

# The role of livestock in developing countries: Misperceptions, facts and consequences

*Jimmy Smith, Director General*

Extinction and Livestock: Moving to a Flourishing Food System for Wildlife, Farm Animals and Us

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By 2050:

- at least 10 billion to feed

- demand for milk, meat and eggs at least double in developing countries
  - because of population, urbanization and income
    - not over-consumption





# Animal-source foods are valuable

5 of 6 highest value global commodities  
(total value of these five is US\$715 billion)



# Livestock sector and economies

Global and national economy – 40% of agricultural GDP and growing;  
Household economy – over  $\frac{3}{4}$  billion dependent livelihoods; more than 1.5 billion involved



Over 50% of the World's crop  
and livestock products

Are produced by smallholder  
farmers on integrated crop-livestock  
farms







# Is livestock production responsible for the destruction of habitats, deforestation, and climate change?

- overgrazing: Moderate grazing is good for biodiversity of wildlife and plants
- 

57% of land used for feed production is not suitable for crop production

86% of the dry matter eaten by animals cannot be consumed by humans

Diets with some animal source foods use less land than vegan alternatives

# Is livestock production a major cause of climate change through:

- GHG Emissions from livestock are about 14% of all human-induced emissions (less than transport, energy and industry)
- IPCC [these calculations from IPCC are based on developed country data; figures for developing countries may be considerably lower]

Within agriculture, which makes up 24% of global emissions, livestock presents the biggest opportunity to reduce emissions – by at least 30%

Livestock are essential for resilient food systems  
[manure, traction, risk management]

Trees are initially cut down mainly for timber or charcoal – not to make pastures



Is consumption of animal-source foods bad for your health  
causing:

- obesity

- calcium      30% of the World's protein comes from animal-source  
foods

Animal-source foods contain B12, micronutrients and  
more bioavailable macronutrients than plant-based foods

Animal-source foods are essential in the first 1000 days of  
life

Milk improves growth, preventing stunting

Meat improves cognitive ability



# Sustainable Development Goals: for the whole World



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

# Sustainable Development Goals: livestock contribute directly to eight



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

# Sustainable Development Goals: at least four cannot be achieved without livestock





# Consequences: doing away with livestock – SDG 1



Three-quarters of a billion people will have no chance to escape poverty

Eliminating poverty for the 700 million still below the poverty line will not happen





# Consequences: doing away with livestock – SDG 2



Half the World's cereal crop could be decimated



# Consequences: doing away with livestock – SDG 13



The biggest opportunity to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture will be lost





# Consequences: doing away with livestock – SDG 2, 3



Eliminating stunting for over 150 million children and malnutrition for 800 million people will not be realized

Micronutrient deficiencies for 2 million will not go away



# Perhaps the two biggest misperceptions?



**Misperception:** Livestock are the problem, not the solution

*Many of the SDGs cannot be achieved without the livestock sector – its part of the solution*

**Misperception:** Developed and developing worlds have different aims in the livestock sector

*All strive for safe, sustainable livestock production that makes a positive contribution to SDGs worldwide. The starting points, and thus transition pathways differ.*

*better lives through livestock*

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