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منظمة  
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## JOINT MEETING

**Hundred and Twenty-ninth Session of the Programme Committee and  
Hundred and Eighty-third Session of the Finance Committee**

**9 November 2020**

**Establishment of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG)  
Sub-Committee on Livestock**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Committee on Agriculture (COAG) at its 27<sup>th</sup> Session established, in accordance with Rule VII.1 of its Rules of Procedure, the Sub-Committee on Livestock (Sub-Committee) and invited the Council and the Conference to endorse the Sub-Committee as an intergovernmental forum with a mandate to discuss and build consensus on issues and priorities related to the livestock sector, and advise COAG, and through it, the Council and the Conference, on technical and policy programmes and activities required to optimize the contribution of the livestock sector, including in poverty alleviation, food security and nutrition, sustainable livelihoods and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- This document provides background information on the Sub-Committee, including on the administrative and financial implications. It also provides, in *Appendix I* and *II* to this document, the Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference and its Rules of Procedure, as reviewed and adopted by COAG.

### GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE JOINT MEETING

- The Joint Meeting is invited to take into consideration the Report of COAG and provide guidance in terms of programme or finance matters, as deemed appropriate.

#### **Draft Advice**

#### **The Joint Meeting:**

- **welcomed the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Livestock (Sub-Committee) and invited the Council and the Conference at its forthcoming sessions to endorse the Sub-Committee as an intergovernmental forum with the mandate to discuss and build consensus on issues and priorities related to the livestock sector, and advise COAG, and through it, the FAO Council and the FAO Conference, on technical and policy programmes and activities required to optimize the contribution of the livestock sector, including in poverty alleviation, food security and nutrition, sustainable livelihoods and the realization of the 2030 Development Agenda;**
- **took note of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee, as adopted by COAG at its 27<sup>th</sup> Session, as well as of the recommendation by COAG to hold, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, the first session of the Sub-Committee during the first quarter of 2022, prior to the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of COAG; and**
- **called for adequate extra-budgetary support for sessions of the Sub-Committee.**

## I. Introduction

1. At its 22<sup>nd</sup> Session in June 2010, the Committee on Agriculture reiterated the crucial role of the livestock sector in food security and livelihoods, especially for pastoralists and small-scale farmers.<sup>1</sup> COAG “confirmed that FAO, within its capacity and mandate, is in a position to address in a balanced and holistic manner the complex social, economic and environmental issues and trade-offs associated with the sector, including climate change considerations”.<sup>2</sup> COAG agreed that “FAO actively engage in consultations to continue the global dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders to sharpen the definition of the sector’s objectives [...]”. It expressed the hope that “such consultations should help identify issues that could require intergovernmental action.”<sup>3</sup>

2. At its 25<sup>th</sup> Session in September 2016, COAG noted the proposal for the creation of a Sub-Committee on Livestock (Sub-Committee), and requested that a background document be developed and presented to the next session of COAG.<sup>4</sup>

3. At its 26<sup>th</sup> Session in October 2018, COAG acknowledged the key importance of the livestock sector for food security and nutrition, livelihoods and poverty eradication and discussed the proposal for the establishment of the Sub-committee.<sup>5</sup> It requested the Secretariat to prepare a report on administrative and financial implications and to develop terms of reference that included rationale, function, structure and implementation modalities to be considered by its Bureau for submission to the next session of the Committee.<sup>6</sup>

4. The Council, at its 164<sup>th</sup> Session in July 2020 “acknowledged the importance of the livestock sector and its role in supporting Members in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and FAO’s work in this respect, as well as the related matter before the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) pertaining to the creation of the Sub-Committee on Livestock, and requested the discussion to move forward within COAG.”<sup>7</sup>

5. At its 27<sup>th</sup> Session in September 2020, COAG, in accordance with Rule VII.1 of its Rules of Procedure, established the Sub-Committee and invited the Council and the Conference to endorse the Sub-Committee. In accordance with Rule VII.3 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee also revised and adopted the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee.

6. This document reviews the role of the livestock sector in achieving the SDGs and describes the roles that the Sub-Committee may play in the future, as well as the administrative and financial implications of its establishment. The Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee, as adopted by COAG, are contained in *Appendices I and II* to this document. This matter is referred to the Joint Meeting in accordance with Rule XXXII, paragraph 9, of the General Rules of the Organization which provides that “Any recommendation adopted by the Committee affecting the programme or finances of the Organization or concerning legal or constitutional matters shall be reported to the Council with the comments of the appropriate subsidiary committees of the Council. The reports of the Committee shall also be placed before the Conference”.

## II. The Role of Livestock in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

7. The livestock sector can contribute directly or indirectly to each of the SDGs, and in particular SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13 and 15. This section briefly reviews the contributions of the sector and the challenges it faces.

