ILRI's participation in CGIAR research programs with global reach influences the choices of the institute's research locations and priority commodities.

The ILRI-led CGIAR Research Program on Livestock and Fish focuses on high-priority value chain development of small-scale dairy, small ruminant, and pig production (http://livestoodfish.cgiar.org). ILRI is also active in 7 other CGIAR research programs.

To prioritize the geographic and commodity focus of this strategy, new empirical assessments will inform ILRI's choice of research locations and high-priority species to identify (1) where small-scale livestock production systems and commodities provide research opportunities to transform livestock value chains for improved food security and poverty alleviation and (2) where a focus on increasing resilience will have the greatest potential.

ILRI's previous strategy (2002–2010) focused on the benefits of livestock for the poor, indeed, on livestock 'as a pathway out of poverty'. Now, ILRI's research agenda more directly addresses the negative as well as positive impacts of livestock, especially with regard to the environment (e.g., land and water degradation and greenhouse gas emissions due to livestock), opportunities to reduce livestock's environmental footprint and human health problems (zoonotic diseases and livestock-food-borne illnesses).

The role of women in agriculture is central, with recent results estimating that improving women's access to inputs and services has the potential to reduce the number of malnourished people in the world by 100–150 million. This is particularly true in the livestock sector, where women are often responsible for raising animals and processing their food products. ILRI's gender strategy provides a framework to implement gender-balanced research.

ILRI is proactive in responding to the development agenda and, while not undertaking development actions itself, ensures that its research outputs lead to research outcomes that impact on development challenges. Partnerships are critical to this. ILRI's partners may be thought of as the institute's 'co-implementers'; these include farmers and others engaged in livestock raising and marketing, development agencies, non-governmental organizations and national research programs. ILRI itself is also often a partner in much larger initiatives.

In 2013, ILRI had offices in countries spanning sub-Saharan Africa and South, Southeast and East Asia. It implements, and partners with, livestock-research-for-development projects in many more countries within these key regions.

CGIAR and ILRI

ILRI research is aligned to the CGIAR strategy and results framework. ILRI's strategy furthers the livestock agenda within this, as well as furthering overall CGIAR aspirations.

ILRI works in eight CGIAR research programs:
- Dryland Systems (led by ICARDA)
- Humid tropics (led by ITA)
- Policy, Institutions and Markets (led by IFPRI)
- Livestock and Fish (led by ILRI)
- Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (led by IFPRI)
- Water, Land and Ecosystems (led by IWMI)
- Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (led by CIAT)
- Managing and Sustaining Crop Collections (led by Global Crop Diversity Trust).

In 2012, ILRI developed a new strategy for the period 2013–2022. Articulated in the tagline better lives through livestock, it incorporates several changes from the previous strategy, moving from a focus on livestock as a pathway out of poverty to a broader agenda that addresses poverty and food security in ways that are environmentally sustainable, good for human health and nutrition, and equitable.

Going beyond the poverty-reduction focus of its past requires that ILRI broaden its target beneficiaries to include other value chain and civil society actors, and poor urban as well as rural consumers. ILRI will also pilot forward-looking interventions for the livestock farmers of the future and support more comprehensive food-system productivity and supply to consumers. In this strategy, ILRI works not only with the smallest scale farmers but also with more commercially oriented livestock producers and value chain actors.

This strategy (2013–2022) builds on ILRI's established and unique global pro-poor livestock mandate, its evidence-based conviction that livestock have a vital role to play in enhancing food and nutritional security and reducing poverty in developing countries and its existing expertise, research agenda and partnerships.

It is designed to respond to major changes that have occurred and are likely to persist in the socio-economic, financial, political, environmental and institutional landscape, in particular those specific to agriculture and livestock, and ILRI's role in the CGIAR Consortium.

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Analysis shows that developing country livestock producers and their communities are diverse, a result not only of their dramatically different ecological settings (ranging from tropical drylands to temperate and humid tropics and highlands) but also of their very different livestock production systems and commodities. Some livestock sectors are growing strongly and provide continuing opportunities for smallholders to improve their lives and livelihoods. Others are accelerating so fast that they raise concerns about the environmental and health costs of the livestock systems. Others, often in remote or marginal environments, are experiencing fragile growth at best and need to enhance their adaptive capacity and that of their animals and environments to climate change and other shocks.

