

Livestock Matter(s)

ILRI News Round-up



The July-August issue of 'Livestock Matter(s)' presents a round-up of livestock development news from ILRI and its partners.

Corporate news



ILRI turns 40 – Join us at an ILRI@40 event!

In 2014, to mark 40 years of its international research, ILRI is facilitating a series of events that bring together global, regional and local actors in sustainable livestock development, including farmers, the public and private sectors and research and development agencies.

Gerardine Mukeshimana, BecA-ILRI Hub plant researcher, appointed minister of agriculture and animal resources in Rwanda

Gerardine Mukeshimana, a plant researcher working at the Biosciences eastern and central Africa-International Livestock Research Institute (BecA-ILRI) Hub in Nairobi, Kenya, was, in Jul 2014, appointed minister of agriculture and animal resources in Rwanda.

Scottish and Kenyan scientists in new alliance to improve animal breeding and health in developing countries

Challenges faced by livestock farmers in tropical developing countries are the focus of a new alliance involving researchers from Scotland and Africa. The University of Edinburgh and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) have joined forces with ILRI in Kenya to launch the Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health, which will initially focus on the use of genetic information to improve the health and productivity of farmed animals in tropical climates.

New mobile project to tackle malnutrition in Africa and Asia

More than three million people in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia will soon be able to access nutrition and health information using mobile technology as part of a new project to help tackle malnutrition. The GSMA Mobile for Development Foundation has appointed a CABI-led consortium as the global content provider to the mNutrition initiative – a UK Department For International Development (DFID)-funded project. The consortium comprises CABI, BMJ, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), ILRI and Oxfam GB.

Project news

Smallholder livestock production and greenhouse gases: getting the bigger picture in assessing the estimates

A paper published June by scientists from Wageningen University and ILRI explores how to account for multi-functionality within the life cycle assessment (LCA) method to assess the contribution of livestock production to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The study argues that farmers' perspectives on cattle and their functions should always be taken into account when assessing the carbon footprints of mixed smallholder dairying.

New studies on MERS coronavirus and camels in eastern Africa published

A research group from the University of Bonn, in Germany and collaborators from ILRI and Kenyan partners have published new research in the science journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, which shows that camels in Egypt, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan have antibodies to the coronavirus that causes the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

Dairying: A way out of poverty

For many poor households in Ethiopia, dairying is considered a powerful pathway out of poverty. The Livestock and Irrigation Value Chains for Ethiopian Smallholders (LIVES) project is facilitating market linkages between farmers, marketing cooperatives and large

institutional milk consumers to help improve marketing of dairy products. LIVES is also testing improved dairy technologies such as simplified corn silage using plastic bags.

Establishing a new joint lab for animal health research with China

The Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) and ILRI are working to establish a joint laboratory for research on ruminant diseases, building on a CAAS-ILRI joint laboratory on livestock and forage genetic resources in Beijing that was established in 2005. The new facility will be located in the Lanzhou Veterinary Research Institute (LVRI) in China.

Mending our food systems: Upstream and downstream research must work together

Future food security will be achieved by exploiting the power of 'new biosciences'. The new biosciences include genomics (the study of the structure, function, evolution and mapping of all the heritable traits of an organism), immunology and vaccinology (the science or methodology of vaccine bio-informatics). This advice to marry up- and downstream research was given by Iain Wright, the interim deputy director general for Integrated Sciences at ILRI in an interview published by *International Innovation* magazine in June 2014.

A short history of the 'live' vaccine protecting Africa's cattle against East Coast fever



On 20 and 21 August, scientists and directors of ILRI hosted a two-day meeting with GALVmed and other stakeholders (researchers, vaccinators, distributors, regulators) involved in the

production and deployment of a 'live' vaccine that protects cattle in Africa against East Coast fever.

ILRI and CTA to host African dairy value chain seminar in September 2014

On 21-24 September 2014, ILRI together with the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) hosted an African Dairy Value Chain Seminar.

