



FROM CRISIS TO ACTION

Lessons from COVID-19 for Building a Better Future through Sustainable Livestock

14-18 September 2020
Online MSP Meeting

www.livestockdialogue.org

Workshop Summary Report 2 – 3 September 2020

GASL Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa 1 (English Speaking Africa)

Virtual workshop
hosted by

the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL), the Africa Union Commission, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (AUC-DREA), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the State Department for Livestock, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives (MOALFC) – Kenya, VSF-Germany, and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Development (FMARD).

GASL in collaboration with ILRI, AUC-DREA, State Department for Livestock, MOALFC, VSF-Germany and FMARD convened a virtual multi-stakeholder meeting for livestock stakeholders themed *Lessons from COVID-19 for building back a better future through sustainable livestock* on 2 and 3 September 2020. The virtual meeting registered 215 participants from 32 countries of which, 16 were African countries with each session registering about 100 participants from academia/research, non-governmental organisations, private sector, multilateral organisations, public sector, development partners and social movements.

The 2-day 3 session meeting was designed to be highly participatory to identify regional (anglophone Africa) COVID-19 impacts and strategies from stakeholder responses that would contribute to building forward a more sustainable future from the livestock sector. The meeting objectives included:

- I. Review the regional impacts of COVID-19 on four sustainability domain areas and the role of livestock
 - Food and nutrition security
 - Livelihoods and economic growth
 - Animal health and animal welfare
 - Climate and resource use
- II. Identify options how the livestock sector could improve its response through sustainable livestock approaches with solutions of a multi-stakeholder nature.
- III. Share current livestock related activities to build forward better, post-COVID-19

The effects of COVID-19 on the livestock sector, as with many others, are still largely unquantified and yet to be fully felt. Formal assessments have not yet been possible, but current observations reveal disruptions to livestock value chains impacting animal productivity and food production. What follows is a summary of the anglophone Africa's discussion on the regional impacts of COVID-19 and includes tables that capture different livestock stakeholder groups discussions on how they can support ongoing efforts to build forward better through a sustainable livestock approach.



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During Session 1, framing presentations were made around the impacts of COVID-19 on the four domain areas of food and nutrition security; livelihoods and economic growth; animal health and animal welfare; and climate and resource use and how sustainable livestock might address these. Thereafter, participants broke into groups to discuss the observed impacts and identified: a) the positive and negative impacts of the pandemic that are most significant to the livestock sector, b) how are we observing or measuring these impacts; and, c) what are 3 overlooked opportunities the pandemic offers to the livestock sector.

Overall, it was reported that while the measures and restrictions on movement adopted by governments have had significant negative impacts brought about by disrupted and fractured livestock value chains, there also have been unexpected positive effects for instance potentially, the reduced impact of livestock activities on climate and natural resources as well as, new opportunities opened by digital and technological solutions.

In summary, positive impacts of COVID-19 reported include: environmental benefits due reduced human activities leading to cleaner air, less disturbed environment and emissions reductions; closer multi-stakeholder collaborations as well as increased interactions with the public/farmers; increased localization as farmers break away from imports thus the re-discovering local markets; growing shorter (local) supply chains; growing demand for healthy food supplied from local producers that are seen by many consumers as fresher, higher quality and more environmentally friendly; accelerated digital transformation as governments and stakeholders seek digital solutions to bolster delivery systems for essential livestock inputs and veterinary services; increased interest in the livestock sector by the youth as they view it as a promising business opportunity; and there opportunities to promote and accelerate the implementation of a One Health approach.

Negative impacts identified include: reduced demand for inputs cutting incomes of businesses; loss of markets as producers, suppliers and other actors are unable to sell/market their products; inaccessibility of essential inputs and services including animal feed and public animal health services; loss of incomes as household members lose their job or opportunities to earn; increased post-harvest losses and wastage from unsold milk and meat; limited access to markets and in some cases markets have experienced total closure leading to overstocking that has led to increase to animal health complications and overgrazing; declining consumer confidence in animal sourced foods due perceptions linking livestock to COVID thus decreased consumption; revision of inclusion gains made in the sector as women and youth take up more responsibility in the household taking care of family members and the sick; loss of funding to the livestock sector as governments divert funding and attention to human health; and increased food prices as the pandemic affects supply.