The strategy sets out a vision, mission and three strategic objectives. It is derived from an assessment of the external context in which ILRI operates and the drivers of livestock development, ILRI's understanding of three major livestock growth trajectories in developing countries, and a critique of the institute's own strengths and weaknesses.

The key to implementation of the strategy are the five critical success factors which, together with effective partnership, are areas where ILRI needs to excel to be able to deliver intended outcomes. For each, an operational plan will set out objectives, targets and measurable indicators that will be the basis for regular monitoring, priority-setting and assessment of outcomes.

This brief summarizes key elements of the strategy.
**Livestock growth trajectories**

Strong growth systems are those where good market access and increasing productivity provide opportunities for continued smallholder participation. In these systems, ILRI supports inclusive growth to maximize the well-being of people and environments.

Fragile growth systems are those where remoteness, marginal land resources or agroclimatic vulnerability restrict intensification. In these systems, ILRI helps people use livestock to feed their families, protect their assets and conserve their natural resources.

High growth (with externalities) are those with fast-changing livestock systems, potentially damaging the environment and human health and excluding the poor. In these systems, ILRI promotes innovations to reduce human health and environmental problems.

**Vision**

ILRI envisions a world where all people have access to enough food and livelihood options to fulfil their potential.

**Mission**

ILRI’s mission is to improve food and nutritional security and to reduce poverty in developing countries through research for efficient, safe and sustainable use of livestock—ensuring better lives through livestock.

**Partnerships**

Partnership is ILRI’s fundamental modus operandi. ILRI will reach out to and engage with a broad range of partners with complementary skills and shared goals.

**Competencies**

ILRI’s broader research portfolio includes greater attention to food security and human nutrition, influencing policy and tackling a wider range of environmental issues. The portfolio includes:

- Animal bioscience
- Animal science for sustainable productivity
- Biosciences East and Central Africa-ILRI Hub
- Feed and forages bioscience
- Food safety and zoonoses
- Livelihoods, gender and impact
- Livestock systems and the environment
- Policy, trade, value chains
- Vaccine platform

**External strategic issues**

1. Tackling growing levels of food and nutritional insecurity among the poor.
2. Tackling growing levels of food and nutritional insecurity through small-scale livestock production and marketing.
3. Realizing the significant role of women in increasing food security and reducing poverty.
4. Reaching the poor through different approaches targeted to different growth trajectories.
5. Addressing environmental and human health problems associated with livestock.
6. Capitalizing on recent developments in new science and technologies that offer new ways to tackle livestock challenges.
7. Increasing investment in livestock research and development to match the value of livestock as a contributor to agricultural GDP.
8. Developing the greater capacities needed to support livestock development.
9. Ensuring that ILRI is fit for purpose—that every part of the institute is focused on achieving its mission.

**Critical success factors**

1. Get the science right: ILRI must implement excellent livestock science to provide high-quality empirical evidence on the most relevant science questions.
2. Influence practice, policy and choices of decision-makers to achieve impact: ILRI must influence the choices of decision-makers and investors and catalyse changes in the strategies and practices of a large set of livestock system actors and livestock producers.
3. Grow capacity: ILRI must equip a critical mass of people and organizations with the skills to design, implement and maintain appropriate livestock research and development initiatives.
4. Secure sustainable and appropriate funding: ILRI must promote more efficient and stable funding flows that support its research and sustain its capacities.
5. Ensure that ILRI is fit for purpose: ILRI must have excellent people, processes and infrastructure to design, carry out research and deliver on its mission.

**Strategic objectives**

**Practice**

With partners, test, adapt and promote science-based practices that—being sustainable and scalable—achieve better lives through livestock.

**Evidence**

With partners, provide compelling scientific evidence that persuades decision-makers that smarter policies and bigger livestock investments can deliver significant socioeconomic, health and environmental dividends.

**Capacity**

With partners, increase capacity among ILRI’s key stakeholders so they can make better use of livestock science and investments.