



## Key Recommendations from the "Regional Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation for Food Systems in Asia and the Pacific"

### Summary

Asia and the Pacific's livestock sector is transforming rapidly, creating opportunities for food security, livelihoods and economic growth, while increasing pressures on climate, natural resources and public health. These recommendations, developed through the 2026 Regional Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation in Hanoi, set priorities across four areas: One Health, climate-smart livestock systems, livelihoods and inclusive economic development, and food security and nutrition.

They call for stronger policies and institutions, better coordination, investment in locally adapted innovations, and improved access to knowledge, finance and digital tools. Countries are encouraged to align national actions with food systems and climate commitments, while ensuring that smallholders, women and youth benefit from livestock transformation.

### Recommendation framework

The recommendations are structured around two complementary lenses: what needs to change and who needs to act.

- What needs to change:
  - One Health
  - Climate-smart livestock systems
  - Livelihoods and inclusive economic development
  - Food security and nutrition

For each priority, four key action levers are identified: research, investment, policy and capacity development.

- Who needs to act:
  - National governments
  - Regional and international partners
  - Investors and the private sector

## Context

Livestock is central to food systems transformation in Asia and the Pacific. The region is home to about 44% of the world's livestock, and the sector supports the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of smallholder farmers, pastoralists and others working across livestock value chains. Livestock also provides an important source of protein and essential nutrition for households in the region. The sector accounts for 40% of the region's top agricultural commodities by value, worth USD 724 billion, or half of the global total value of these commodities.

Yet livestock systems face interconnected challenges: rising demand and pressure to increase productivity, climate change and environmental pressures, animal and public health risks, and persistent barriers facing smallholder producers. Addressing these challenges requires better coordination across sectors, stronger links between evidence, policy and investment, and solutions adapted to diverse livestock systems.

Across Asia and the Pacific, more than 30 countries in the region have developed national food systems transformation pathways. The Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Livestock Transformation (GPA–SLT)<sup>1</sup> provides a shared framework organized around four priority tracks. This creates an important opportunity to strengthen the integration of livestock into national food systems strategies.

The region also has a growing portfolio of proven livestock innovations, including improved breeds and forages, climate-smart feeding, One Health field sites, digital traceability tools, and cooperative business models. The central challenge is no longer whether innovations exist; it is whether they reach producers at the scale and pace required.

These recommendations aim to embed livestock as a core pillar of food systems transformation, rather than treat it as a standalone or marginal sector, and to help proven innovations move from pilot projects to widespread use. Two principles guide them: recommendations must be backed by practical incentive structures for producers, and gender equality, youth engagement, and social inclusion must run as cross-cutting priorities throughout.



Farmer Benna Ramji with his sheep in Nagar village, Tonk district, India where improved farming systems are creating new opportunities for older farmers (photo credit: ILRI).

<sup>1</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd8317en>

# PRIORITY ACTIONS BY THEMATIC AREAS

## One Health (OH) in agrifood systems



### Research

- Adopt multidisciplinary OH methodology across human, animal, and environmental sectors.
- Develop national OH implementation guidelines.
- Evaluate OH field sites and integrated surveillance models, generating evidence on health, economic, and ecosystem benefits.



### Investment

- Demonstrate return on investment through clear evidence of economic benefits and positive externalities for public and ecosystem health
- Finance integrated surveillance, response systems, local field sites, and scalable knowledge products.



### Policy

- Establish national OH committees with multi-ministry collaboration.
- Implement local OH field site models.
- Create knowledge exchange platforms.
- Base policy on data, evidence, and science.



### Capacity development

- Integrate OH into higher education curricula and accredited professional training.
- Strengthen joint surveillance, response, communication, and outreach skills, including awareness activities beyond universities.

## Climate-smart livestock systems



### Research

- Co-create and scale context-specific, climate-smart innovations including country-specific emission factors.
- Build evidence on climate, productivity and livelihood impacts.
- Test and scale locally adapted solutions, engaging the private sector.
- Strengthen regional research, data and knowledge sharing.



### Investment

- Mobilize and align public, private, and blended finance for climate-smart livestock solutions.
- Improve producers' access to finance and incentivize value creation, adoption and climate co-benefits.



### Policy

- Strengthen coordinated regional policies and institutional frameworks for climate-smart livestock systems.
- Coordinate regional action where shared standards or cross-border environmental issues require cooperation.
- Align policies across provincial, national and regional levels to support food systems transformation.



### Capacity development

- Build technical capacity from national institutions through extension services to farms.
- Combine productivity and profitability training with practical approaches to adaptation, mitigation and environmental management.

## Livelihoods and inclusive economic development



### Research

- Co-design research and innovation with farmers, producer organizations, research institutions, development agencies, the government, and other value-chain actors.
- Tailor solutions to diverse livestock systems and assess differential impacts on women, youth, and marginalized groups.



### Investment

- Produce evidence on returns on investment to promote bankable opportunities and avoid inefficient public spending.
- Support value-chain upgrading, market access, services, and inclusive finance for producers and enterprises.



