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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK

First Session

16 - 18 March 2022

Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Committee on Agriculture's Sub-Committee on Livestock

Executive Summary

At its 27th Session, the Committee on Agriculture established the Sub-Committee on Livestock, endorsed by Conference at its 42nd Session.¹ The Sub-Committee, according to its Terms of Reference, shall inter alia “prepare a multi-year programme for its work for consideration and approval by the Committee [on Agriculture]”.²

This document contains, for consideration by the Sub-Committee, the draft Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Sub-Committee. The MYPOW aims to guide the Sub-Committee's work during the period 2022–25. The MYPOW, which outlines proposed major areas of work for the Sub-Committee, is foreseen to be reviewed and updated at the Sub-Committee's next session.

Suggested action by the Sub-Committee:

The Sub-Committee is invited to review and revise, as appropriate, the draft MYPOW 2022–25 of the Sub-Committee, for consideration and approval by the Committee on Agriculture.

Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:

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¹ C2001/REP, paragraph 47.

² C/2021/21, paragraph 21 and Appendix E.

DRAFT

Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Sub-Committee on Livestock (2022–25)

I. Introduction

1. At its 27th Session, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) established the Sub-Committee on Livestock (Sub-Committee) as an intergovernmental forum with a mandate to discuss and build consensus on livestock issues and priorities, and advise COAG, and through it, the FAO Council and the FAO Conference, on technical and policy programmes and activities needed to optimize the contribution of livestock to poverty alleviation, food security and nutrition, sustainable livelihoods, and the realization of the 2030 Agenda.³ The Sub-Committee, according to its Terms of Reference, shall inter alia “prepare a multi-year programme for its work for consideration and approval by the Committee [on Agriculture]”.⁴

2. This Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) presents the major livestock issues and priorities that the Sub-Committee will consider during the period 2022–25. The MYPOW is a key tool for planning future work and sessions of the Sub-Committee.

II. Major livestock issues and priorities for the Sub-Committee

3. Globally, more than 800 million people are chronically hungry and billions more face other forms of malnutrition. Countries are off track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 (Zero Hunger).⁵ Terrestrial animal source food is nutrient-dense and provides energy and many essential nutrients such as proteins, fatty acids and micronutrients.⁶ Livestock-derived food products contribute 33 percent of protein and 17 percent of calorie intake of diets globally, but this contribution is not equitably distributed among regions. Livestock species and breeds are adapted to a wide range of environments, so the livestock sector can contribute significantly to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, even in areas that are unsuitable for crop production.

4. One-tenth of the global population live in extreme poverty. While this proportion has been decreasing in recent years,⁷ poverty has since increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸ Livestock contribute to poverty alleviation and employment creation: globally, more than a billion people depend on livestock for their livelihoods. Small-scale livestock keepers including pastoralists represent a large share of livestock producers. They have little bargaining power in both input and output markets and limited access to social protection schemes. Many small-scale livestock producers are women, who often have less access to natural and production resources, credit, information, and markets. The involvement of youth in farming is also decreasing.

³ C/2021/21, paragraph 19.

⁴ C/2021/21, paragraph 21 and Appendix E.

⁵ FAO. 2021. *Tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG indicators 2021: A report on the indicators under FAO custodianship*. Rome. 143 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/sdg-progress-report/en/#chapeau>).

⁶ FAO. 2018. *World Livestock: Transforming the livestock sector through the Sustainable Development Goals*. Rome. 220 pp. (also available at <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca1201en>).

⁷ United Nations. 2019. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019*. New York. (also available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2019.pdf>).

⁸ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/covid-19-leaves-legacy-rising-poverty-and-widening-inequality>.

5. The human health burden of zoonoses is high, with an estimated 2.7 million human deaths per year. Diseases also disrupt the participation of countries in international trade. Inappropriate use and overuse of antimicrobials in livestock production contributes to an increase in antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Veterinary drug and other residues are eliminated into the environment, contaminating soil and water. Practices to increase the short-term profitability of livestock production may degrade animal welfare, affecting the immunity and productivity of animals. Collaboration among animal production and health specialists, public health officials, and the private sector through a One Health approach is key to addressing these issues.

