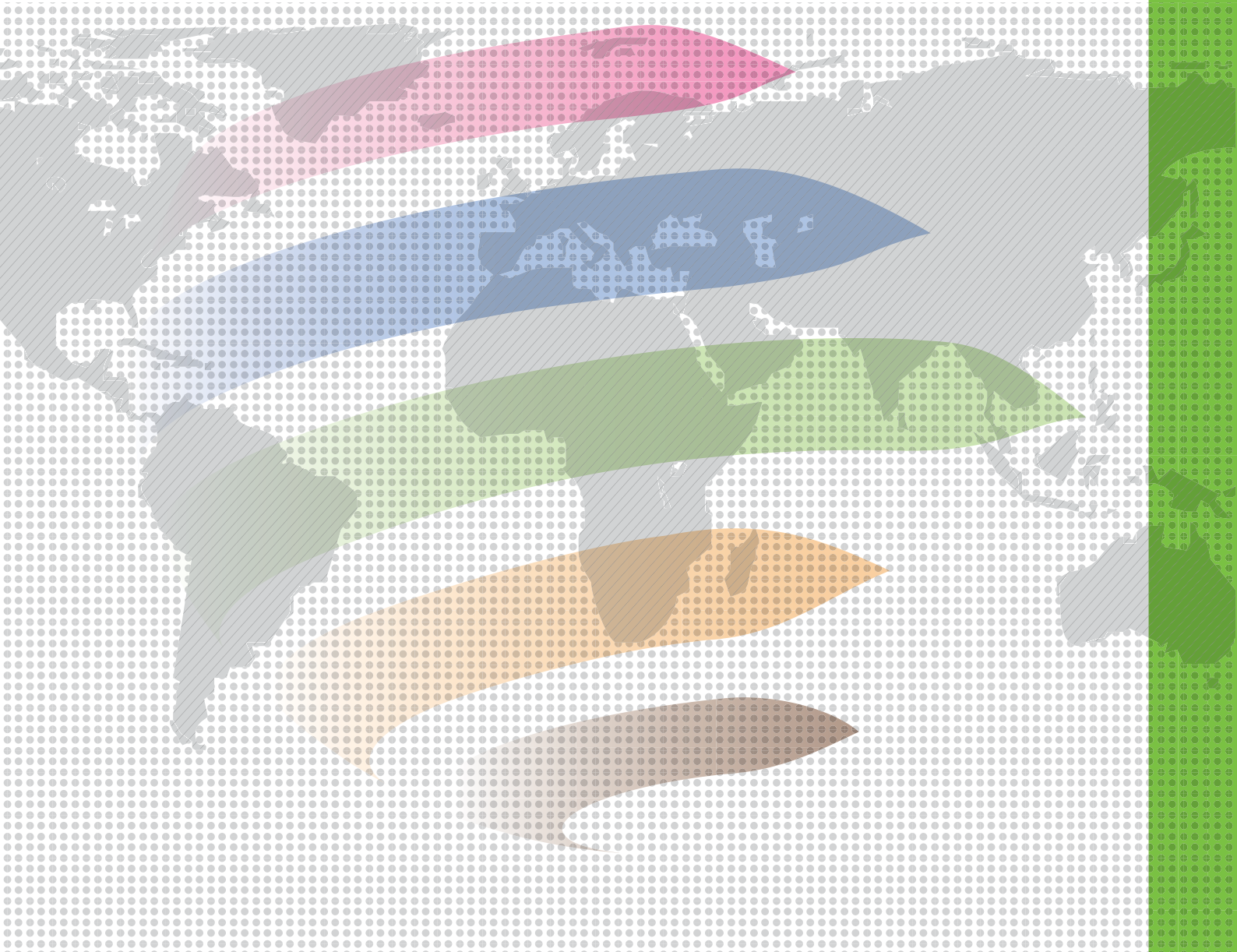




GLOBAL AGENDA OF ACTION

IN SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK SECTOR DEVELOPMENT



This note describes the status of the Global Agenda of Action in support of sustainable livestock sector development (the Agenda), which is being build through a participatory process that focuses on consensus building among key stakeholders in the livestock sector for subsequent joint action. Stakeholder have agreed that, initially, a Global Agenda of Action will focus on the improvement of resource-use efficiency in the livestock sector to support livelihoods, long-term food security and economic growth while safeguarding other environmental and public health outcomes.

A Global Agenda of Action is being built around the notion that demand growth for livestock products will likely continue for decades to come, as incomes and human populations continue to grow. Such growth will need to be accommodated within the context of a finite and sometimes dwindling natural resource base, and will be faced with the need to respond to climate change, both adapting and mitigating.

Demand growth also presents opportunities for social and economic development that many developing countries would not want to miss.

Ensuring that the livestock sector contributes to society's environmental, social, economic and health objectives, requires concerted stakeholder action towards the necessary changes in regulatory frameworks, policies, technologies, and supporting investments.

The development of the Agenda heeds the call of these opportunities.

BUILDING A GLOBAL AGENDA OF ACTION

Voluntary stakeholder commitment to improve resource-use efficiency in the global livestock sector to support livelihoods, long-term food security and economic growth while safeguarding other environmental and public health outcomes is at the base of the Agenda. Public sector, private sector, civil society, academia, research, and inter-governmental organization stakeholders have been integral to the agreements reached on the nature of the initiative, the initial three focus areas and the oversight arrangements.

