Assessing the potential of payment for environmental services in livestock inclusive agricultural production systems in developing countries

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The production of livestock in mixed extensive and intensive crop–livestock and pastoral grazing systems worldwide generates both positive and negative impacts on the environment. This creates a challenge to promote livestock production systems that can generate economic benefits that foster social development while ensuring environmental sustainability.

In the developing world, there is increasing interest in payments for environmental services as an instrument to better manage the environment while helping to reduce poverty, particularly in rural areas.

However, few payments for environmental services schemes so far target livestock keepers.

This ILRI report assesses the merits of such schemes in various livestock-inclusive farming systems in the developing world.

The report recommends:

- Develop robust measurement and verification tools for environmental services produced by the livestock sector in livestock-inclusive agricultural production systems.

- Develop policies to promote implementation of schemes offering payments for environmental services in livestock-inclusive agricultural production systems to enable livestock farmers to diversify their income and to improve their economic situation.

- Provide support to livestock farmers to access the emerging environmental service markets.

- Implement capacity building activities (training, information provision to mention but a few) to increase the awareness of payments for environmental services schemes among smallholder households and to enable collective action processes needed for livestock farmers to access and participate in environmental service markets.

- Establish pilot climate change mitigation PES projects to demonstrate their benefits to livestock keepers and to explore the potential to link PES to climate change adaptation funds.
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