6. Livestock are the biggest user of agricultural land and consume approximately one-third of global cereal production. In some areas, the expansion of arable land at the expense of forest is driven by feed demand. Livestock contribute to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (about 14.5 percent of total anthropogenic GHG emissions)⁹ and use significant amounts of the world's fresh water. The genetic diversity of livestock is in a continual state of decline.¹⁰ The negative environmental impacts of livestock can be reduced and the delivery of ecosystem services enhanced by adopting nature-based solutions, best practices and innovations. Livestock are particularly key to climate solutions in agriculture, and can contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and to important ecosystem functions.

III. The role of the MYPOW as a planning tool for the Sub-Committee

7. The MYPOW will help the Sub-Committee to plan the delivery of agreed outputs, meet its objectives and fulfil its mandate. The MYPOW will guide the Secretariat's prioritization, identify opportunities for cooperation with partners, and support resource mobilization.

8. In line with its Terms of Reference, the Sub-Committee will advise COAG on technical and policy matters related to livestock and on the work to be performed by FAO in the field of livestock. The term "livestock" in this document refers to all terrestrial animals used for food and agriculture.¹¹

9. Following the advice of the COAG Bureau, the proposed MYPOW has a four-year horizon, and is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary.

IV. Major topics and deliverables of the Sub-Committee MYPOW

10. FAO aims to optimize the contribution of the livestock sector to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The MYPOW contributes to FAO's Strategic Framework 2022–31, supporting the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, and falls under three main thematic areas:

- sustainable livestock systems for food security and nutrition and inclusive economic growth;
- animal, public and environmental health through the One Health approach; and
- natural resource use, climate change and biodiversity.

11. These thematic areas were introduced at the 27th Session of COAG in document COAG/2020/5¹² and framed the agenda of the first session of the Sub-Committee. Work in these areas was initiated in 2021 and will be further developed over the period 2022–25.

⁹ Gerber, P.J., Steinfeld, H., Henderson, B., Mottet, A., Opio, C., Dijkman, J., Falcucci, A. *et al.* 2013. *Tackling climate change through livestock: a global assessment of emissions and mitigation opportunities*. Rome, FAO. 139 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3437e.pdf>).

¹⁰ FAO. 2015. *The second report on the state of the world's animal genetic resources for food and agriculture*. Rome. 606 pp. (also available at <https://www.fao.org/3/i4787e/i4787e.pdf>).

¹¹ C/2021/21, paragraph 21 and Appendix E.

¹² Available at <https://www.fao.org/3/nd382en/ND382EN.pdf>.

A. Sustainable livestock systems for food security and nutrition and inclusive economic growth

12. At its 27th Session, COAG requested FAO to produce a comprehensive, science- and evidence-based global assessment of the contribution of livestock to food security, sustainable food systems, nutrition and healthy diets.¹³
13. The assessment will cover all major sources of animal source food from terrestrial species (mammalian, avian, insect) of regional or global importance, and from all livestock systems. It will apply an agrifood systems approach, with a view to providing balanced and holistic guidance to policy and support the sustainable transformation of the livestock sector to best contribute to the 2030 Agenda.
14. The assessment is planned to be developed between 2021 and 2024 based on four component documents with the following working titles: 1) contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition and health outcomes – an evidence and policy overview on the state of knowledge and gaps; 2) factors determining supply, demand and consumption of terrestrial animal source food – historical analysis and foresight; 3) contribution of the livestock sector to food security and sustainable agrifood systems – benefits, synergies and trade-offs; and 4) options to sustainably change the livestock sector through incremental or transformative change to better contribute to food security, healthy diets and nutrition. Component document 1 has been completed and presented at the first session of the Sub-Committee. Component documents 2, 3 and 4 are planned for subsequent sessions, subject to availability of necessary resources. Subsequently, a synthesis document will be prepared.
15. Small-scale livestock production systems and associated value chains serve as an economic and social engine, providing food security and nutrition, employment, and other multiplier effects to local economies. However, small-scale producers face a number of challenges, including inadequate access to productive and natural resources, services, information, technologies, and innovations, which hinder their productivity.
16. COAG requested FAO to develop a technical document of good practices, based on sound scientific evidence, including consideration of the relevant policy recommendations adopted by the 43rd Session of the Committee on World Food Security¹⁴ on this subject, as the basis to consider initiating negotiations by Members on voluntary guidelines to enhance the productivity of small-scale livestock keepers.¹⁵
17. The document COAG:LI/2022/3 Good practices to sustainably enhance the productivity of small-scale livestock producers has been submitted to the First Session of the Sub-Committee. It describes the characteristics and importance of small-scale production systems, the challenges small-scale producers face, and the options for improving the productivity of these systems. Developing an international instrument aimed at guiding dialogue, policy processes and actions to enhance the productivity of small-scale livestock producers requires an inclusive, participatory and global process. The development of such an instrument could be another result under this major area of work by the Sub-Committee.

