

Welcome Address

By Niek Schelling

Welcome ceremony, “Workshop on Reduced Discharge”
Samsung Convention Center at Hoam Faculty House of SNU
Tuesday, 24 April 2012. 18.30 h.

Dear participants

First of all I would like to thank the Government of S-Korea and in particular the Seoul National University for hosting this international meeting on Reduced Discharge in the livestock sector.

I would like to especially thank dr. Hong Choi and his staff for his initiative to organize this meeting and for all the preparations. I would also like to thank FAO and the donors of the Global Livestock Dialogue that support this meeting here in Seoul.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 2010 the Netherlands organized a side event on sustainable livestock development during the meeting of the Committee of Agriculture of FAO in Rome. This event was well attended by many countries and organizations and highlighted some dilemma's of current and future livestock production.

A long period of time livestock was hardly seen as an interesting topic for food security and rural development. Now we know that in 2050, the consumption of animal products will rise by 70 percent. This is driven by higher incomes in emerging economies and developing countries. At the same time we see that livestock is a hungry sector and uses a large part of our agricultural land, water, energy and fertilizers. The livestock sector is also an important source for labour and rural income. An adequate overall policy framework however is missing, and farmers and entrepreneurs in the rural area's lack good instruments to improve their production and livelihoods. We see that there as a general lack of access to knowledge and innovation, weak global and national policies or guidance to accommodate sector growth in a proper way, that means:

- increase production in a sustainable way,
- improve rural livelihoods especially in developing countries
- improve efficient use of scarce resources such as nutrients, land, water
- improve access to inputs such as credit, knowledge, good seeds
- increase market access and make products demand driven

There are many more issues like animal health and welfare, and we need to approach these in an integrated way.

So we need an Agenda of Action for this, covering activities based on integrated thinking.

Ladies and gentlemen

One of the three focal areas that the Global Livestock Dialogue identified last year in its second multistakeholder meeting in Phuket, is the theme of “Zero Discharge”. And that is what we are going to discuss this week. Now what do we mean by zero discharge?

We mean that all livestock systems should completely recycle nutrients and recover energy that has been brought into the system. We see in many circumstances that nutrients and energy, simply escape to the atmosphere (Green house gasses) or into the water or soil (manure), with negative impacts on the environment. We see this in intensive livestock systems in western countries that are far away from their feed sources. This is also the case in my country, the Netherlands and other regions in Europe and America. But also here in Korea or in China. Other countries use animal waste and manure for fertilizing their land or for heating and cooking.

Ladies and gentlemen

Discharge of waste also reflects a loss of value, as waste materials may have an important economic value if properly handled. So let us stop throwing away our money and invest in better recycling and recovery of valuable materials. What can we do about animal husbandry systems and feed composition to reduce wasting valuable fertilizers? The Workshop this week focuses on finding appropriate and feasible solutions for this.

The big question is of course: can we find appropriate business models for recovery of nutrients and energy? At this moment poultry manure is turned into a valuable fertilizer and can be easily traded. Pig slurry however does not have these possibilities yet.

Do we have enough knowledge and can we use this knowledge for innovations in practice. I think a lot of scientific research has already been done in many countries, including my own country the Netherlands. Several technical solutions have already been prepared, tested and sometimes applied, such as biogas production. Sometimes national or international legislation is hindering further development of sustainable use of manure.

We need to exchange our experiences, translate knowledge into innovations and pilote promising initiatives. Therefore our Workshop will look especially into the opportunities for cooperation between the Livestock Dialogue and the Global Research Alliance, and feed into an Agenda for Knowledge and Innovation. I believe this multistakeholder workshop is capable of finding some good proposals that may pose interesting opportunities for farmers all over the world.

Dear participants

Our Korean host has prepared a very nice and interesting program for us. We can do our work in this beautiful venue of the Seoul National University. We will not only work, discuss and write proposals. We also have nice receptions and dinners and even a football match on Thursday. I am convinced that a balance of work and relaxing always gives the best results. I also think that our group (not too small/not too big and very professional) is excellent for networking and exchanging of experiences.

Dear Hong,

Thank you and your staff for all your work.

And also Henning and his FAO-staff for all the technical preparations and documentation.

Tomorrow morning we will start with an interesting seminar on “Livestock and Green Growth”. Korea has a strong Green Growth Policy active in all sectors of society. We will look to the livestock connection.

My plea for this workshop would be: let us be informal and concrete. Let us make practical arrangements for cooperation. Let us make use of our knowledge experiences and networks.

I wish you a lot of success and I hope we can provide some concrete results by the end of this week.

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