



Assessing the contribution of livestock to food security, sustainable food systems, nutrition and healthy diets

Terms of Reference of the Scientific Advisory Committee

BACKGROUND

The Committee on Agriculture (COAG), one of FAO's Governing Bodies, is providing overall policy and regulatory guidance on issues relating to agriculture, livestock, food safety, nutrition, rural development and natural resource management. At its 27th session in October 2020, COAG requested FAO to produce a comprehensive and evidence-based global assessment of the contribution of livestock to food security, sustainable food systems, nutrition and healthy diets.

It is estimated that animal-source foods from terrestrial animals (ASF) contribute 18% of global food energy consumption and 34% of global protein consumption. ASF are a unique source of high-quality proteins and bioavailable essential vitamins and minerals that are essential for wellbeing and health and that may be difficult to obtain solely from plant-source foods.

Despite the importance of ASFs, the ecosystem services and other functions of livestock, the livestock sector needs to solve challenges related to deforestation, land use changes, overgrazing, water and land use and pollution, food-feed competition, greenhouse gas emissions, antimicrobial resistance and animal welfare. These challenges require changes in practices and public policies and must be supported by targeted investments. However, over recent years, a number of studies and initiatives focusing on food security, nutrition and healthy diets have provided only partial analyses that do not adequately consider the numerous benefits of the livestock sector and ASF provide to the food system and achieving the SDGs.

A comprehensive and neutral evidence-based assessment of the contribution of the livestock sector to food security, sustainable food systems, nutrition and healthy diets is needed to provide balanced holistic guidance to policy and enable decision makers. Livestock sector policies must be based on data and scientific evidence and foster sustainable transformation of the livestock sector to better contribute to fighting all forms of hunger and malnutrition.

The assessment will be prepared based on four components for consideration by the newly established COAG-Sub-Committee on Livestock and later synthesized into a high-level publication.

By end 2021, the following two documents should be available:

1. Contribution of animal source foods to healthy diets for improved nutrition and health outcomes – an evidence and policy overview on the state of knowledge and gaps
2. Factors determining supply, demand and consumption of ASFs

and by the end of 2024:

3. Contribution of the livestock sector to food security and sustainable food systems - benefits and trade-offs
4. Options to sustainably transform the livestock sector to better contribute to food security, sustainable food systems, nutrition and healthy diets

ROLE AND ENGAGEMENT

Scientific Advisory Committee members will be invited:

1. to provide their views and suggestions in writing on detailed annotated outlines and draft versions of the four documents and the high level publication; and
2. to actively participate in virtual meetings lasting 2-4 hours to discuss revised versions of annotated outlines and draft versions of the four documents and high level publication;

In addition to participation in the meetings, members are expected to provide recommendations for contributors and reviewers.

The Scientific Advisory Committee will be limited in size and selected among outstanding internationally renowned independent experts, ideally with track record in research proven through peer-reviewed publications and with focus in systems research, based on the following list of criteria:

- coverage of all required disciplines including: livestock science, veterinary science, human nutrition, human health, food safety, legal and policy, agricultural economics, agricultural science, climate science, environmental science, social science; and
- regional balance.

Members will be selected on the basis of their qualifications and capacity as experts and will not represent countries or regions. FAO will not grant any honorarium to members of the Scientific Advisory Committee.

APPLICATION

Candidates are kindly requested to submit their CVs to the officer leading the work – Beate Scherf (Beate.Scherf@fao.org) by 6 July 2021. CVs must include an updated list of publications and work experiences. All applications will be reviewed by the FAO team leading the development of the assessment. Merit, regional and gender balance are key selection criteria.