



Concept Note for the Side Event to FAO Council 172nd Session

**CONTRIBUTION OF TERRESTRIAL ANIMAL SOURCE FOOD TO HEALTHY DIETS FOR IMPROVED
NUTRITION AND HEALTH OUTCOMES – AN EVIDENCE AND POLICY OVERVIEW ON THE STATE OF
KNOWLEDGE AND GAPS**

25 April 2023, 12:30-14:00 (CEST)
Sheikh Zayed Centre, FAO HQ & Zoom

Background

The role of terrestrial animal source foods (TASF) in human and planetary health is at the forefront of discussions in the nutrition, health, agriculture and climate spheres. It is in the mass media on an almost daily basis, with sometimes opposing views of the risks and benefits of TASF for human and planetary health. In response to this, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in October 2020 requested FAO to produce a “comprehensive, science and evidence-based global assessment of the contribution of livestock to food security, sustainable agrifood systems, nutrition and healthy diets” (the Assessment). COAG’s Sub-Committee on Livestock in its first session in March 2022 agreed on the approach, scope, content, timeline and stakeholder involvement process of the Assessment consisting of four Component Documents¹. This first Component Document serves as the technical, scientific synthesis of evidence for TASF contributions to human nutrition and health² (see also brief³).

It is estimated that terrestrial animal source food contributes 18 percent of the global food energy consumption and 34 percent of the global protein consumption. Perhaps more importantly TASF such as eggs, milk or meat are a unique source of a variety of essential micronutrients. TASF consumption differs among countries, age groups, gender and economic groups. In some locations, particularly sub-Saharan Africa and parts of South Asia, many individuals do not consume sufficient terrestrial animal source food to meet their nutritional needs for several essential nutrients. In other parts of the world, particularly some high income countries, consumption is very high. This pattern contributes to food insecurity and malnutrition in some contexts, adverse health outcomes in others, and simultaneously to environmental challenges.

Food and nutrition policies are crucial across sectors to optimize outcomes and address potential trade-offs. From a national, regional and global perspective, food based dietary guidelines are a pivotal point of departure to guide national policies and promote locally relevant optimal food consumption patterns. Analyzing current policies related to TASF and identifying gaps between dietary recommendations and practice will highlight areas within the food system that need to be targeted and provide balanced and holistic guidance to policy and decision makers on how TASF can contribute to healthy diets for improved nutrition and health outcomes while protecting the environment.

¹ <https://www.fao.org/3/ni005en/ni005en.pdf>

² FAO. 2023. Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition and health outcomes – An evidence and policy overview on the state of knowledge and gaps. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3912en> (embargoed until launch event)

³ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc0946en/cc0946en.pdf>



Objectictive of the side event

The purpose of this event is to launch the first component document of the Assessment, present its findings and to discuss policy implications of current knowledge on the role of TASF as part of healthy diets, for improved nutrition and health outcomes.

The presentation will include:

1. The world nutrition situation, dietary patterns and food systems in relation to TASF consumption;
2. Nutrients provided by TASF and their importance for human nutrition and health over life courses;
3. Analysis of policies shaping consumption of TASF;
4. Food safety and food-borne diseases related to TASF, from production to consumption;
5. Emerging topics.

Programme

Moderator: Kaveh Zahedi, Director Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB)

Session 1. Opening remarks by Deputy Director-General, Maria Helena Semedo (5 minutes)

Opening remarks on the status of malnutrition and the contribution of TASF for healthy diets and improved nutrition framing within the four *Betters*.

Session 2. Presentation of the findings from the Assessment (20 minutes)

- by Lora Iannotti, Washington University in St. Louis, United States of America; and
- by Florence Mutua, International Livestock Research Institute, Kenya

Session 3. Moderated panel discussion on how different stakeholders relate to the findings presented (35 minutes)

- Member Nations: H.E. Carla Barroso Carneiro, Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil
- World Health Organization: Francesco Branca, Director of the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development
- Private Sector: Caroline Emond, Director General at International Dairy Federation
- FAO: Thanawat Tiensin, Director, Animal Production and Health Division
- FAO: Lynnette Neufeld, Director, Food and Nutrition Division

Session 4. Moderated discussion (25 minutes)

Session 5. Closing remarks by Chief Economist, Máximo Torero Cullen (5 minutes)