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<sup>1</sup> CL 140/3, paragraph 10.

<sup>2</sup> CL 140/3, paragraph 11.

<sup>3</sup> CL/140/3, paragraph 13.

<sup>4</sup> C 2017/21, paragraph 58.

<sup>5</sup> COAG/2018/11.

<sup>6</sup> C 2019/21 Rev1, paragraphs 28-29.

<sup>7</sup> CL 164/REP, paragraph 18 k).

8. One in nine people in the world suffers from hunger and micronutrient deficiencies affecting some two billion people globally. Animal-source foods (ASFs) are rich in energy, provide high quality and complete protein, and a range of readily absorbable and bioavailable micronutrients. These nutrients are more easily obtained from ASFs than from plant-based foods. The provision of adequate amounts of ASF in a diet can add much-needed nutritional value. Globally, livestock provide 34 percent of protein intake and 18 percent of dietary energy, but this is not equitably distributed.
9. One in eight people in the world lives in extreme poverty. About 600 million of the world's poor keep livestock as an essential source of income. Livestock also supports the creation of employment opportunities and can provide opportunities to empower rural women, increase the resilience of households to cope with climate and market shocks, and support sustainable economic growth. The value of livestock production accounts for 40 percent and 20 percent of total agricultural output in developed and developing countries, respectively.
10. Along with these benefits, a number of challenges come. High impact animal diseases such as *Peste des Petits Ruminants*, foot and mouth disease and African swine fever are examples of devastating livestock diseases. In addition to these livestock diseases, the emergence and spread of epidemic and pandemic diseases transmitted from animals to humans such as highly pathogenic avian influenza and the current COVID-19 pandemic are seriously compromising global health and food security. Inappropriate use and overuse of antimicrobials in livestock production contributes to an increase in antimicrobial resistance in pathogens causing human and animal infections. Today, approximately 700,000 people die of drug-resistant infections every year. Ensuring One Health collaboration between stakeholders in animal production and health specialists, public health officials, and the private sectors, including the feed industry, is crucial to achieving an integrated and preventive strategy for animal diseases and associated human health risks.
11. Livestock contributes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, leaks nutrients or residues from concentrated sources of waste into water and air, and generates large volumes of manure. Conversely, wider adoption of existing best practices and technologies in feeding, health and husbandry, and manure management could help in cutting GHG emissions by as much as 30 percent. If managed sustainably, livestock can contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and important ecosystem functions, including nutrient cycling, soil organic carbon sequestration, seed dispersal and maintaining agricultural landscapes.
12. To enhance the contribution of the livestock sector to achieving the SDGs, a number of complex interactions need to be addressed. For example, increasing short-term production levels through the overuse of resources can result in reduced productivity in the long term; although emission intensity from the livestock sector is declining, a rise in production levels could lead to higher overall GHG emissions, if the sector growth surpasses the gains in emissions per kg of product; competition over land for the production of feed can constrain the availability of resources to produce food; promoting greater competition with higher levels of market concentration will likely keep many small producers from participating in markets. Failure to address these interactions could result in positive synergies being precluded and in the predominance of negative trade-offs. In other words, enhancing the contribution of livestock to the SDGs will require a transformation of parts of the sector.
13. Despite the size and dynamic nature of livestock systems, there is no dedicated intergovernmental mechanism that discusses the issues described above. Considerations of livestock issues take place in a scattered manner and different fora like the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), Codex Alimentarius, and in multi-stakeholder platforms, but often remain disconnected at country level. Therefore, there is a need for an intergovernmental forum to address the complexities of livestock development in a more coherent manner.

### III. The Role of the Sub-Committee

#### A. Broadening knowledge and expertise

14. Experiences of other bodies of FAO demonstrate how COAG will be able to benefit from the establishment of the Sub-Committee by attracting relevant expertise without undermining its multidisciplinary character. The FAO Committee on Fisheries, for example, benefits from the expertise of two sub-committees: the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. The FAO Committee on Commodity Problems benefits from its subsidiary intergovernmental groups established to focus on trade issues for individual commodities, such as rice, grains and tea. The CGRFA is supported by four intergovernmental technical working groups on plant, animal, forest and aquatic genetic resources. Government representatives and observers attending the sessions of these subsidiary bodies are distinctly different from those attending sessions of the parent Committees. The establishment of the Sub-Committee will therefore expand the expertise COAG may draw upon and thereby strengthen COAG's capacity to deal with all livestock-related matters.

#### B. Central role of the livestock sector in FAO's mandate

15. Livestock production and health and all social, technical, economic, institutional and structural aspects related to the livestock sector are at the core of FAO's mandate. Due to the complex interactions among the SDGs, optimizing the contribution of the livestock sector to sustainable development requires careful planning, implementation and monitoring to enhance synergies and manage trade-offs.