¹³ C/2021/21, paragraph 14.

¹⁴ Committee on World Food Security. 2016. *Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: what roles for livestock? Policy Recommendations*. FAO. 8 pp. (also available at www.fao.org/3/bq854e/bq854e.pdf).

¹⁵ C 2021/21, paragraph 14.

B. Animal, public and environmental health through the One Health approach

18. FAO works closely with the World Health Organization, the World Organisation for Animal Health and the United Nations Environment Programme to jointly pursue the One Health approach, which seeks to comprehensively address disease threats at the animal–human–environment interface.

19. Under this area of work, the Sub-Committee will monitor the mainstreaming of One Health and biosecurity approaches in the livestock sector. This will include regular reporting on FAO support to Members in implementing the Progressive Management Pathway for Biosecurity and enhancing national One Health early warning frameworks. For more information, see document COAG:LI/2022/5 Strengthening national coordinated capacities to manage the risks of animal diseases and emerging zoonoses through the One Health approach.

20. At its 27th Session, COAG underlined the importance of FAO's shared responsibility in promoting prudent and responsible use of antimicrobials in the food and agriculture sectors. The Committee further encouraged FAO to explore alternative ingredients to replace antimicrobials as growth promoters.¹⁶

21. The document COAG:LI/2022/7 Alternative feed practices to promote responsible use of antimicrobials is presented at the First Session of the Sub-Committee. It provides an overview on the use of antimicrobial growth promoters (AGPs) in the livestock sector and related consequences, and presents feeding practices that may contribute to reducing or replacing AGPs, as well as requirements and collective actions needed for their adoption. If agreed by the Sub-Committee, a database will be developed to monitor policies and legalization related to AGPs and their impact on animal health and welfare, and productivity, and provide an inventory of alternative feeding practices.

C. Natural resource use, climate change and biodiversity

22. FAO is custodian of several SDG indicators related to climate change and natural resources. It is strengthening the knowledge and evidence base by developing assessments and evaluating the impacts of technical options to improve the sector's environmental performance. At the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation recognized that livestock management systems are highly vulnerable to climate change, and when managed sustainably and improved, livestock systems can contribute to climate change resilience and GHG emissions reduction.¹⁷

23. FAO develops tools, methodologies and protocols to assess the environmental impacts of livestock systems and identify best practices¹⁸ at the country level. FAO builds the capacities of governments, the private sector and funding institutions to use these tools for national GHG inventories and access to climate finance and investment plans.

24. Enteric fermentation is a major source of methane, a short-lived climate pollutant. Reducing methane offers the opportunity to reach climate benefits faster, particularly in the livestock sector. For this reason, at UNFCCC's COP26, more than 110 countries joined the Global Methane Pledge led by the United States of America and the European Union, aiming to cut methane emissions by 30 percent by 2030 compared to 2020 levels.¹⁹ FAO has shown that adopting existing best practices and

¹⁶ C 2021/21, paragraphs 23–26.

¹⁷ FCCC/SB/2021/L.1.

