



GLOBAL AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK

GLOBAL FORUM FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE, BERLIN 16 – 18 JANUARY 2014: **SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK: WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?**

GLOBAL FORUM FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) is an international conference that focuses on central questions concerning the future of the global agri-food industry. It is held during International Green Week (IGW), and this year was the sixth time it has been staged. The forum gives representatives from the worlds of politics, business, science and civil society an opportunity to share ideas and enhance political understanding on a selected topic of current agricultural policy within the context of food security. The GFFA is organised by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) in cooperation with GFFA Berlin e.V., the Senate of Berlin and Messe Berlin GmbH. This year the title of the conference was “Empowering Agriculture: Fostering Resilience – Securing Food and Nutrition”, and discussions centred on how agriculture and rural areas can cope more effectively with economical, ecological and social challenges and crises (e.g. production risks and market disruption, the degradation of natural resources, climate change, etc.) while at the same time performing their central task of ensuring food security. For the first time, an opening event was held which outlined the key issues and explained which aspects are of particular relevance to the subsequent discussions in the GFFA events. The key speaker at the opening event was Professor Sir Gordon Conway¹, leader of the Agriculture for Impact initiative, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation².

DISCUSSION FORUM SUMMARY

A two hour discussion forum on sustainable livestock was held at the GFFA in Berlin in January 2014. The discussion forum was convened by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), which is coordinating the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock³ initiative. The background to the discussion forum is shown in Box 1.

The discussion forum was run as a facilitated discussion, engaging both a panel of five experts and the 80 or so participants attending. Panel discussants were: MariaHelena Semedo, Deputy Director General of FAO, and Coordinator for Natural Resources; Christopher Delgado, Senior Fellow at the World Resources Institute; Jacques Chavaz, Deputy Director General of the Federal Office for Agriculture and Head of International Affairs, Government of Switzerland; Cameron Bruett, Head of Corporate Affairs and Chief Sustainability Officer, JBS USA Holdings, and Chair of the Global Round Table on Sustainable Beef; and Neil Fraser, Principal Adviser on International Policy, New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries, and Chair of the Guiding Group of the FAO Global Agenda initiative. The leader and facilitator of the discussion was Kenya-based Brian Perry, Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of AfriqOne and Honorary Professor at the Universities of Edinburgh and Pretoria.

¹ http://www.imperial.ac.uk/AP/faces/pages/read/Home.jsp?person=g.conway&_adf.ctrl-state=1dm8so02md_3

² <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/africanagriculturaldevelopment>

³ <http://www.livestockdialogue.org>

The discussion forum was opened by Maria Helena Semedo of FAO. She first identified the need to improve the efficiency of the use of natural resources in livestock enterprises, and the role that incentives can play to induce livestock keepers, value chain actors, and resource managers to adopt better practices. She also emphasised the potential for livestock to contribute substantially to the protection of natural resources, particularly to the reduction in climate gas emissions, the provision of water resources and to enhancing biodiversity, all of which also have the potential to provide new incomes to smallholders and pastoralists.

A 20 minute presentation entitled “Sustainable livestock futures under growth and climate change” was then given by Chris Delgado, in which he summarized the changing context for food, nutrition, and sustainability, outlined the major challenges for the livestock sector in that context, and presented approaches to potential solutions and key actions. He emphasised the need to seek “Triple Wins”, meaning improvements in productivity, increased resilience, and mitigation of the effects of climate change. Short presentations were then given by Cameron Bruett, representing the private sector, Jaques Chavaz representing the Swiss government, and Neil Fraser who described the progress made so far by the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock, before the floor was opened up for general discussion.

BOX1. *Overview of Sustainable Livestock: What are the options?*

In recent years negative reports about the livestock sector seem to have increasingly seized the media spotlight. Environmental issues and the sector's contribution to climate change, disease transmission from livestock to humans, and health issues related to the excessive consumption of meat continue to capture headlines. Whilst such issues are undoubtedly worthy of attention, it is at the same time important not to lose sight of the critical development functions that the livestock sector fulfils in enhancing livelihoods, in creating economic growth and income, and in providing nutritious diets. The vast diversity in livestock systems worldwide and the different demands and expectations placed on the sector have contributed to the difficulties by public policy in comprehensively addressing the sector. It has also contributed to a poor understanding of how the sector, in a context of an increasing world population, growing scarcity of natural resources and accelerating climate change, can best contribute to sustainable food and agriculture. Solutions need to be found for the sector to produce more, from less, with benefits to all. This situation has not only fuelled debate, but it has also contributed to a vast array of visions on what the future of the sector should look like. Integrating these different visions has thus far been complex. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that to ensure the sector achieves its multiple sustainability outcomes (social, economic, environmental), that its stakeholders' demand, an informed use, not a wholesale reduction, of livestock sector diversity is required. This panel discussion will explore available options for sustainable livestock sector development, first through a keynote presentation by a renowned sector development expert. Following this context setting presentation, an international stakeholder panel will discuss their views on livestock sector futures, to identify practice change and continuous sector improvement options that could facilitate the livestock sector's contribution to sustainable food and agriculture in a diversity of ways.

The ensuing animated discussion highlighted the key roles to be played by livestock in sustainable development and in protecting and enhancing the livelihoods of poorer sectors of society, including the potential contributions to be made in reducing greenhouse gases. These were contrasted with the strong negative biases towards livestock and meat emerging from the so-called green elite of western nations. Sir Gordon Conway, who had given the opening plenary address to GFFA the previous day, emphasized the synergy of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock with the concept of sustainable intensification⁴ put forward by the Montpellier Panel. He also emphasized the relevance of the three action areas for sustainable development

⁴ <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/africanagriculturaldevelopment/themontpellierpanel/themontpellierpanelreport2013>

he had described (agro-ecology, providing sustainable solutions, but with an economic penalty), genetics, and socioeconomics (particularly seeking new market opportunities for smallholders and pastoralists).

At the suggestion of Davin Nabarro, panel members each contributed spontaneously some policy imperatives for the sustainable development of the livestock sector, and their proposals, and those of Henning Steinfeld, were used in the summing up of the session. The broad principles of these are summarized below. These policy related suggestions are not intended to provide a considered overview of what is required, but rather represent the spontaneous suggestions by panel members and contributions from the floor. Inevitably therefore they are not mutually exclusive, and certainly not exhaustive:

1. Greater international recognition of the key role of sustainable intensification in the processes of poverty reduction, livelihood enhancement and natural resource management, and the need for innovation in sustainable intensification
2. The need to strengthen the emphasis on knowledge generation and transfer (including ongoing research and development, targeted analyses and assessments, particularly in relation to water and climate change). Particular attention to pathways for reducing any trade-offs in the livestock sector amongst productivity increase, stronger resilience, and GHG mitigation.
3. Greater attention should be given to institutional developments that would facilitate committed engagement by all livestock value chain actors, paying particular attention to developing countries market chains; the example of bovine semen-sexing in India was tabled. These need to include the provision of incentives, the need to overcome the problem of underpriced externalities, and also the emerging role for payments for environmental services
4. Sustainable grassland management institutions and policies targeted at triple wins for productivity, resilience and GHG mitigation.
5. Target policy support and infrastructure investment to climate-smart supply chains that minimize losses and waste in the system, increasing efficiency and alleviating pressure on productive resources.
6. Greater understanding and exploitation of market signals; this is related to trade policy, and to the removal of policy distortions
7. The overwhelming need to adopt approaches which aim to pursue a landscape-wide approach to enhance achievement of triple wins – productivity, resilience, mitigation

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