



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



CONTRIBUTION OF LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS TO FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

FRANCE¹ – FAO EVENT

MILAN, 26 JUNE 2015

FRENCH PAVILION, EXPO MILANO

A SHORT REPORT

This event, focusing on the contribution of livestock and livestock products to food security and nutrition, highlighted the global issues arising from the current strong growth in demand for products of animal origin. The day-long event, moderated by journalist Frédéric Denhez, provided an opportunity for rewarding exchanges between high-level speakers and an informed audience.

The event was coordinated with a Switzerland-FAO workshop held the day before under the heading “Sustainable Livestock and Climate Smart Agriculture”. Both events held in the context of Expo Milano 2015 threw light on what the livestock sector will be like in the future.

¹ Ministry of Agriculture, Agrifood and Forestry (MAAF) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI).



M. Berhe Tekola, Director of the FAO Animal Production & Health Division (AGA)

In his introduction, **Berhe Tekola**, Director of the FAO Animal Production & Health Division (AGA), emphasised the background: strongly growing demand over the period to 2050, numerous benefits (nutritional and cultural values, economic importance – especially in the poorest countries, a sector with great resilience in the face of climate stress) but also a sector attracting criticism for its environmental impact (strong media pressure). He called on participants to work to optimise the use of natural resources in the sector (pasture, genetic resources) and to extract value from the potential offered by the livestock farming sector for food security generally, these being two of the FAO's strategic goals.

Shirley Tarawali (ILRI – *Institut International de Recherche sur l'Élevage* / International Livestock Research Institute) presented the main conclusions reached in the workshop held the day before in the Swiss pavilion under the heading: “Sustainable Livestock and Climate Smart Agriculture” organised jointly by the Swiss government and the FAO. The discussions had focused on how three initiatives might be interfaced: the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL), a platform for multiactor dialogue on the sustainability of livestock farming (in its three dimensions); the Global Research Alliance (GRA), which brings researchers together to find practical solutions to combat climate change; and the Global Alliance on Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA), whose remit is broader than that of GASL, focusing on climate-related aspects. The participants concluded that synergies are possible in order to avoid duplication of effort and to fill in gaps (examples: gender issues and combating antimicrobial resistance); dialogue between platforms must continue, while noting that the livestock sector is happy at least to have a dedicated platform.

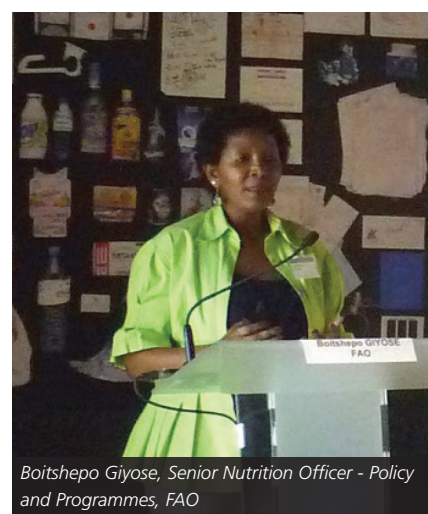
A framing sequence based around **the complementary visions of a sociologist, a nutritionist and a specialist in nomadic populations and pastoralism** demonstrated the major role of livestock farming in all societies (following a variety of pathways shaped by geographical and historical contexts), highlighting its economic and social as well as food-related importance.



Frédéric Saumade, Professor of social anthropology, University of Aix-Marseille



Saverio Kratli, Editor, *Nomadic Peoples*, IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples



Boitshepo Gyiose, Senior Nutrition Officer - Policy and Programmes, FAO

The **first round table** that followed looked at **the role and place of livestock products in food supply, and their nutritional value in particular**:

- The FAO (Boitshepo Gyiose, a specialist in nutrition), supplementing her framing paper on the essential and particularly easily digested nutritional intakes provided by livestock products (e.g. amino acids, vitamins, iron), tied this in with the cultural aspects of these products as expressions of traditions. She argued for a dialogue between scientific experts, consumers, producers and decision-makers on the proper place of products of animal origin in diet.