16. Previously, FAO did not have a dedicated forum with a mandate to address such trade-offs, to advise COAG, and through it, the FAO Council and FAO Conference, on technical and policy measures needed to optimize the contribution of the livestock sector to the 2030 Agenda. The Sub-Committee will be able to fill this important role and its establishment is further signal of the Organization's commitment and responsibility to contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.

#### C. Clearly defined tasks of the Sub-Committee

17. The Sub-Committee provides a unique intergovernmental forum for consultation and discussion on issues related to the livestock sector and will advise COAG on technical and policy matters related to the sector. The Sub-Committee will, in particular:

- (i) identify and discuss major trends and issues in the global livestock sector, and advise and make recommendations to the Committee on these matters;
- (ii) advise on the preparation of technical reviews and of issues and trends of international significance;
- (iii) advise on the liaison with other relevant bodies and organizations with a view to promoting harmonization and endorsing policies and actions, as appropriate;
- (iv) advise on mechanisms to prepare, facilitate and implement action programmes, as well as on the expected contribution of partners;
- (v) advise on the strengthening of international collaboration to assist developing countries in the implementation of good practices and guidance to support sustainable livestock sector development;
- (vi) collaborate with existing partnerships and establish communication channels with multiple stakeholders, as guided by the Committee;
- (vii) monitor the progress made in implementing the Committee's programme of work on livestock-related issues, as well as any other matters referred to the Sub-Committee by the Committee;

- (viii) prepare a multi-year programme for its work for consideration and approval by the Committee; and
- (ix) report to the Committee on its activities.<sup>8</sup>

#### *D. Benefits of the Sub-Committee for FAO Members*

18. Livestock systems are central to food systems' development. The value of their production accounts for 40 percent and 20 percent of agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in developed and developing countries, respectively.
19. Between 2016 and 2020, approximately 290 ongoing projects on livestock, or that include a livestock component, were implemented by FAO.
20. The establishment of the Sub-Committee provides Members and observers with a mechanism to discuss and build consensus on livestock priorities, and to advise, guide, monitor and review FAO's policies, programmes and activities relevant to the livestock sector.

#### *E. FAO's comparative advantage for establishing the Sub-Committee*

21. There is no permanent United Nations (UN) system body specifically dealing with issues related to the livestock sector. While other intergovernmental *fora*, such as the Committee on World Food Security, the CGRFA and the Codex Alimentarius, occasionally touch upon issues of relevance to livestock production and health, there is no intergovernmental forum that specifically deals with all livestock-related issues holistically.
22. The Sub-Committee will provide an ideal forum for discussing critical topical issues, such as the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Current evidence suggests that this pandemic may have originated in wildlife. Its effects on the livestock sector are still largely unquantified and yet to be fully felt. Current observations reveal severe disruptions to livestock value chains that are likely to grow, along with their dire socio-economic consequences. The Sub-Committee will facilitate and coordinate global assessments of the impact of such pandemics on the livestock sector, including related responses; allow countries to share their experiences and provide guidance on policies to mitigate these impacts, as well as strategies to prevent new pandemics, based on the One Health approach.
23. While a number of multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogues exist at global and regional levels which promote sustainable development of the livestock sector, these partnerships and dialogues are of an informal nature. The Sub-Committee leverages the key comparative advantage of FAO as a UN system organization.
24. Under COAG's guidance, the Sub-Committee will collaborate with existing partnerships and liaise with a wide range of stakeholders thereby ensuring close coordination of the Committee's work on livestock with existing partnerships, including the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL), the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership, the Feed Safety Multi-stakeholder Partnership, the Global Soil Partnership and the Water Platform, and provide expert advice to standard setting bodies such as Codex Alimentarius and OIE.
25. The establishment of the Sub-Committee thus confirms and further strengthen FAO's role as:
- a) key forum for dealing with complex issues related to the livestock sector in a comprehensive, open, transparent and participatory manner;
  - b) neutral platform for the exchange of information and views among governments and key stakeholders on all matters relevant to sustainable livestock production; and

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<sup>8</sup> See *Appendix I*.

- c) provider of knowledge and facilitator of knowledge exchange on matters related to the livestock sector.

#### **IV. Administrative and Financial Implications of the Sub-Committee**

26. As observed at paragraph 6 above, this matter is referred to the Joint Meeting pursuant to Rule XXXII, paragraph 9, of the General Rules of the Organization. As per Rule VII.2 of its Rules of Procedure, COAG, before taking a decision on the establishment of the Sub-Committee, examined the administrative and financial implications of such a decision, in the light of a report submitted by the Director-General.<sup>9</sup>

27. COAG will decide on the timing and duration of the sessions of the Sub-Committee, as per Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure (see *Appendix II*). No more than one session of the Sub-Committee should be held per biennium and the session should be held with timing that enables the Committee to take into consideration the report of the Sub-Committee.

