

Livestock production for food security and nutrition

Statement by Shenggen Fan

Director General, IFPRI

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Distinguished Ministers and guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First, I would like to commend the agriculture ministers for committing to make livestock production and animal husbandry more sustainable, responsible, and efficient. Taking action on livestock production is critical to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and many other goals.

Currently, the global food system faces multiple challenges. World hunger is on the rise, with 815 million people chronically hungry. Undernutrition persists, with 2 billion people lacking in key micronutrients, and 155 million children stunted. At the same time, the food system is pushing planetary boundaries, as agriculture accounts for 70 percent of total water consumption, nearly 35 percent of land area, and between 17 and 30 percent of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. The livestock sector alone contributes up to 15 percent of human-induced GHG emissions. Moreover, changes in global demographics, rising inequality, and growing food safety concerns present further challenges to food systems around the world.

Livestock plays a critical role in food systems facing these emerging global challenges. Livestock is key for smallholders as an important source of income and as labor-saving, productive assets. Livestock also contributes to nutrition, as animal sourced foods are important, especially to reduce child stunting in developing countries. Research finds that consuming a diverse array of animal sourced foods is strongly associated with child growth.

For the global livestock sector to sustainably contribute to food security and nutrition, policy changes will be important. Developed countries will need to focus on mitigating GHG emissions. Improvements can be made to the sector, including in animal and herd efficiency for ruminants through better feed and feeding practices, and manure management to ensure recovery and recycling of nutrients and energy.

On the other hand, the livestock sector in developing countries should first focus on improving nutrition and human health, by promoting diet diversification with multiple animal sourced foods, and mitigating risk for food safety and zoonotic diseases from livestock. Secondly, smallholder livelihoods need greater support, such as better targeted and more productive social protection policies. Further, both climate adaptation and mitigation need to be promoted, including through partnerships for climate-smart adaptation.

For all countries, policy innovations will play a key role. Policies should ensure that livestock practices improve human nutrition, mitigate climate change, and support environmental sustainability. For example, research shows that taxing emissions-intensive foods can benefit human and planetary health: it would decrease GHG emissions while avoiding 100,000 deaths by 2020 as a result of changes in

dietary and weight-related risk factors. While there have been many other innovations, more research is needed.

IFPRI will continue to support the Global Forum and key stakeholders by providing research and evidence to inform policies for food security and nutrition, as well as for sustainable livestock practices. We must continue to work together to accelerate our progress towards a healthy and sustainable future.

Thank you.