The Agenda is also linked closely to FAO's inter-governmental processes of its Committee on Agriculture (COAG). During its 23rd session held in May 2012 COAG recognized that the Agenda can inform, guide, and enrich FAO's inter-governmental processes and endorsed FAO's central current, and if so requested, future role in the initiative.

As a fundamental component of the Agenda's consultation processes, two multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) meetings have thus far been organized: The first in Brasilia, Brazil (17 to 20 May 2011), and the second in Phuket, Thailand (1 to 4 December 2011). In addition, workshop were organized Rome, Italy (2 to 4 April 2012), Seoul, Republic of Korea (24 to 27 April 2012); and Brasilia, Brazil (7 to 10 May 2012) to further the development of focus area action programmes.

TURNING THE AGENDA INTO CONCRETE ACTION

A sustainable response to demand growth for livestock products in the context of an increasing global resources crisis, requires the development and mainstreaming of clear sector guidance. In this respect, stakeholders have agreed that the Agenda should initially focus on three specific areas:

- 1 Closing the efficiency gap:** This focus area proposes that large gains in resource use efficiency can be made by using available technology to close the gap between attainable efficiency rates and those actually achieved. While the technological frontier will continue to expand towards attainable efficiency gains at the margin, the bulk of producers continue to apply practices that are often greatly inefficient. The agenda will focus on commodity chains and production systems where the efficiency gap is large and where upgrading of technologies is both technically feasible and economically viable. Public-private and other forms of partnership will play a central role in the transfer and adaptation of technology.
- 2 Restoring value to grasslands:** This focus area proposes that the widespread neglect of grazing land constitutes a missed opportunity. Such neglect expresses itself in a high incidence of poverty in many marginal areas, but also in low productivity of land and livestock, and widespread degradation.

Grazing land, if appropriately managed and enabled by institutional and policy change, could play a better role and provide large and multiple resource benefits in the form of carbon sequestration, protection and provision of water services, and biodiversity protection. Carbon finance, and other forms of payment for environmental services, could be a key to raise productivity and enhance livelihoods as well as to provide environmental services at local to global scales. Institutional change, including REDD-type financing mechanisms, will be key.

3 Towards zero discharge: This focus area, aims at recycling and recovering nutrients and energy contained in animal manure, particularly from intensive and confined livestock operation. Nutrients and energy are only partially converted by the animal, and between 50 and 90 percent of the nutrients, and about 30 percent of the energy are excreted and often lost to the environment, leading to nutrient overload and gas emissions. Recycled nutrients can help raise soil fertility and plant productivity and substitute mineral fertilizer. Recovered energy reduces climate gas emissions and substitutes fossil fuel. Sustainable application of animal waste on crops, public policies and the development of incentive structures will be essential.

Whilst the relative emphasis and the approaches for each focus area will vary among geographic regions, each presents specific 'game changing' opportunities for large environmental, social and economic gains.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Stakeholders have agreed that, initially, the Agenda will:

- 1 Network and inform:** to stimulate multi-stakeholder interaction and collaboration; to enhance the access to and choice of information; and to link demand for knowledge and services to its supply and/or supplier, and
- 2 Analyze and guide:** to develop harmonized metrics and methodologies; to provide strategic sector guidance; and to inform inter-governmental and other partnership processes.

The Agenda will also actively catalyze concrete action to be able to translate the concept of livestock sector sustainability into practice. It is through practice change that impact occurs, benefits from multi-stakeholder involvement are realized, and generic lessons are learned. In addition, there is the need for the further development of a set of principles to which Agenda stakeholders subscribe, which will equally serve as the rules-of-engagement for Agenda-related activities.

Agenda stakeholders, whilst mindful that its oversight mechanism should remain open to debate, evaluation and review, have endorsed an interim oversight solution through the establishment of a Guidance Group. This group, to be established for an initial two years, will have an Agenda Secretariat staff as an ex-officio member, and consist of three donor representatives; three representatives from inter-governmental / international organizations; two representatives from each of the Agenda's focus areas clusters; and three representatives 'at large' to ensure regional and stakeholder grouping representation.

NEXT STEPS

The Agenda's strategy document and the three focus areas' proposed work programmes, funding strategies, and an operations manual are being developed further by the FAO Secretariat in collaboration with the Interim Preparatory Committee (IPC) and the focus area clusters. In addition, the Agenda's oversight mechanism, the rules-of-engagement, and the communication and networking strategies are undergoing further refinement from the FAO Secretariat and the IPC.

Prior to their completion, the above indicated strategies and documents will be distributed for comments and suggestions to the MSP. The subsequent finalized drafts are expected to be discussed and endorsed at the next MSP meeting which will be hosted by the African Union / Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources and the International Livestock Research Institute in Nairobi, Kenya, from 22 to 24 January 2013.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Henning Steinfeld
Chief, Livestock Information,
Sector Analysis and Policy Branch
Animal Production and Health Division
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations
henning.steinfeld@fao.org

www.livestockdialogue.org