Participants noted that with COVID-19, traditional in-person data collection has been hindered meaning that to measure the impact of the pandemic on the livestock sector many are combining administrative and transactional data i.e, market prices, and also using information generated through mobile phones. The availability, importance, and usage of real-time information available ? that impacts every aspects of peoples' lives e.g., cost of food, availability of jobs, mobility patterns, is thus providing a paradigm shift on how the sector is predicting and assessing the impact of the pandemic.



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The pandemic has also provided unexpected opportunities, participants described the numerous digital solutions that were in place, accelerating Africa's digital transformation as governments and stakeholders stepped up efforts to use digitalization to secure basic supplies for livestock farmers and their households e.g., animal feed, reaching farmers with e-extension services, online market platforms, financial and supply chain services – all essential lifelines for the sector. The growth of local value chains that innovated to respond to consumer demand for basic supplies was also noted as an opportunity for governments and stakeholders to strengthen short value chains. The meeting also shed light on the need for a united international effort to prevent another devastating pandemic through implementing a One Health approach that combines animal, human and environmental health at every level – from community to global and all in-between.

During session 2, participants were engaged in a lively panel debate by Dr. Godfrey Bahigwa, AUC-DREA, Dr. Sam Thevasagayam, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Dr. Jemimah Njuki, International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Joyce Makau, ILRI on *what we know or don't know about the pandemic*. Key issues emerging during the conversation and in the chat room discussions include:

- Even before the pandemic, Africa food systems faced notable challenges brought about by the fall army worm, desert locusts and effects of climate change.
- With COVID-19, Africa is particularly vulnerable to disruptions of food systems resulting from social distancing, restrictions on movement, economic slowdowns, and commitments of healthy people (especially women) to care for others. This leaves about 130-150 million people in the continent likely to face food insecurity.
- There is increasing concern that policy makers, decision makers and influencers in the North may view the livestock sector as a problem rather than solution due to perceptions linking COVID-19 to livestock.
- With a reported 37%¹ decline in the consumption of animal sourced food, what is the impact of this on the food and nutrition security of women and children under 5 years old? Given the importance of these nutritionally rich foods for these particularly vulnerable individuals, its likely to be serious.
- While there have been numerous responses to COVID, we need to apply an intersectional lens in these efforts to ensure an inclusive response that reaches the most vulnerable populations and especially countries where there is a growing 'double burden of malnutrition.
- The pandemic has greatly affected animal health service delivery; there have been reduced sales recorded by agrovets with fewer pastoralists in Northern Kenya, for example, purchasing less animal health inputs thus affecting their ability to control diseases. More pastoralists households have also modified their diets, consuming more carbohydrates, and skipping meals – putting the nutrition security of the household at risk.
- However, feed mills are demonstrating resilience to reduce COVID-19 supply chain disruptions compared to other value chains. The sector identified cheaper sources of local raw materials, improved efficiencies, used bulk purchasing and long-term storage options. They also offered free delivery and sales promotions to accommodate farmer needs to reduce the impacts of cost increases.

¹ According to Venuture37 pulses survey



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- The Biennial Report tracking the implementation of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) from 2015 - 2019, shows that in Africa, only Uganda is on track to achieving zero hunger by the year 2025. To reverse this trend, Member States need to increase investments in those areas that can increase food availability efforts to improve nutrition.
- Governments are reallocating public funds meant for the livestock sector and nutritional programs to cater to COVID-19 responses.
- AUC-DREA has mobilised inter-Ministerial dialogues, between Ministers of Agriculture, Trade, Finance and Health under COVID task forces to draw attention to the Food and Nutrition Security situation and possibly will attract more investments from government, private sector and development partners.
- There is a huge gap of knowledge and understanding of objective data on the contribution of livestock sector to the GDP, food and nutritional security of a country; as well as, how best to optimize production to meet this demand in economic, social and environmentally sustainable way. This information is needed to guide policy makers in making decisions based on data to increase investments in the sector and optimize the livestock production to meet the demand of the continent.

During Session 3, stakeholder groups (academics/researchers, donors, NGOs, private sector, social movements, public sector and multi-laterals) discussed their roles to contribute to efforts to *build forward better* through sustainable livestock. Responses included: strengthen public sector capacities around One Health, harness digital solutions; engage multi-stakeholders to collaborate and take action, generate and mobilize evidence, invest in research, mitigate livestock impacts on the environment, promote and implement a one health approach, reinforce and rebuild markets and value/supply chains, engage in policy advocacy for increased budget allocation to the livestock sector and invest in innovative business models.

What did we learn?

