Photos on front cover and page 3: All photos are from the FAO Mediabase.
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Foreword

This year’s report of *The State of Food and Agriculture* is being published at a crucial point in time. The world is going through a financial turbulence that has led to a serious economic setback. But this must not mask the global food crisis that has shaken the international agricultural economy and proven the fragility of the global agricultural system.

Unfortunately, today increasing hunger is a global phenomenon and no part of the world is immune. Our estimates show that the number of those suffering from chronic hunger in the world has topped one billion in 2009 – one billion and 20 million to be more precise. The challenge that lies ahead is to secure the food security of these one billion hungry people and also to double food production in order to feed a population projected to reach 9.2 billion by 2050.

At the global level, recognition has been growing that agricultural development is crucial if we are to reverse this trend and start making significant and sustainable progress towards lifting millions of people out of poverty and food insecurity. This recognition is increasingly finding expression at the highest political levels.

However, the global food and agriculture sector is facing several challenges, including demographic and dietary changes, climate change, bioenergy development and natural-resource constraints. These and related forces are also driving structural changes in the livestock sector, which has developed as one of the most dynamic parts of the agricultural economy.

The global livestock sector has been undergoing change at an unprecedented pace over the past few decades, a process that has been termed the “livestock revolution”. Booming demand in the world’s most rapidly growing economies for food derived from animals has led to large increases in livestock production, supported by major technological innovations and structural changes in the sector. This surging demand has been mostly met by commercial livestock production and associated food chains. At the same time, millions of rural people still keep livestock in traditional production systems, where they support livelihoods and household food security.

The rapid transition of the livestock sector has been taking place in an institutional void. The speed of change has often significantly outpaced the capacity of governments and societies to provide the necessary policy and regulatory framework to ensure an appropriate balance between the provision of private and public goods.

A number of issues are confronting the sector:

- There is increasing pressure on ecosystems and natural resources – land, water and biodiversity. The livestock sector is only one of many sectors and human activities contributing to the pressure. In some cases its impact on ecosystems is out of proportion with the economic significance of the sector. At the same time, the sector is increasingly facing natural-resource constraints and growing competition with other sectors for a number of resources. Awareness is also increasing of the interactions between livestock and climate change, with the livestock sector both contributing to it and suffering from its impacts. Conversely, it is also being recognized that the sector can play a key role in mitigating climate change through adoption of improved technologies.

- The globalization of food systems has meant an increasing flow of technology, capital, people and goods, including live animals and products of animal origin, around the world. Increased trade flows, along with the growing concentration of animals, often in proximity to large human populations, have contributed to increased risks of spreading of animal diseases and to a rise in animal-related human health risks globally. At the same time, inadequate access to veterinary services jeopardizes the livelihoods...
and development prospects of many poor livestock holders throughout the developing world.

- A final critical issue relates to the social implications of the structural changes in the sector and the role of poor people in the process. How can the livestock sector contribute more effectively to alleviating poverty and ensuring food security for all? Has the rapid development of the sector in many countries benefited smallholders, or are they being increasingly marginalized? If so, is this inevitable, or can the poor be brought into the process of livestock development?

Within each of these three areas, the report discusses the most critical challenges and opportunities facing the sector. It highlights systemic risks and failures resulting from a process of growth and transformation that has outpaced the capacity and willingness of governments and societies to control and regulate. It tries to identify issues that require solutions at various levels to allow the livestock sector to meet society’s expectations in the future in terms of provision of both private and public goods. The issue of governance is central. Identifying and defining the appropriate role of government, in its broadest sense, is the cornerstone on which future development of the livestock sector must build.

The challenges posed by the livestock sector cannot be solved by a single string of actions or by individual actors alone. They require integrated efforts by a wide range of stakeholders. Such efforts need to tackle the root causes in areas where the social, environmental and health impacts of the livestock sector and its rapid development are negative. They must also be realistic and equitable. By focusing our attention constructively, we can move towards a more responsible livestock sector, allowing it to meet the multiple, often competing, objectives of society. It is my hope that this report can contribute towards the first important steps in this direction.

Jacques Diouf
FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL
Acknowledgements

The State of Food and Agriculture 2009 was prepared by a core team led by Terri Raney and comprising Stefano Gerosa, Yasmeen Khwaja and Jakob Skoet, all of the FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division; Henning Steinfeld, Anni McLeod and Carolyn Opio all of the FAO Animal Production and Health Division; and Merritt Cluff of the FAO Trade and Markets Division. Liliana Maldonado and Paola Di Santo provided secretarial and administrative support.

