

**Agenda of Action in Support of Sustainable Livestock Development**  
**CONSULTATION ON FOCUS AREA NUMBER 2:**  
**RESTORING VALUE TO GRASS LANDS**  
**Brasilia, 07-10 May 2012**

## **Introduction**

This workshop, jointly organized by the FAO Secretariat and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Production and Food Supply/EMBRAPA (Agricultural Research Corporation) of the Government of Brazil, was funded by the Governments of Switzerland and The Netherlands and held at Embrapa Estudos e Capacitação (Cecat) in Brasilia. The consultation was the third of a series of three expert consultations organized by the FAO under a Global Agenda of Action in Support of Sustainable Livestock Development (GAA) which is to be launched publicly later this year.

## **Objective**

The main purpose of the workshop was to identify practical steps to prepare an initial action programme concerned with restoring value to grasslands, with the objective of ending the neglect of grasslands and pastoralists by promoting:

- Sustainable intensification in high potential areas;
- Restoration and livelihood protection in low potential areas;
- Better incentives for rewarding environmental services;
- Institutional reform and facilitation of knowledge sharing.

An issues paper, [Restoring Value to Grasslands](#), and background paper, [Options for Support to Grassland Restoration in the Context of Climate Change Mitigation](#), were previously posted by the Secretariat.

## **Participation**

About 45 participants attended from different regions including Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America, representing governments and international organizations (mostly drawn from agricultural research), non-government organizations, the private sector (mostly representing beef producer and exporter organizations) and academia (see List of Participants).

## **Main Presentations**

The first day was devoted to hearing some 15 invited presentations on various aspects of restoring value to grasslands, both in Latin America and in other regions, and aimed at providing answers to questions such as:

- Where is grassland degradation & associated losses of environmental assets & services most acute?

- Where, given various constraints, is restoring value to grasslands most feasible?
- Which policy instruments are best suited to large scale grassland restoration?
- What role can climate finance & other PES schemes play in supporting large-scale grassland restoration?
- How could the GAA be best positioned to add value to ongoing & past activities?
- How can each stakeholder engage in an initial Action programme?

Some of the main points from presentations were as follows. Latin American research over 50 years in Uruguay shows that soil carbon can be recovered effectively from degraded pastures subject to maintenance of adequate soil nitrogen. Brazil has identified 15M ha of degraded grasslands suitable for restoration by 2020 through an integrated program named ABC. The crop-livestock interface was identified as important in many regions to restore grasslands with balanced management systems. Land tenure and use of regional pastoralist associations were identified as important opportunities for restoring grassland value in Sub Saharan West Africa. In all cases, sources of grassland degradation must be known before meaningful solutions can be identified. Where a market does not exist, incentives must be provided for land use changes in support of environmental services and climate change mitigation. Interventions must be specific to the local/regional culture, climatic environment, economic status and actual causes of grassland degradation. In all cases, long-term solutions are needed rather than short-term or donor-dependent efforts. Grasslands were excluded from the Kyoto Protocol, making climate finance more difficult to obtain. Main gains of intervention would generally be for economic and food security purposes, with climate mitigation as a byproduct. (For an abstract of all presentations please refer to workshop notes prepared by Ted Haney of IMS).

Conclusion of the background paper presented by Timm Tennigkeit is reproduced verbatim: “Compared to the deforestation and forest degradation issue, a grassland agenda also faces a number of unique challenges. Firstly, grasslands and extensive livestock production systems have to date been accorded lower political priority in many countries. Agencies charged with grassland management are typically not powerful agencies even within their own agriculture ministries. And the perspectives of grassland users such as pastoralists are often politically marginalized within regional and national policy debates. Secondly, compared to the gradual emergence of a robust scientific basis for quantification of REDD+ actions, a grassland agenda also faces the challenge of a scientific basis that is variable across the many grassland types and production systems that it may address. So far, there has been no harmonized definition for grasslands. Furthermore, while there are a number of initiatives already supportive of a scientific basis for GHG quantification in grasslands, in general there has been less focus in the international scientific community on grasslands”.

### **Summary of Discussions**

Days 2 and 3 of the workshop were mainly spent in working groups, variously formed on either regional, stakeholder- or topic-based lines in order to allow for good cross-fertilization of experiences. By the end of Day 2, working groups had compiled ideas for

possible policy options for restoring value to grasslands; their assessment of opportunities and challenges for the uptake of these options; and tentative lines of action. After an effort at sorting and prioritizing these ideas, working groups were re-formed on Day 3 to identify activities/further information needed to develop an initial Action programme. This was largely successful and resulted in a rich harvest of proposals for activities under three headings: (a) knowledge, assessment and methodologies; (b) political and institutional processes; and (c) pilot projects. These proposals are listed in the three final working documents of the workshop. Further work is needed to consolidate and prioritize these proposals, and this will be undertaken between now and September by volunteer working groups comprising different stakeholders, coordinated by the Secretariat.

### **Next Steps**

In closing, Henning Steinfeld of FAO expressed satisfaction with the exceptional spirit of cooperation demonstrated at this workshop between different stakeholders with often widely differing views on subjects as controversial as grass/rangelands and the place of pastoralists. The next major step was to make a strong business case and muster the political and institutional support needed for proceeding with all three focal areas of the GAA. This did not mean launching new studies but carefully building up an evidence-based case for working on grassland issues. Additional value would be generated by doing this work together as far as possible, in country coalitions and cross-stakeholder groups based on consensus. To his call for volunteers to help carry forward the work of the three working groups, responses were immediately forthcoming, viz:

- Knowledge/Assessment/Methods: Jan de Leeuw (ILRI/ICRAF) and Constance Neely (FAO/ICRAF) with Liz Wedderburn (AgResearch NZL);
- Policy/Institutional Processes: Timm Tenningkeit (Unique) and Ted Haney (IMS) with Andrea Malmberg (Savory Institute);
- Pilot Projects: Eduardo Bastos (GTPS Brasil) with Ilse Koehler-Rollefson (LPP).

The next major milestones for the GAA would be meetings of the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in Rome on May 21, of the Interim Preparation Committee in Rome on May 28, and of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform in Nairobi starting on September 18, to which all were invited.

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