28. As an example, a three-day meeting of the proposed Sub-Committee would incur the following costs: i) interpretation USD 45 000; ii) document preparation USD 25 000; and translation USD 60 000. Therefore, the estimated total for running a three-day meeting would be approximately USD 130 000. The first meeting of the Sub-Committee will be held once these costs are covered by extra-budgetary contributions for which a resource mobilization proposal is being developed. Funding options for future functioning of the Sub-Committee will be further explored.

29. Expenses incurred by representatives of members of the Sub-Committee, their alternates and advisers, when attending sessions of the Sub-Committee, as well as the expenses of observers at sessions, would be borne by the respective governments or organizations. However, as far as representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition are concerned, FAO is committed to raising extra-budgetary resources with the aim to support their participation in the sessions of the Sub-Committee.

30. Human resources will be required for the administration of the Sub-Committee. FAO's Animal Production and Health division (NSA), through its different units, is already in charge of all technical and policy issues the Sub-Committee will cover. The Sub-Committee will allow NSA to inform Members on a regular basis and seek their guidance on relevant technical work and policy issues. Increased workload caused by the administration of the Sub-Committee is expected to be fully compensated by better and more targeted planning and programming of COAG's work on livestock, as facilitated by the Sub-Committee. While the Sub-Committee will create an additional workload in terms of preparation and organization of its sessions, it is expected to reduce the number of *ad hoc* consultations, information workshops and expert seminars held in the past to inform Members or seek expert advice on specific issues pertaining to livestock. At the same time, the Sub-Committee will increase transparency and improve the involvement of Members in the Organization's work, which will allow FAO to concentrate its work, with the informed support by its Membership, on optimizing livestock's contribution to the achievement of the SDGs.

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<sup>9</sup> See COAG/2020/7, paragraphs 31-34.

## **Appendix I - Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committee on Livestock**

The Sub-Committee on Livestock (the Sub-Committee) shall provide a forum for consultation and discussion on all matters related to livestock and shall advise the Committee on Agriculture (the Committee) on technical and policy matters related to livestock and on the work to be performed by the Organization in the field of livestock. "Livestock" refers to all terrestrial animals used for food and agriculture.

In particular, the Sub-Committee shall:

- (i) identify and discuss major trends and issues in the global livestock sector, and advise and make recommendations to the Committee on these matters;
- (ii) advise on the preparation of technical reviews and of issues and trends of international significance;
- (iii) advise on the liaison with other relevant bodies and organizations with a view to promoting harmonization and endorsing policies and actions, as appropriate;
- (iv) advise on mechanisms to prepare, facilitate and implement action programmes, as well as on the expected contribution of partners;
- (v) advise on the strengthening of international collaboration to assist developing countries in the implementation of good practices and guidance to support sustainable livestock sector development;
- (vi) collaborate with existing partnerships and establish communication channels with multiple stakeholders, as guided by the Committee;
- (vii) monitor the progress made in implementing the Committee's programme of work on livestock-related issues, as well as any other matters referred to the Sub-Committee by the Committee;
- (viii) prepare a multi-year programme for its work for consideration and approval by the Committee; and
- (ix) report to the Committee on its activities.

In order for the Sub-Committee to carry out this mandate, the Committee will assign specific tasks to the Sub-Committee.



## **Appendix II - Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee on Livestock**

### **Rule 1 - Membership**

The Sub-Committee on Livestock (the Sub-Committee) shall be open to all Member Nations of the Committee on Agriculture (the Committee).

### **Rule 2 - Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons**

The Sub-Committee shall elect, from among the representatives of its Members, a Chairperson and six Vice-Chairpersons (Bureau), each coming from one of the following geographic regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America and Southwest Pacific. In electing the Chairperson, the Sub-Committee shall have due regard to the principle of rotation. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons remain in office until the next session of the Sub-Committee and shall be eligible for re-election for no more than one term.

The Chairperson, or a Vice-Chairperson in the absence of a Chairperson, shall preside over the meetings of the Sub-Committee and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work.

### **Rule 3- Sessions**

The Committee shall decide on the timing and duration of the sessions of the Sub-Committee, when required. In any case, the Sub-Committee shall hold no more than one session per biennium and the session shall be held with timing that enables the Committee to take into consideration the report of the Sub-Committee.

### **Rule 4 - Observers**

The Observer capacity in the Committee shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the Sub-Committee.

### **Rule 5 - Rules of Procedure of the Committee**

The provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to all matters not specifically dealt with under the present Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee on Livestock.