Overall guidance on the preparation of the report was provided by Hafez Ghanem, Assistant Director-General of the Economic and Social Development Department of FAO; as well as Costas Stamoulis, Director, and Keith Wiebe, Deputy Director, of the FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division. Additional guidance and support for the preparation of Part I of the report was provided by James Butler, Deputy Director-General; Modibo Traoré, Assistant Director-General of the FAO Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department; and Samuel Jutzi, Director of the FAO Animal Production and Health Division.

Part I of the report, Livestock in the balance, was co-edited by Terri Raney, Jakob Skoet and Henning Steinfeld. Drafting was also undertaken by Stefano Gerosa and Yasmeen Khwaja, of the FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division; Jeroen Dijkman, Pierre Gerber, Nigel Key, Anni McLeod, Carolyn Opio and Henning Steinfeld, all of the FAO Animal Production and Health Division. Additional contributions were provided by Daniela Battaglia, Katinka de Balogh, Joseph Domenech, Irene Hoffmann, Simon Mack and Jan Slingenbergh, all of the FAO Animal Production and Health Division; Bernadete Neves, Luca Tasciotti and Alberto Zezza, all of the FAO Agricultural and Development Economics Division; Renata Clarke, Sandra Honour and Ellen Muehlhoff, all of the FAO Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division; Nancy Morgan of the FAO Investment Centre Division; and Patricia Colbert, Eve Crowley and Ilaria Sisto, all of the FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division.

Part I of the report drew on two forthcoming volumes entitled Livestock in a Changing Landscape, to be published in late 2009 by Island Press, and prepared with the support of several organizations, including FAO, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), FAO Livestock, Environment and Development Initiative (LEAD), the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE), Bern University of Applied Sciences, the Swiss College of Agriculture (SHL), the Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD), and the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford University.

It also drew on research papers prepared under the Pro-Poor Livestock Policy Initiative (PPLPI), funded by the Government of the United Kingdom, and the LEAD, funded by the European Union and the Governments of Denmark, France and Switzerland.

Background papers for Part I of the report were prepared by Klaas Dietze (FAO); Jeroen Dijkman (FAO) and Keith Sones (Keith Sones Associates); Klaus Frohberg (University of Bonn); Jørgen Henriksen (Henriksen Advice, Copenhagen); Brian Perry (University of Oxford) and Keith Sones (Keith Sones Associates); Robert Pym (University of Queensland); Prakash Shetty (University of Southampton); Farzad Taheripour, Thomas W. Hertel and Wallace E. Tyner (Purdue University); Philip Thornton (International Livestock Research Institute) and Pierre Gerber (FAO); and Ray Trewin (Australian National University).

Part I of the report benefited greatly from two external workshops, made possible with financial support from the World Bank. The first workshop, held in November 2008, had participation of the following authors of background papers: Jeroen Dijkman, Pierre Gerber, Jørgen Henriksen, Brian Perry, Robert Pym, Keith Sones and Ray Trewin, in addition to Jimmy Smith (World Bank) and FAO staff from the Agricultural
Development Economics Division, the Animal Production and Health Division and the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division. The second workshop, held in April 2009, had external participation of: Vinod Ahuja (Indian Institute of Management), Peter Bazeley (Peter Bazeley Development Consulting), Harold Mooney (University of Stanford), Clare Narrod (International Food Policy Research Institute), Oene Oenema (University of Wageningen), Fritz Schneider (Swiss College of Agriculture), Jimmy Smith (World Bank), Steve Staal (International Livestock Research Institute), and Laping Wu (China Agricultural University).

Part II of the report, *World food and agriculture in review*, was prepared by Jakob Skoet and Merritt Cluff, based on inputs from the Commodity Policy and Projections Team of the FAO Trade and Markets Division, with specific contributions from Merritt Cluff, Cheng Fang, Holger Matthey, Grégoire Tallard and Koji Yanagishima.

Part III of the report, *Statistical annex*, was prepared by Stefano Gerosa.

The expert contributions of the editors, designers, layout artists and reproduction specialists of the FAO Electronic Publishing and Support Branch are also gratefully acknowledged.
Abbreviations and acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>BSE</td>
<td>bovine spongiform encephalopathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBPP</td>
<td>contagious bovine pleuropneumonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<td>CSF</td>
<td>classical swine fever</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FMD</td>
<td>foot-and-mouth disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
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<tr>
<td>GHG</td>
<td>greenhouse gas</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIEWS</td>
<td>Global Information and Early Warning System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPAI</td>
<td>highly pathogenic avian influenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFPRI</td>
<td>International Food Policy Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPCC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISFP</td>
<td>Initiative on Soaring Food Prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>least-developed country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIE</td>
<td>World Organisation for Animal Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPR</td>
<td>peste des petits ruminants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIGA</td>
<td>Rural Income Generating Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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