



联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK

First Session

16 - 18 March 2022

Mainstreaming rangelands and pastoralism in FAO's work

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

Gregorio Velasco Gil

Regional Project Coordinator

Animal Production and Health Division (NSA)

Tel: (+39) 06 570 54355

I. Introduction

1. The 27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) acknowledged the critical role of rangelands and pastoralism in contributing to national economies, and supporting the livelihoods and food security of millions of people and the ecosystem services they provide, particularly in arid and semi-arid land and mountainous areas.

2. The Committee further acknowledged the potential of rangelands and pastoralism to contribute significantly to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 15 (Life on Land), and the opportunities they offer for rural prosperity. It also recognized the numerous challenges pastoralists and rangelands face, such as land degradation and climate change impacts, and requested FAO to mainstream its work on rangelands and pastoralism to ensure their systematic consideration in its technical and policy programmes.¹

3. Mainstreaming FAO's work on rangelands and pastoralism aims to build a corporate vision to fill the data gap and assess the impact of FAO's interventions on pastoral livelihoods and rangelands.

¹ C 2021/21, paragraphs 102 and 103.

This allows for better coordination between FAO's technical units and Decentralized Offices, thus better supporting Members.

4. Under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, supporting healthy and productive rangelands and sustainable pastoralism contributes to the *four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*.² The cross-cutting accelerators – data, technology, innovation and complements – are key to enhancing this contribution.

II. Actions towards mainstreaming pastoralism and rangelands in FAO

5. A reference document published in 2021 by FAO³ provides a renewed understanding of pastoral systems while supporting pastoral communities and rangeland ecosystems and related policy development. This publication presents two main messages:

- Pastoral systems are emblematic of farming systems that work with nature. They adapt to temporal and spatial variability of resources through flexible strategies such as livestock mobility or herd composition.
- Pastoral systems have been traditionally misunderstood by ill-adapted conventional modelling and economic analysis of livestock production.

6. An FAO Inter-Departmental Working Group on Pastoralism focuses on cross-learning reflection between teams diversely focusing on themes such as climate, land, agriculture, forestry, economics and statistics. Meetings of this group centre on pastoralism with respect to variability, and the way it might relate to other aspects of FAO's work beyond the focus on pastoralism.

7. FAO initiated a stocktaking exercise to review project portfolios of six countries.⁴ The stocktaking exercise maps FAO and national interventions (in collaboration with other institutions) impacting pastoral systems. The outcomes and lessons of this stocktaking exercise include:

- Pastoral systems are recognized in FAO's projects in diverse forms, from productive and income-generating systems to land-use systems. Some projects seek to enhance them through rehabilitating mobility routes, improving governance of tenure for common lands, linking pastoral systems to markets and collecting data on the resilience and value of pastoralism.
- These projects have a regional approach for far-reaching impacts on herders' livelihoods and the environment.
- Developing and improving the coordination mechanism of FAO's projects and activities will contribute to achieving a shared vision of pastoralism and rangelands within FAO.

8. FAO fosters the adaptation and implementation of tools, guidelines and knowledge generation on pastoralism to inform policy development with key stakeholders.

- The Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE), the methodology for animal feed balance sheets, and the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* were adapted to pastoralism and are being implemented while considering livestock mobility.⁵ A Participatory Rangelands and Grassland Assessment (PRAGA) was developed.

² FAO. 2021. *Strategic Framework 2022 – 2031* [online]. [Cited 14 January 2022]. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb7099en/cb7099en.pdf>

³ FAO. 2021. *Pastoralism – Making variability work*. FAO Animal Production and Health Paper No. 185. Rome. (also available at <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb5855en>).

⁴ Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria and Sudan.

⁵ FAO. 2016. *Improving governance of pastoral lands*. Governance of Tenure Technical Guide No. 6. Rome. (also available at <https://www.fao.org/3/I5771E/i5771e.pdf>).

- FAO delivered evidence on the potential of pastoral systems to be carbon-neutral,⁶ the sustainability of pastoral agrifood systems and their contribution to the national gross domestic product. At the regional level, FAO implemented a territorial foresight on pastoralism in a transboundary area of West Africa, documented the migration of pastoral youth in towns, and is working on guidelines for extending social protection to pastoral populations.
- A pastoralist-adapted early warning system⁷ was developed in partnership with other institutions to prevent food security crises and implement cash and assets transfers to targeted populations.
- FAO is conducting an assessment of the role of livestock in restoring dryland forests and rangelands, particularly the role of integrated extensive grazing in managing and restoring dryland forests, trees and agrosilvopastoral ecosystems.

III. Next steps

9. Data and knowledge on pastoralism and rangelands remain scarce, and research methods are not always adapted to their specificities. Existing scientific evidence of their benefits is still poorly reflected in national policies.

10. To address these challenges, the following actions are proposed:

- Generate reliable data and knowledge on rangelands and pastoralism through participatory approaches to develop and implement evidence-based policies.
- Share and promote the FAO reference publication on pastoralism with FAO's relevant units and Decentralized Offices.
- Include pastoralism and rangelands in FAO's project cycle to identify gaps and enable follow-up actions.
- Improve monitoring protocols of rangelands as critical ecosystems, as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration programme of work.
- Produce a reference list of FAO's tools and methodologies impacting rangelands and pastoralism to identify gaps and adapt them to pastoralism specificities.
- Support Decentralized Offices in the formulation of country programming frameworks in countries with significant pastoral populations to address their needs and well-being.

⁶ Habibou, A.M., Hiernaux, P., Lecomte, P., Ickowicz, A., Bernoux, M. & Vayssières, J. 2018. Contrasted seasonal balances in a Sahelian pastoral ecosystem result in a neutral annual carbon balance. *Journal of Arid Environments*, 162: 62–73.

⁷ FAO. No date. Predictive Livestock Early Warning Information System (PLEWS). In: FAO [online]. Rome. Cited 14 January 2022. <https://www.fao.org/land-water/water/drought/drought-portal/details/en/c/1201135/>