority areas 1 to 4 are identified by the draft FAO REU livestock strategy, while area 5 was emphasized on the regional Gender Equality in Livestock Workshop (November 2019, Budapest).

<sup>2</sup> Gender mainstreaming is "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated" (ECOSOC, 1997).

the broader context of the 'leaving no one behind' principles of the 'Agenda 2030' Sustainable Development Goals, FAO REU outlined in its Gender Equality Strategy (2019–22) several areas of focus, namely:

- collection and analysis of gender statistics;
- capacity development of FAO technical staff and national partners to formulate and implement evidence-based agricultural policies and strategies;
- economic empowerment of rural women through diversification and generation of income and improved access to markets; and
- making FAO technical assistance gender-sensitive by mainstreaming gender equality, human rights and social inclusion within all FAO initiatives.

The FAO REU gender stock-taking exercise (2017) emphasised the need to go beyond capacity development on gender mainstreaming across the project cycle, and to focus on specific technical areas. This implies supporting technical officers with content-relevant and practical solutions for developing and implementing gender-responsive strategies, policies, and programmes within their own technical area. In 2018, the focus of the gender work was on livestock, the technical area that holds vast opportunities for the most vulnerable. Besides the continued work on reviewing livestock projects, programmes, strategies, and policies from a gender-equality perspective, for the first time intensive data collection and analysis was undertaken on the gender and socio-economic characteristics of livestock smallholders (primary cattle-keepers) in three eastern European countries within a regional technical cooperation project (TCP/RER/3604). Furthermore, a 'Regional Gender Equality in Livestock' workshop was organized in November 2019 in Budapest, Hungary, where the results of the mentioned research were presented and discussed. Additionally, FAO technical staff and national counterparts were trained on the relationship between gender equality and livestock, while key gender issues and priorities for the region were identified (see Annex 1).

The Gender Equality and Livestock Strategy is the result of a continued and intensive collaboration between the gender and livestock technical teams of FAO REU, and it builds largely on the contributions and views of regional partners that emerged from the regional event in Budapest. The strategy aims at contributing to greater gender equality and social inclusion in agriculture.





## 2. Areas of gender-mainstreaming implementation

### 1) COLLECT AND ANALYZE SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA IN A SYSTEMATIC MANNER

Agricultural censuses and surveys developed and implemented in the past provided limited or no information on the gender aspects of livestock production. However, to develop gender-responsive programming and to carry out adequate gender mainstreaming, up-to-date sex disaggregated data is essential (FAO, 2016–2020). The collection of such data – either as a stand-alone project, or as part of a project – has to be performed via tools specifically designed to capture gender and socio-economic data or via mainstreaming gender and socio-economic concerns in other activities.

- A comprehensive survey was carried out in 2019 on cattle farmers within a regional project. The results and experiences of this survey were analysed, and a wealth of information was generated to inform policy and programme development (FAO, 2020). The same survey will be conducted in other countries in the region within similar projects in future. The surveys may serve as baseline assessments for national programmes, policies, strategies, and FAO projects, as well as contribute to a regional database used for strategising livestock work.
- All value chain analysis (VCA), implemented within FAO REU livestock projects, will be developed in a gender-sensitive manner to capture the real needs and opportunities of women, men, and vulnerable populations, and mitigate the effects of modernization of value chains, so that technological solutions can be accessed by all.
- All country gender assessments will continue gathering and analysing secondary data on livestock, considering the main dimensions of the above-mentioned core survey (FAO, 2020).

## 2) SECURE VULNERABLE LIVESTOCK FARMERS' ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

Women are generally disadvantaged in ownership and control over land, livestock, and other natural resources. Access to land largely determines the possibilities for livestock production. Women's access to land is often limited due to the lack of enforcement of advanced land laws, the unequally distributed land (in the process of privatization), and due to discriminative inheritance and land-registration practices (FAO, 2016–2020).

- Besides general campaigns on gender equality and human rights, awareness raising on women's property rights will be integral parts of future livestock projects with subject-relevant aims and scope; for example, focusing on livestock ownership rights as a spouse and consequent opportunities to access credit, extension services (rural advisory services), and decision-making platforms.
- Awareness of policy makers of female livestock farmers' poor access to technologies will be raised as part of routine and project work. The technological needs of livestock farmers will be assessed in a gender-sensitive manner in all relevant livestock initiatives, and women's access to machinery, equipment and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) will be promoted to decrease their time-burden and boost female-led businesses.



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### **3) INCREASE ACCESS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (FOR EXAMPLE WOMEN, REFUGEES, INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS, YOUTH, AND OTHER DISADVANTAGED GROUPS)**

Women have less access to rural advisory services and vocational education than men. This holds true for training and advice in livestock production and animal health too, which leads to rural women's insufficient knowledge of innovative practices, animal health surveillance, disease recognition, prevention and treatment of animals' diseases, as well as to lower access to technologies (FAO, 2020). Furthermore, given the low capacity of veterinary services to conduct effective disease surveillance, training women on disease recognition can put them in the front line of early disease detection through passive surveillance. This, however, beyond access to training, requires that women have functioning channels of communication with field veterinarians to alert them on disease outbreaks.

