



GLOBAL AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK

ANIMAL WELFARE ACTION NETWORK

Integrating Animal Welfare in Sustainable Livestock to Deliver the SDGs

Objectives and Activities of the Animal Welfare Action Network

1. Convene a broad range of expert stakeholders, aiming to represent all sectors and regions, to develop consensus on approaches to livestock welfare and its implementation to deliver the SDGs.
2. Develop a knowledge base and hub of expertise to advise on diverse solutions and their implementation, including opportunities to learn across species, systems and geographical regions, so as to adapt, scale and replicate good practice. It will identify priorities, win-win solutions and how to successfully manage trade-offs to maximize the contribution of animal welfare to sustainable livestock development.
3. Promote visibility and effective communication of efforts to integrate animal welfare within sustainable livestock approaches and to help shape sustainable livestock development policy.

Integrating Animal Welfare in Sustainable Livestock: The Context

Livestock are an essential consideration for solutions to food and nutrition security and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals on a global, regional and local scale. Decisions about livestock production systems have significant potential impacts on natural resource requirements, environmental and animal welfare. However, animal source foods are important for delivering key nutrients to counter malnutrition in developing and emerging economies.

Long term food security needs to be based on sustainable agriculture (see Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2) which considers all facets of sustainability, including economic, environment, animal welfare and social components, as well as public health. This is reflected in the approach adopted by the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL) in its two ‘consensus’ documents, both of which note the importance of animal welfare by “Integrating respect for socially desirable outcomes that are not the immediate focus of Agenda-related activities, including, but not limited to, public health, biodiversity and animal welfare” (GASL, 2013) and “Taking an integrated approach to sustainable livestock that includes consideration of livelihoods, social impacts, public health and animal welfare, environmental impacts, land use and tenure, and biodiversity.” (GASL, 2015).

Integration of livestock welfare is a growing expectation of global society. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)’s first animal welfare standards in 2007 provided a valuable global benchmark informed by international consensus of its now 180 country members. As such, its founding principles of animal welfare are recognized as a core aspect of livestock production globally.

The international community, including industry and governments, have integrated animal welfare into sustainable approaches to food security and agricultural development. In recent years, the Rio+20 Declaration (United Nations, 2012), from the world’s largest sustainable development summit, agreed language confirming the importance of sustainable livestock production. Financial mechanisms for agricultural funding endorse the importance of animal welfare: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development included animal welfare (equivalence with EU animal welfare legislation) in its lending standards in 2014, while the UN Committee on Food Security’s Responsible Agricultural Investment Principles, recently adopted, also highlight the importance of animal welfare. The World Bank/IFC’s Good Practice Note on Animal Welfare provides detailed recommendations (World Bank/IFC 2014). The OECD/FAO (2016) Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains notes that it “will support animal welfare in our operations, including by striving to ensure that the ‘five freedoms’ for animal welfare are implemented, i.e. freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition, physical and thermal discomfort, pain, injury and disease, fear and distress, and freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour; and ensuring high standards of management and stockmanship for animal production, that are appropriate to the scale of our operations, in accordance with or exceeding OIE’s principles.”

Animal Welfare and Sustainable Livestock Development

Farm animal health and welfare can contribute to food and nutrition security by directly improving productivity and resilience of farming systems, especially for small farmers, consequently increasing availability of protein and micro-nutrient rich foods to local communities. The benefits of better farm animal health and welfare can play a significant role in reducing undernutrition and in implementing the post 2015 agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals (notably Goal 2 on hunger).

All farming systems, whether large or small, smallholder or industrial, can integrate better animal welfare and environmental performance while delivering good productivity. Good animal health and welfare outcomes

arise from good animal housing, good feeding, good health and natural behavior. The greatest efficiency gains can be derived from improving underperforming small farms through better feeding, breeding and animal care. These can include ensuring animals receive sufficient nutrition to thrive and grow, selecting breeds fit for the local climate, providing adequate veterinary care and designing farming systems and handling practices to meet animals' needs for natural behavior and to minimize stress and injury. Improving small scale farmer productivity has the greatest potential for increasing food security, consequently making high quality protein and nutrition available at the local level.