- Many issues are cross cutting and inter-related throughout the four sustainability domains.
- There are major concerns around food security and especially food system resilience.
- There is renewed resurgence calling for a 'lessons learned' response that brings prominence to a One Health approach.
- New technologies, especially digital ones are being deployed – perhaps faster than would otherwise have been the case.
- Several reports of small-scale local systems faring better than large, industrial scale.
- Rethinking business models with many companies reimagining their post-COVID return.
- Recognition that livestock need to be part of building forward sustainable, resilient food systems – messaging and evidence to support this is needed
- All stakeholders recognize the importance of dialogue and coordinated solutions across different groups- no single typology can address alone



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The workshop ended with an appreciation that while the pandemic has had a profound impact on livestock value chains in the continent, the importance of protecting the sector was highlighted given its unique ability to contribute to inclusive economic growth, food security, nutrition and healthy diets, and ensure social stability.

Contributions from the Group Discussions
Regional Africa 1 (English speaking Africa) MSP Preparatory Meeting
“Lessons from COVID-19 for building back a better future through sustainable livestock”
2 and 3 September 2020

Food and Nutrition Security
<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced nutritional content due to increased cost of animal sourced foods occasioned by reduced availability (due to market closures). - Loss of markets for livestock and livestock products, compounded with loss of income and eroded consumer purchasing power has led to reduced consumption of animal sourced foods² increasing the likelihood of nutritional deficiencies especially in children below 5 years and pregnant women. - Disruption of livestock supply chains e.g., dairy in Uganda, hindering access to animal sourced food exacerbating shifts to nutrient poor diets. - Constrained informal sector due to movement restrictions that has resulted in the closure of a number of small and medium producers, transporters, processors within the livestock value chain. The breakdown of the (fragile) supply chains of livestock perishable products, may have a long term effect on availability decreasing the nutritional security of vulnerable groups. <p>Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing attention benefitting smaller localised markets as local systems prove to be more resilient. - High labour activity on farm (family labour readily available), due to movement restrictions. - Increased access to livestock markets (and other) information online. <p>Opportunities/Lessons for future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-discovery of local markets for local products resulting in shorter value chains. - Embrace new technologies and digital solutions.
Livelihoods and Economic Growth

² By 37% according to Venture37 pulses survey



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Challenges

- Loss of income due to closure of borders has led to reductions in the import and export trade.
- Increased spoilage, waste, and post-harvest losses along the livestock products value chains due to inaccessibility of markets.
- Increased food prices due to disrupted supply chains thus reduced food availability.
- Reduced pastoralists mobility leading to lower access to resources, sanitary risks and conflicts.
- Loss of work opportunities and income caused by government restrictions has had severe economic impacts on livestock-based economics in the horn of Africa.
- Double work for women who have increased household responsibilities.
- Pandemic has diverted government investments and policy attention from the livestock sector.
- Milk trade has been severely impacted, adversely, and particularly affective female micro entrepreneurs who make up the majority of producers.
- Cost of transportation has increased, undermining the profitability of businesses with small margins.

Responses

- Many governments have exempted animal sourced food production and distribution from movement restrictions to ensure availability.
- Governments have provided tax relief to increase consumers' purchasing power e.g. reduction of pay as you earn in Kenya.
- Increased multi-stakeholder collaborations and especially between public and private sector and increased interactions between government and the citizenry.
- Expansion of local supply chains to fill urban demand previously met through imported products.

Opportunities/Lessons for future

- Increase recognition of the importance of animal sourced foods as livestock is a major contributor to economic growth to most African economies.
- Invest in digitalization and e-extension.
- Seize opportunity for import substitution and growth of local industry.
- Increase biosecurity measures at marketplace level to avert similar closures in future as well as strengthen animal health and vaccination programmes.

Animal Health and Animal Welfare

Challenges

- Movement restrictions have reduced availability of veterinary services and drugs, animal feed and live animals resulting in higher operating costs for traders and increased prices for retailers.
- Closure of animal markets has given rise to unregulated informal markets.
- Disrupted animal disease surveillance and reporting as national animal disease control programmes are reduced or even suspended.
- Movement restrictions have increased pressure on pastures and led to difficulties in feeding animals resulting in weight loss and higher animal mortality.



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- Animal welfare challenges due to overstocking could increase stress and the prevalence of animal diseases and compromise animal welfare.
- Reduced public sector funding for animal health and welfare as more resources (e.g., reallocation of public funds meant for nutritional programs) are being diverted to cater for COVID-19 prevention and containment and human health needs.