¹⁸ See FAO. 2021. Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE). In: *FAO* [online]. Rome. [Cited 13 December 2021]. <http://www.fao.org/agroecology/tools-tape/en/> and FAO. 2021. Global Livestock Environmental Assessment Model (GLEAM). In: *FAO* [online]. Rome. [Cited 13 December 2021]. <http://www.fao.org/gleam/resources/en/>

¹⁹ See <https://www.globalmethanepledge.org/>.

technologies in feeding, health and husbandry, and manure management could help cut GHG emissions by as much as 30 percent.²⁰

25. Promoting regenerative grazing practices and restoring degraded rangelands can help with soil carbon sequestration and put carbon back in the ground, while also improving biodiversity and water quality, especially in extensive grazing systems. Improving manure management can avoid nutrient losses, contribute to healthy soils and produce renewable energy.

26. The document COAG:LI/2022/4 Integrating the livestock sector into national climate actions by considering its adaptation and resilience to climate change, and contribution to biodiversity and ecosystem services is presented at the First Session of the Sub-Committee. It reviews livestock's potential to contribute to climate action, enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services. It also provides an overview of FAO's support to Members to raise the ambition of their climate actions and sustainable development of the livestock sector.

27. Under this area of work, the Sub-Committee will monitor FAO's support to Members to integrate livestock-related mitigation and adaptation targets into national climate policies. In particular, it will report on regional consultations to develop regional strategies on mitigation and adaptation in the livestock sector, the development of national livestock climate change policies, and national feasibility studies to reduce enteric methane.

V. Scheduling of activities within the MYPOW

28. The MYPOW has been drafted to allow the Sub-Committee to focus on the priorities identified by COAG. It will allow thorough preparation of milestones and outputs over a period of four years, giving adequate time for informed debate. A focus on three to four major outputs or milestones per session is suggested.

29. The preparatory work for each of the major outputs and milestones suggested will need to be expressed as timed activities, and progress made in these will be reported to sessions of the Sub-Committee. Table 1 of the appendix to this document provides a schedule over the Sub-Committee's next three sessions. This forms the backbone of the MYPOW. The Sub-Committee may, at every session, review the MYPOW and provide guidance on what needs to be addressed in its next session, and how.

30. As per its Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference, and under the supervision of its Bureau, the Sub-Committee will, among other activities, plan and implement its programme of work in collaboration with relevant bodies and partners, establish communication channels with multiple stakeholders and monitor the progress made and report to COAG on its work.

²⁰ Gerber, P.J., Steinfeld, H., Henderson, B., Mottet, A., Opio, C., Dijkman, J., Falcucci, A. *et al.* 2013. *Tackling climate change through livestock: a global assessment of emissions and mitigation opportunities*. Rome, FAO. 139 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3437e.pdf>).

Appendix

Table 1: Major outputs and milestones in the Committee on Agriculture's Sub-Committee on Livestock's Multi-Year Programme of Work (2022–2025)

Thematic areas	First session (16–18 March 2022)		Second session		Third session
Sustainable livestock systems for food security and nutrition and inclusive economic growth	Assessment ⁱ : Component document 1 ⁱⁱ on contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diet		Assessment: other planned documents (see paragraph 14)	Global/regional workshop to present the results of the Assessment	Assessment: Synthesis report
	Good practices for enhancing the productivity of small-scale livestock producers		Review of progress on the development of voluntary guidelines or other instrument, if requested by the Sub-Committee and the Committee		Draft voluntary guidelines or other instrument
Animal, public and environmental health through the One Health approach	One Health and biosecurity in the livestock sector		Target and indicators for One Health and biosecurity		Review of progress on One Health and biosecurity
	Alternative practices to address antimicrobial growth promoters in the livestock sector		Development of voluntary guidelines or other instrument		
Natural resource use, climate change and biodiversity	Integration of livestock in national climate policies		Methods and metrics for mitigation and adaptation to climate change		Review of progress on integrating livestock in national climate change policies
Management of the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW)	Adoption of the MYPOW		Midterm review of the MYPOW		

ⁱ Global assessment of the contribution of livestock to food security, sustainable food systems, nutrition and healthy diets.

ⁱⁱ Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition and health outcomes – an evidence and policy overview on the state of knowledge.