ILRI researchers present on health impacts of aflatoxins in animal-source foods

In August, as part of knowledge exchange on the latest research developments in the area of aflatoxins and food safety, Delia Grace and Johanna Lindahl, food safety researchers from ILRI, presented on 'aflatoxins, animal health and the safety of animal-source foods' at a virtual briefing organized by the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, a network of 37 bilateral donors, multilateral agencies and international financing institutions working to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable rural development.

Filling the milk glass: East African farmers to gain from new recording device

ILRI researchers from the Dairy Genetics East Africa project and other partners have developed 'Ng'ombe Planner', a tool that will help in collecting farm productivity data by enabling farmers to enter their own records of livestock production activities. The mobile phone-based tool, which uses the Android, Java and USSD applications, will help farmers take charge of their own production recording and should lead to improved farm data collection.

Maize stover: A potential green fodder in Ethiopia

Maize is a major food crop in the lowlands and mid-highlands of Ethiopia, but its stover is not utilized efficiently as animal feed, particularly in rain-fed maize production systems. The Livestock and Irrigation Value Chains for Ethiopian Smallholders (LIVES) Project is supporting farmer groups in Ethiopia to start fodder processing and conservation businesses.

New ILRI report assesses risk of Ebola in Uganda's pig value chain

In July scientists from ILRI have published a report of a risk assessment to determine the threat of the deadly Ebola virus in the pig value chain in Uganda.

Land pressure drives hunt for resilient livestock genes in East Africa

Scientists from ILRI presented various papers from ongoing livestock genetics research at the 10th World Congress on Genetics Applied to Livestock Production held in Vancouver, BC, Canada, on 17-22 August 2014.

ILRI in the media



Mapping the web of disease in Nairobi's invisible city

Scientists from ILRI and the University of Nairobi are carrying out research, in Nairobi's informal settlements, that is searching for pathogens such as *Escherichia coli*, *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* in the food chain. This is part an international study that seeks to understand the origin and spread of zoonotic pathogens that can spread from animals to humans.

Guardian article highlights success of volunteer farmer trainers in East Africa dairy project



In August, the *Guardian's* farming and food security hub published an article on how the East Africa Dairy Development (EADD) project is successfully working with volunteer farmer trainers to improve milk production in East Africa.

African Livestock Futures: Realizing the potential of livestock for food security, poverty reduction and the environment in Sub-Saharan Africa

The African Livestock Futures Study investigating plausible trajectories for African livestock up to 2050, indicates potential for growth in livestock production and demand in Africa, contributing greatly to wealth, employment, economic growth as well as to the resilience and productivity of producers' livelihoods, and to the food security, nutrition and sustainable development of all.

ILRI in CGIAR

Update on 'Maziwa Zaidi' — Tanzania dairy value chain development program

On 25 and 26 June, partners in the Tanzania dairy value chain development projects met to develop a strategy and implementation plan for the coming years.

Arguing the case for massive investments in 'One Health'

A recently published paper by Delia Grace, a veterinary epidemiologist and food safety expert at ILRI, outlines a pathway to develop the business case for One Health, which can transform the management of neglected and emerging zoonoses, annually saving the lives of millions of people as well as hundreds of millions of animals whose production supports and nourishes billions of poor people.

Research to influence policy: Taking dryland ecosystems research beyond the shelves.

Lance Robinson, an environmental governance and resilience scientist at ILRI recently produced a policy brief in a collaborative process that involved working with seven selected stakeholders from the natural resource management sector in Kenya. The four-page policy brief 'Framework for natural resource governance in dryland landscapes in Kenya: Making ecosystem-based management a reality', shares key policy options for governance of ecosystems in the drylands of Kenya based on a case study of an assessment of the Mt Marsabit ecosystem in northern Kenya.

ACIAR newsletter highlights ILRI project on risk assessment for improved food safety in Vietnam

The July issue of *Partners* magazine, the flagship publication of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), features an article on an ACIAR-funded project led by ILRI that uses a risk assessment approach towards improving the safety of pig and pork value chains in Vietnam.