- Nestlé (Anne Roulin, Vice President Nutrition, Health & Wellness and Sustainability) provided a presentation, illustrated by an example from the Punjab (India), on her approach to ensure that development of its activities contribute to improving the food security (producer income) and nutrition (improved nutritional value of products) of local populations and to controlling the environmental impact of farming activities (e.g. optimisation of water use).
- The French Ministry of Agriculture (Valérie Vion, head of the Globalisation and Food Security Office at the General Directorate for Economic and Environmental Performance of Enterprises (DGPE)) described the tools for implementation of food policies in France (National Nutrition and Health Program (PNNS) – National Programme for Food (PNA)), which are defined on the basis of broad consultation and scientific data, helping ensure that consumers are informed. The advantage of consumption of livestock products is fully acknowledged in these contexts. The French Ministry of Agriculture also presented instruments of “quality label” type that meet consumer demand and add value to products.
- The non-profit association “Bleu-Blanc-Cœur” (Pierre Weill) highlighted the complexity of the challenge involved in reconciling the environmental sustainability of food supply with good nutritional balance. Products from livestock farming are indispensable to health, but their nutritional properties and their environmental performance both depend on production practices. The “Bleu-Blanc-Cœur” approach, which prioritises grass pasturage and flax consumption, has precisely this in mind. Recognition from the authorities is a factor of acknowledged importance in supporting this approach



The **second round table** discussed the **socioeconomic aspects**, with livestock farming not only enabling producers to generate income but also to energise and add value to their regions:

- The FAO (Philippe Ankers, head of its Livestock Production Systems Branch) stressed three messages: 1. Agriculture has major potential for alleviating poverty; 2. Livestock farming has major capacity for creating jobs that pay a decent wage; 3. Investment, especially public, in support services is required.
- The International Dairy Federation (Nico van Belzen) presented broad figures on the dairy sector, underlining the need to produce more to meet rising demand.
- Emmanuel Coste, a farmer raising organic sheep and suckling beef cattle, president of the international issue group Interbev, stressing the great importance of farmers’ own input to the debate, described the many contributions made by livestock farming to development: production; the sanitary quality of products; participation in the vitality of local regions by creating direct and indirect employment (5-7 jobs upstream and downstream per livestock farmer in the Upper Loire region); preservation of the attractiveness of regions (e.g. upkeep of landscape and roads; rural tourism facilities); management of biodiversity (local breeds); positive externalities (management of fertility, water management). The challenge for tomorrow, in a context in which fingers are regularly pointed at livestock farming, will be to attract young people to take over holdings and thus add value to wooded areas where other types of farming are either not possible or not economically viable.
- The “Laiterie du Berger” (Shepherd’s Dairy) (Senegal – Arona Diaw), after having sketched out the background (extensive livestock farming model, local production coverage of only 40% of requirement, high levels of dairy imports), described its business model: adding value to local milk through processing, sales in urban areas, limited product range, milk collection with limited but suitable equipment. To achieve this, the Laiterie has had to develop services for farmers (inputs), and this has increased production. Additional small farms have recently been set up to secure supplies to the dairy (following a drought which led pastoral farmers to leave the area, the dairy was faced with a situation of relative shortage).





The closing remarks by Patrice de Laurens, head of the Europe and International department of the directorate responsible for agricultural policies (DGPE/MAAF), provided an opportunity to recall not only the effort that needs to be made by livestock sectors to improve their environmental performance but also their full potential, with a view to the Climate Conference in Paris (COP21), and to present in that spirit the core goals of the "4 per thousand" initiative.

The day's proceedings illustrated and demonstrated the major role livestock farming should continue to play in food supply and nutritional balance for the general population as well as its capacity to contribute to the preservation of the major environmental balances and rural development that can be fair and sustainable if properly conducted. The challenge of antimicrobial resistance and the question of animal welfare were also cited as important issues.