Responses

- Increased presence and engagement with government for relief support, quick response.
- Increased public health control measures and adherence to protocol and procedures enforced.

Opportunities/Lessons for future

- Promotion and commitment to a One Health approach is critical.
- In future, farmers should be more selective on choice of breeding stock to increase productivity
- Work with the ICT sector to enhance use of technology in e-extension and digitization of training for farmers
- Improve biosecurity to prevent infection at farm and along the value chain to the market.
- Review of a country's preparedness in the face of another pandemic/crisis.

Climate and Natural Resource Use

Challenges

- With restriction of mobility pastoralists are unable to access critical resources across borders for their animals (water, pasture).
- Social networks of exchange and reciprocity of livestock resources and information affected reducing smallholder farmers and pastoralists' resilience.
- With livestock markets closed, there is overstocking of livestock due to low prices increasing pressure on scarce water and pasture.

Responses

- Governments have stepped up efforts to support livestock farmers and also COVID-affected households with funds for sustenance.
- Increased collaboration among different stakeholders – the support has enabled increased resource mobilisation efforts to address issues affecting smallholder farmers.

Opportunities/Lessons for future

- Smallholder farmers should not be dependent on high-input breeds, focus on local breeds that do not require high cost inputs and are more drought/heat resistant and resistant to diseases.
- Opportunity for large industries to re-think their strategies.
- Strengthen smallholder farmers link to input and output supply chains.
- Increase multi-stakeholder coordination to address climate change challenges.



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Articulating Actions for Building Forward Better

Academics/Researchers
<p>What 'build forward better' changes or results can academics/researchers best deliver or contribute to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generate more e-extension publications to support farmers increase livestock production. - Conduct a demonstration project to show the value of improved genetics but also take into consideration appropriate health care and improved feeding. - Research/publish more in the One Health area as this would help ensure preparedness. - Understand what drives resilience and package and communicate this information. - Digitize processes and build more data [e.g. use blockchain to improve agri-food supply chains; digital census on farms; lab diagnostic sampling; produce mobile apps for farmers]. - Change the research approach from "research to inform policy" to "research that informs practice". - Work towards ensuring uptake of existing research findings. - Assess and share the impact of COVID-19 on the sector. <p>What are concrete actions can be done to deliver these changes? Who else do you need to work with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage multi-stakeholders to collaborate and take action e.g., local universities, extension officers, ministries of agriculture finance sector-lending agencies etc. - Promote and implement a one health approach with government, regional economic communities, international partners, and private sector. - Create platforms to translate research into policy and practice and ensure uptake and use of findings. - Change research approach to co-creation of knowledge and practice and incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems. - Promote systems approach for greater multidisciplinary collaboration. - Communicate and package knowledge, learning, research for uptake. Some strategies include lead in bringing together rapid multi-stakeholder policy response teams to design interventions and inform on urgent issues such as pandemics. - Support government tighten up policies on biosecurity to better regulate cross-border trade.
NGOs
<p>What 'build forward better' changes or results can NGOs best deliver or contribute to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in strengthening local capacities in the delivery of inputs and services. - Strengthen national and continental political will for the livestock sector. - Strengthen commitment to the One Health approach. - Raise awareness on how to prepare for disasters and risk mitigation measures - Policy advocacy that brings experiences from the field to policy makers to influence policy decisions and actions. - Develop data sources that generate rapid information that support the implementation of disaster mitigation measures. <p>What are concrete actions can be done to deliver these changes? Who else do you need to work with?</p>



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- Plan for future emergencies and disasters by developing contingency plans for resilience at local level (based on current experience).
- Advocate with stakeholders for increased budget allocation to the livestock sector by government/donors.
- Generate and mobilize local evidence on the impact of COVID-19.
- Engage multi stakeholders to collaborate in the review and implementation of sector policies that allow to build back better.
- Strengthen local, national, regional, and international collaborations.
- Intensifying livestock production systems to mitigate livestock impacts on the environment.

Private Sector

What 'build forward better' changes or results can the private sector best deliver or contribute to?

- Adopt alternative packaging (smaller packs) and distribution channels to ensure continued supply of products and service lines e.g., motorcycles, home delivery
- Invest in large larger storage units, e.g. for feed mills
- Improve dairy cattle breeds to increase production, to meet local demand
- Improve access to inputs and services
- Engage government and especially law enforcing agencies to appreciate that livestock services part of 'essential services' during emergencies such as the ongoing pandemic.

