

→ Sustained agricultural and forestry production systems, food processing and safety

Livestock, livelihoods and environment



The issue at stake

Responding to a growing demand for livestock products, the livestock sector has experienced a rapid growth over the past 20-30 years. In particular meat production from poultry and pigs has sharply increased in East Asia, where large “landless” livestock farms have emerged, running on imported feed from often faraway places. But livestock keeping has also increased in other regions of the world; pastoral communities have grown and increased their livestock numbers; extensive beef production has claimed new grazing lands; mixed-crop livestock farmers have intensified milk production, with smallholders continuing to keep animals for traction; and many resource-poor households have turned to one or another form of livestock keeping to improve their livelihoods.

This intensification in the livestock sector has resulted in increased pressure on natural resources. Considerable areas of land are used to graze animals and to crop animal feeds and fodder. Livestock keeping in dry areas puts pressure on scarce water resources, while in other areas waste from livestock production pollutes water resources. And last but not least, the livestock sector contributes considerably to the emission of greenhouse gases.

Livestock keeping continues to be an integral part in most farming systems, thereby generating income and contributing to an improved livelihood in many farming households. In comparison to large farms, poorer farming households in developing countries own disproportionately more livestock and hence benefit more from livestock keeping. Besides the production of milk, meat and eggs, there are many additional benefits from livestock which often play a crucial role, especially in poor livestock-

keeping households. Without any doubt, animal husbandry contributes significantly to poverty alleviation in many regions of the world.

Therefore, with increasing pressure on the environment on the one hand and benefits in poverty alleviation on the other, a balanced and sustainable livestock sector is an absolute must.

Approach by the HAFL

With regard to the livestock sector, the HAFL frames its intervention as follows:

- Livestock production and, in particular, its efficiency is to further increase in order to meet the still growing demand for livestock products at the global level.
- Animal husbandry not only results in the availability of livestock products for the consumers, but it also signifies an important socio-economic activity for livestock keepers, in particular for resource-poor households in developing countries.
- Livestock keeping is linked to natural resources and the environment; hence, livestock production and its intensification have an impact on the natural resources and the environment.

From these statements the HAFL concludes:

A sustainable livestock sector weighs economic, social and environmental aspects against each other and brings them together for the benefit of producers, consumers and the environment, even when compromises in certain periods are needed.



In order to implement this conclusion, the HAFL approaches the livestock sector in various, situation-specific ways, but it tries to include the same aspects, i.e.:

- Appraise in a participatory manner the livelihood and the context of all livestock keepers concerned in order to identify their needs as well as their potentials and limitations.
- Appraise the wider economic picture of the livestock sector in a given context by involving not only the livestock keepers but also other value chain players and consumers, as well as non-governmental organisations and governmental departments.
- Assess the impact of livestock keeping on the environment, e.g. in the planning of livestock initiatives, try to develop an ex-ante environmental impact assessment.
- Identify possible gaps regarding knowledge and technology and try to fill these gaps through own service provision and, if needed, research and development (R&D), as well as through networking with others.
- Support livestock keepers, other stakeholders and their organisations such as farmers' groups, cooperatives, traditional authorities in the application of knowledge and technology; backstop local R&D institutions and government authorities in their support to the livestock sector.

Expertise and services offered by the HAFL

The HAFL has conducted a number of mandates over the past years in the field of livestock development, mainly within the framework of development initiatives which have directly addressed livestock keeping or which have contained aspects related to the livestock sector.

In line with the terms of references of respective mandates, livestock keeping is often approached from a development point of view. Rural households and their livelihoods are put in the forefront. Proposed interventions and activities have to benefit the concerned households, generate income, improve livelihoods and contribute to poverty alleviation. In order to be effective, service delivery is to be linked to local stakeholders who themselves have to steer any proposed intervention in collaboration with local and central government agencies.

Besides mandates directly conducted at field/project level, the HAFL wants to be a partner for governmental non-governmental agencies and the private sector on issues concerning poverty alleviation and the mitigation of negative environmental impact linked to livestock keeping. In this function, the HAFL can contribute to the livestock discussion within these organisations and institutions, and it may even become a partner in the policy dialogue with a wider clientele.

The HAFL draws on the wide experience of its staff in supporting livestock services in many countries around the world, including Vietnam, India, Mongolia, Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, Tanzania, Namibia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua,

Kosovo and China. In concrete, the HAFL can provide the following services:

- Rural appraisal and planning of livestock projects or livelihood development projects with livestock components.
- Backstopping of project implementation.
- Sector analysis and elaboration of elements for livestock sector policies.
- Analysis of experiences from livestock development projects.
- Contribution to and participation / representation in national / international livestock development forums.
- Support to the private sector in project planning, implementation and backstopping
- Development and support in livestock specific education and training programmes

Expected development impact

- A contribution to an efficient livestock sector taking into account socio-economic as well as environmental aspects.
- Strengthening of poor livestock-keeping households by supporting and facilitating development, adoption and application of sustainable livestock initiatives.
- Contribution to sustained livestock keeping in the context of a challenging environment and limited natural resources.
- Support to global initiatives for sustainable livestock sector development

A selection of experience

- Analysis of the livestock sector in Mongolia and input to the sector planning.
- Support to a small livestock development project in Vietnam.
- Backstopping of various livestock initiatives in India based on experience gained in the Indian livestock production and dairy sector during the last decades
- Fact finding and analysis of the potential for improved beef production in Georgia and Tatarstan (Russia).
- Sector analysis of the involvement of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in the field of livestock research and development.
- Active cooperation in national and international networks dealing with livestock and development (LivestockNet, CoP Pro-Poor Livestock Development, Water for Food).
- Steering and R&D activities in the international initiative on livestock, environment and development (LEAD).
- Member of the Interim Program Committee of the Global Agenda for sustainable Livestock Sector Development.
- Analysis of and backstopping for Nestlé's investment project in dairy development in China (Harbin)
- Research in livestock aspects within the Mongolian project to link herders to the international carbon market



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