Gender flagship achievements in the Ethiopia small ruminants value chain

At the Ethiopia small ruminants value chain strategy and implementation planning workshop held on 13-14 June at the ILRI Addis Ababa campus, the gender flagship theme of the Livestock and Fish CGIAR Research Program reviewed the past year's achievements and future plans.

Recommendation for accessing finance for livestock and dairy value chains in developing countries

In July an ILRI organized discussion at the Fin4Ag Conference in Nairobi gave recommendation for increasing access to financial products and services relevant to livestock and dairy value chains in African-Caribbean-Pacific countries. Recommendations included developing capacities in technical and managerial practices for farmers and SMEs; understanding the complexity of local livestock chain contexts for service providers, financial actors and policymakers and identifying credible spaces in which to gather relevant information on the value chain.

ILRI gives 'one health' training to support pig health project in the Philippines

On 30-31 July, Fred Unger, a veterinary epidemiologist and Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) expert with ILRI, visited the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD) project site in Pampanga, Philippines and served as a resource speaker for a 'seminar on ecohealth and one health'.

Nicaragua's dual-purpose cattle value chain: Strategy and implementation planning workshop

On August 5 and 6, 2014, the Livestock and Fish team conducted a Livestock and Fish Strategy and Implementation Planning Workshop for the Dual-Purpose Cattle Value Chain (DPVC) in Managua, Nicaragua.

Knowledge clearinghouse gives research methods and best practices on value chain performance

Value chain development and assessment is at the heart of the livestock and fish research program. In the past three years, a useful collaboration has been created with the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions, and Markets (PIM) to develop, test and refine various tools and approaches to our value chain work.

Living from milk: Dairy innovation platform experiences from Tanzania

In recent years the Program in Tanzania – focused on dairy development – is linking up with different local and national stakeholders. One of the most promising partnerships has been with the Tanga Dairy Platform. To learn from the platform's experiences, we recently produced three photo films telling stories from platform stakeholders.

Update on Ethiopia small ruminant value chain development program

On 13 and 14 June, partners in the Ethiopia sheep and goats value chain development projects met to develop a strategy and implementation plan for the coming years. Barbara Rischkowsky, ICARDA value chain leader gave an update of progress so far in the value chain development program.

Burkina Faso strategic implementation planning workshop collects stakeholder inputs

On 14 and 15 July, ILRI staff and partners in the Burkina Faso small ruminant value chain project met to develop programmatic and operational elements of a strategic implementation plan for the Livestock and Fish program.

ILRI under the lens



Ankole cow at the ILRI farm in Nairobi (photo credit: ILRI/Paul Karaimu).

Staff updates

In July and August we welcomed the following staff:

- Mwansa Songe, epidemiologist/ food safety expert
- Victor Riitho, post doc molecular immunologist
- Amos Ssematimba, scientist-mathematical modelling
- Kindu Mekonnen, crop livestock systems scientist
- Theodore Knight-Jones, epidemiologist/ food safety expert
- Julius Osaso, diagnostic platform manager
- Everlyne Nyakundi, refrigeration and air conditioning technician
- George Kikoyo, program accountant
- Dorine Odongo, communications and knowledge management specialist
- Silas Ongudi, research assistant
- Violet Barasa, research technician, Gender
- Millicent Liani, research technician, Gender
- Solomon Mutua, communications assistant
- Elijah Mwaura, research technician
- Caroline Kanyuuru, research technician
- Elvira Omondi, Program Management Officer

We also said farewell to:

- Margaret MacDonald-Levy, People and Organizational Development
- Suzanne Bertrand, Biosciences
- Caroline Kasyoka Nzui, ICT
- Anne Awino Odhiambo, People and Organizational Development
- Jeridah Kwamboka Sinange, EOHS
- Robert Ilmedimi Lechipan, Finance
- Rose Nduta Mute, Finance
- John Ajode Juma, Finance
- Albert Mwangi, Bio-Innovate Program
- Nixon Bandi Witere, Finance

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