- The entry points for the capacity development of women and vulnerable groups will be dairy farming, poultry and small-ruminants livestock production, in which they are already involved, and are known sub-sectors that secure pathways out of poverty. Food-safety training is key to improve the quality of animal products. In addition to this, training accompanying the provision of any equipment is highly necessary to secure women's and vulnerable populations' position along these value chains.
- Capacity development – particularly through farmers field schools, demonstrations farms, and focused farm visits – will also be provided to rural women in atypical, non-traditional fields of livestock production, if feasible based on gender-sensitive VCA. For instance, whenever possible, women should not be left out of learning about innovative production techniques (including artificial insemination, performance recording, mechanization or modernization of production processes, and climate-smart livestock raising), or of training on pasture-management approaches and techniques (including seasonality, overgrazing, winter feeding, animal rotation, and grass-growing cycles). Feed preparation and apiculture represent niche opportunities for women to start up their own businesses, thus pilot projects will be proposed to train women in these fields.
- The modalities of training will be well tailored. The participation of women will be encouraged (either in mixed or homogeneous groups) and monitored in all livestock initiatives, with corrective measures taken if necessary. A gender-sensitive capacity development needs assessment will be conducted before the implementation of training to understand the most suitable place, the most adequate trainer, and any special needs of potential female and vulnerable target populations. Capacity development will be accompanied with gender sensitisation (of counterparts and beneficiaries) and soft-skill training.



#### 4) COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT TO THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE LIVESTOCK SMALLHOLDERS

Women's access to credit is limited by several factors, including for instance the lack of collateral, the lack of information, the time burden, and low willingness to take risks. Access to the livestock market is male-dominated all over the world. As a result of these factors, combined with having less control over capital, land and resources, the exclusion of women from decision-making is occurring at a large scale (FAO, 2016–2020).

- To decrease the vulnerability of smallholder farming women when it comes to selling their milk or milk products, and to assist them to get greater access to information, FAO will advocate for and – when possible – support the establishment of women's dairy associations and women's entrepreneur funds/management groups. FAO will also train members of these initiatives based on gender-sensitive VCA. These groups should start as informal discussion groups and over time develop into more structural and legally supported associations.
- FAO is committed to facilitating, when feasible, dialogue between policy makers and women's associations to shape national mechanisms for female-led rural enterprise development (linking cooperatives with livestock and rural development programmes).



Photo: © FAO

# Bibliography

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- FAO (2020) *Gender and Socio-economic characteristics of cattle keeping households in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine.* Unpublished.

## Annex 1:

PRIORITY AREAS OF ACTION, IDENTIFIED IN THE 'REGIONAL GENDER EQUALITY IN LIVESTOCK' WORKSHOP, IN WHICH 52 EXPERTS FROM FAO, AND COUNTERPARTS FROM 18 COUNTRIES, TOOK PART (BUDAPEST, NOVEMBER 2019).

- Gender assessments of the livestock sector for better tailored interventions;
- Systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data in livestock in different countries of the region;
- Comprehensive approaches to the empowerment of female livestock farmers (quotas, earmarked subsidies, awareness raising, training and inputs);
- Awareness raising on women's property rights and legal aid to address/revise the ownership status of women;
- Sensitisation of partners and media campaigns to fight stereotypes that hinder the full involvement of women in the sector (for example in larger-scale marketing and technological processes);
- Tailor-made training on milk processing, cheese preparation, milk and dairy product safety, innovative solutions and approaches related to seasonality, low lactation, overgrazing, winter feeding, pasture management, animal rotation and grass growing cycles, where the modalities are well-thought – for example, on-site training with the involvement of female trainers, while providing day-care services in mixed or same-sex groups depending on the context, complemented with soft-skill development (e.g. related to marketing);
- Help women to access financial services (to provide information on how to open bank accounts, access soft loans, and credits);
- Female-led business development in novel areas of the market, e.g. producing silage and haylage for direct sale to end users to solve low-quality winter-feeding issues, apiculture;
- Business development in small ruminants, poultry, and cheese production (accessible value chains for women);
- In order to reduce the manual-labour time burden for women involved in livestock farming, increase their access to machinery via earmarked subsidies, and provision of specific equipment and related training;
- Establish Women's Entrepreneur Funds and support the Farm Management Groups initiative, to train farmers on accounting and managing costs;
- Support the establishment and functioning of female-led for-profit democratic dairy cooperatives and women farmers' networks, which pursue the development of value added chains;
- All projects and interventions should start with a gender-sensitive value chain assessment, which should involve the understanding of power dynamics at all levels, the role of partners, and understanding the network of formal and informal institutions, which is critical;
- Monitoring the implementation of the programmes and projects related to livestock and gender equality, and promotion of information accessibility;
- Support government to mainstream gender in national livestock strategies.



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