What are concrete actions can be done to deliver these changes? Who else do you need to work with?

- Adjust business operating and finance models and re-build markets and strengthen value/supply chains.
- Seek out partnerships to leverage on collective support and strengthen advocacy efforts.
- Engage in cross-sectional dialogues to accelerate national digitalization plans for the sector.
- Strengthen input distribution networks, and physical infrastructure for inputs storage and business operating efficiency.

Social Movements

What 'build forward better' changes or results can social movements best deliver or contribute to?

- Advocates for livestock to bring groups together for livestock.
- Ensure inclusion (of local communities, women, youth etc.) in building back better – leave no one behind.

What are concrete actions can be done to deliver these changes? Who else do you need to work with?

- Create working groups to help support livestock advocates of smallholder systems
- Engage the commercial farmers as well to do more to reduce their negative impacts on climate change etc.

Donors

What 'build forward better' changes or results can donors best deliver or contribute to?



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- Many interventions are having localized impacts (markets, inputs, etc) that in turn impact on livelihoods. Thus, humanitarian donor community should pay attention - engaging outside health sector too - meaning food security and livelihood issues
- Address the gap in livestock support through inputs and extension (crops are usually prioritized, and livestock forgotten!). Such actions are needed at every level from local-national-regional and beyond.
- Exploit livestock opportunities - governments addressing this through national livestock development actions. These need to be cognizant of resilience and sustainability issues - some of which need to be revisited to identify new and better approaches.

What are concrete actions can be done to deliver these changes? Who else do you need to work with?

- Work with governments to review policies and support sector analysis and investment plans in the context of sustainable resilient agri-food systems.
- Review donor internal policies.
- Invest in agricultural (livestock) research for development - to learn and find solutions.
- Invest in e-extension, digital solutions that foster farmer to farmer learning.

Multi-lateral Organisations

What 'build forward better' changes or results can multi-lateral organisations best deliver or contribute to?

- Make vaccine access systems equitable and inclusive.
- Enhance implementation of One Health approach (also improve the approach).
- Support prepare for future disasters/emergencies.
- Reinforce local production, both through policy regulation and research.
- Rebuild a livestock sector that is more aware of biosecurity and food safety issues.
- Invest in the development of local supply chains to shorten/localize supply.

What are concrete actions can be done to deliver these changes? Who else do you need to work with?

- Enhance/create awareness targeted to governments to invest and re-build local value/supply chains.
- Generate and mobilize evidence around key issues/topics e.g., equity, inclusiveness, vulnerability etc.
- Coordinate multiple cross-sectional actors to collaborate and take action.
- Plan, collaborate and build to respond to future emergencies and disasters.
- Advocate for governments to review and implement policies that support local small and medium businesses that are critical in filling supply chain gaps.

Public Sector

What 'build forward better' changes or results can the public sector best deliver or contribute to?

- Create platforms that promote multi-stakeholder dialogues linking diverse stakeholders in the livestock sector.
- Enact policies that support producers and local businesses access convenient financial resources in terms of interest rate to ensure the continuous operation of supply/value chains.
- Put in place and enforce guidelines for sanitary management of local markets.



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- Identify policies and strategies that need to be reviewed and revised to support efforts to build back better.
- Increase public investments and raise research and development expenditure in the livestock sector.
- Relax cross border restrictions to allow the trade flows for livestock products to continue unhindered with strict adherence to sanitary measures.
- Collaborate across sectors and strengthen partnerships with medical workers and veterinarians to operationalize the One Health approach.
- Support livestock farmers to build cooperative links to markets.
- Improve animal health through use of new technologies e.g., digitalization of service delivery.
- Enact policies to encourage diversification into value addition of livestock products e.g., processing dairy into yoghurt, to reduce vulnerability.

What are concrete actions can be done to deliver these changes? Who else do you need to work with?

- Form new or strengthened partnerships with livestock farmers to understand where they need support (e.g. technology application)
- Partner with private sector from small farmer to cottage industries, to agri-food businesses, ICT industry
- Ensure research is driven by policy needs (research for development) and results are shared.
- Build expert capacity within Public sector especially around ICT and One Health.
- Increase funding for the sector especially around research and development and capacity building.
- Prioritize existing policies that need to be reviewed and revised for the smooth implementation of a One Health approach.
- Disseminate guidelines and strengthen enforcement for the optimal sanitary management of local markets.