Animal health and welfare further contribute to food security and sustainable development by boosting livelihoods, through employment and the potential to increase production and thus allow surplus product onto the commercial market. In organized commercial markets, animal welfare can be a quality attribute that affords additional premium. Animal welfare attributes can enhance trade by allowing access to markets in regions with higher welfare standards (and thus boost income from small scale farming systems in developing countries).

Attention to animal health and welfare can improve efficiency and productivity by reducing loss and waste, which are significant contributors to food insecurity. Poor animal welfare directly relates to production losses through poor growth, disease, or poor handling and inhumane slaughter, leading to injury and carcass damage. Animal welfare can be improved in both small and large scale production systems often with little extra cost, bringing together improvements in both food safety and animal welfare provenance of products.

Multistakeholder Approaches to Sustainable Livestock Welfare

Many of the Global Agenda's members have made significant efforts to integrate animal health and welfare into their approaches to sustainable livestock, but as yet there is no way of capturing, sharing or communicating its contribution to implementation of the SDGs. There is significant potential to share knowledge, to adapt, replicate and scale solutions, to advise on good practice and to provide expert, consensus driven policy signals from GASL members. In other areas of the GASL's work, action networks have adopted approaches which include animal welfare, and the animal welfare action network can provide a hub for good animal welfare practice and cross-fertilization between action networks to maximize the impact of the Agenda.

The network aims to facilitate, synergize and catalyze integration of animal health and welfare within approaches to sustainable livestock, to optimize the benefits to animals, people and the planet. It will enhance implementation of existing approaches, standards and guidelines, rather than seeking to develop new global standards. Its membership is voluntary and its decisions consensus-driven.

The objectives of the network are to:

1. Convene a broad range of expert stakeholders, aiming to represent all sectors and regions, to develop consensus on approaches to livestock welfare and its implementation to deliver the SDGs.
2. Develop a knowledge base and hub of expertise to advise on diverse solutions and their implementation, including opportunities to learn across species, systems and geographical regions, so as to adapt, scale and replicate good practice. It will identify priorities, win-win solutions and how to successfully manage trade-offs to maximize the contribution of animal welfare to sustainable livestock development.
3. Promote visibility and effective communication of efforts to integrate animal welfare within sustainable livestock approaches and to help shape sustainable livestock development policy.

Membership is derived from across all relevant sectors, including industry, producers and farmers, academia, governments, NGOs and international institutions. It aims to be regionally and sector-relevant, dependent on its voluntary membership.

Outputs can include:

- Dialogue fora to build collaborative approaches and partnerships for sustainable livestock implementation
- Published frameworks for integrated animal welfare in sustainability assessments
- Case studies of good practice of win-wins and trade-offs in sustainable livestock production across economic, environmental, animal welfare and social components (linking to Action Networks 1, 2, 3).
- Case studies of adoption of good welfare in sustainable livestock through adaptation, scaling and replication
- A virtual (web-based) knowledge hub of approaches to animal health and welfare integration, including a repository of evidence on integration of animal welfare and an expertise bank enabling knowledgeable stakeholders across the world to identify each other and interact.
- Impact assessments of benefits to poverty reduction, hunger, loss and waste, and other SDGs (linking to proposed Poverty Reduction Action Network).
- Production of consensus-led public, policy and technical communications to maximize visibility and catalyze further action.

Next steps in Development of the Action Network

The network will aim to grow its membership across all sectors and geographies. It will develop an action plan including outcomes and timeline; it will aim to self-organize along the principles of the Global Agenda's governance process, including agreeing facilitation and management. Initially, the network will be facilitated by World Animal Protection solely in order to commence activities, but a broad membership base across sectors will be developed. It is envisaged that the network will meet virtually four times a year and face to face at least once.

Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (2013). Agenda Consensus. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome.

http://www.livestockdialogue.org/fileadmin/templates/res_livestock/docs/2013_consensus_november.pdf

Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (2015). Agenda Consensus. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome.

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OECD/FAO (2016) Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains.

<http://www.oecd.org/daf/inv/investment-policy/rbc-agriculture-supply-chains.htm>

World Bank / IFC (2014). Good Practice Note on Animal Welfare in Livestock Operations

http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/ifc+sustainability/learning+and+adapting/knowledge+products/publications/publications_gpn_animalwelfare_2014

World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) OIE Achievements in Animal Welfare. <http://www.oie.int/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-key-themes/>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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