



Background paper

“Shaping the Future of Livestock – sustainably, responsibly, efficiently”

Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in Berlin from 18 to 20 January 2018

Questions regarding livestock husbandry and the production of staple foods from animals (particularly meat, milk and eggs) are becoming more and more international in the course of globalisation and the growing political significance of global food supply. Rising demand, changes to markets, consumer expectations, climate change and political crises are all directly affecting animal keepers throughout the world, in industrialised and developing countries alike. At the same time, consideration must also be given to regional differences, different forms of livestock husbandry and production, and cultural and religious practises.

Demand for meat and products of animal origin is increasing due to the growing world population and changes in consumption patterns resulting from a variety of factors, for instance higher disposable incomes. Over the past five decades, global meat production has increased fourfold. Production can only be increased to meet demand if sufficient resources are available. This makes it necessary to use resources, particularly water and soil, more sustainably and efficiently.

Farmers are also increasingly being confronted with the challenges of climate change. Livestock farming is partially responsible for this development and also affected by it; at the same time it can also be part of the solution. Of all carbon emissions caused by agriculture, 75% are generated by livestock husbandry. On the other hand, pastures play a vital role as carbon sinks and in safeguarding biodiversity. What is needed, therefore, are smart solutions for resource stewardship.

Livestock husbandry constitutes an important source of income, particularly in the most deprived countries in the world. Livestock husbandry is the basis for the livelihood of 1.3 bn people worldwide. Smallholders play a particularly significant role in meeting the demand for products of animal origin while being disproportionately affected by global developments. Better access to markets, technical innovations, and methodological innovations and tailor-made financial and hedging tools can help to improve the lives of these animal keepers. This is particularly true of the situation for women.

Healthy animals and products made from these animals are vital for human health while being a fundamental source of income for all animal keepers, irrespective of their stock size. To ensure animal health, what is needed are customised and effective solutions and closer international cooperation in combating animal diseases and zoonoses. In this regard, combatting antimicrobial resistance is key. In many societies, consumers have a keen interest in animal welfare, animal-welfare oriented husbandry and production methods.



The global challenges and issues of animal husbandry addressed above are complex and multi-faceted. They must be systematically incorporated into the international debate. The GFFA is a global agricultural policy event which brings together business, the scientific community, policy makers and civil society; it also hosts the world's largest meeting of agriculture ministers. It therefore provides a fitting forum for structuring the discussion and giving impetus for the development of a roadmap for solutions. The SDGs, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Codex Alimentarius and other agreements (to be identified) of international bodies serve as a framework in this respect.

In order to be able to focus on relevant areas of action, in which agriculture can make a contribution, the discussion will concentrate on primary production up to the first processing stage.

The GFFA Draft Communiqué includes a commitment to the importance of the role that animal husbandry and products of animal origin play for global food supply and to the responsibility that agricultural policy makers have to promote sustainable, responsible and efficient livestock husbandry. The Ministers could stress the importance of drawing up resource-conserving, regionally-adapted and inclusive solutions to address the global challenges relating to the production of animal products.

The following areas of action can be identified:

- Ensuring food security
- Improving livelihoods
- Protecting resources, conserving the environment and mitigating against climate change
- Improving animal health and animal welfare

The Communiqué could be concluded by stating solution proposals and approaches for improved international cooperation by involving internationally relevant forums and organisations.