### Policy

- Develop integrated frameworks for cross-ministerial collaboration producing multi-sectoral livestock policies.
- Use inclusive stakeholder engagement to align policy design with conditions across different farming systems.
- Base policy on data, evidence, and science.



### Capacity development

- Identify capacity gaps and needs along value chains and develop a targeted roadmap for capacity development.
- Strengthen the capabilities of producers, enterprises, service providers, institutions, and producer organizations.

## Food security and nutrition



### Research

- Conduct interdisciplinary, end-use-oriented research that connects livestock, food security, food safety and nutrition.
- Promote nutrition-sensitive livestock interventions.
- Support food safety along value chains.



### Investment

- Invest in low-input-cost models for farmer groups and cooperatives.
- Support smallholder market access through value chain upgrading
- Train traders on quality control.



### Policy

- Develop an engagement plan for all relevant stakeholders.
- Strengthen regional and national coordination.
- Base policy on data, evidence, and science.



### Capacity development

- Build institutional capacity on nutrition-sensitive and food safety risk assessment.
- Equip smallholders with knowledge on nutrition, food safety and good production practices.
- Develop digital extension tools on nutrition, food safety and livestock management.



## PRIORITY ACTIONS BY REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

### Priority actions for national governments

Governments in Asia and the Pacific should accelerate sustainable livestock transformation through coordinated national plans of action, implementation, and investments. Eight key recommendations were made:

- **Develop or update national strategies for sustainable livestock transformation**

Countries should assess whether to develop or revise national plans of action for sustainable livestock transformation (NPA-SLT) aligned with national food systems strategies and climate commitments, as well as with the GPA-SLT

- **Embed livestock in national food systems strategies.**

Countries with food systems transformation pathways should ensure that livestock is explicitly reflected as a core pillar since it intersects with nutrition, public health, ecosystem health, trade, climate, and rural development.

- **Establish strong national coordination mechanisms**

Governments should designate a lead institution and coordination mechanism that brings agriculture, health, environment, finance and planning authorities together under a One Health framework.

- **Adopt inclusive and multi-stakeholder planning**

National planning should engage farmers, producer organizations, the private sector, research institutions, and civil society to ensure that livestock development is inclusive, evidence-based, and practical.

- **Develop implementation roadmaps**

Countries should set clear milestones, timelines, and monitoring systems to guide implementation and track progress.

- **Define clear responsibilities across thematic GPA-SLT areas**

National strategies should clarify institutional leadership across the four key areas of the GPA-SLT: One Health, climate-smart livestock systems, livelihoods and inclusive economic development, and food security and nutrition.

- **Mobilize sustainable financing**

Governments should identify potential funding sources, including national budgets, bilateral development assistance, climate finance, and private investment (such as blended finance).

- **Plan innovations as packages, not as isolated technologies.**

Livestock innovations scale when core technologies—such as improved breeds, vaccines, feeds, food safety practices and digital tools—are combined with enabling conditions, including producer capacity, input supply, markets, finance and supportive policies. National plans should identify these needs and target investment accordingly. This integrated approach, demonstrated across conference themes, is essential for moving from pilots to scale.



A livestock keeper herds goats in China (photo credit: ILRI).

## Priority actions for regional and international partners

Regional organizations, development partners, and financial institutions play a critical role in supporting country-led livestock transformation. Key priorities include the following:

- **Develop a shared framework for transformation**

Regional organizations should consider developing a sustainable livestock transformation theory of change to provide a common framework for regional efforts, investments, and collaboration. In particular, the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA) has developed such a framework around a common vision: livestock production in the region transformed into productive, resilient and inclusive systems that ensure animal health, public health, and environmental sustainability. Its outcomes could help align national NPA-SLT processes with regional programming.

- **Provide guidance for NPA-SLT and support regional coherence**

These partners should support countries in developing or revising NPA-SLT. Regional organizations, including regional economic communities such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and other livestock-specific regional platforms such as APHCA and the Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Animal Production Services (PHOVAPS), also have a crucial role in promoting regional alignment, harmonizing approaches and standards, and coordinating across borders on shared

priorities such as transboundary disease control, trade, and climate-smart livestock systems.

- **Map and coordinate institutional support**

Development and research partners should support national governments in identifying technical and institutional support for the implementation of their NPA-SLT.

- **Align and mobilize financing**

Development and research partners should support resource mobilization for country-owned plans, including through blended finance, concessional funding, and risk-sharing mechanisms.

- **Strengthen capacity, data, and systems**

International and regional partners should aim to support extension services, laboratory and surveillance systems, monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV), and practical data tools.

- **Support livestock master plans**

Partners should support the development of national livestock master plans to guide sector priorities and investments.

- **Broaden stakeholder consultation**

Regional partners should continue engaging a wider range of stakeholders—including farmer organizations, consumer groups and subnational governments—to strengthen ownership and regional coherence.



## Priority actions for investors and the private sector

The conditions investors require to commit capital are the same conditions innovations need to scale: regulatory clarity, demonstrated stakeholder demand, functioning institutional support, and access to data. Governments that build these conditions through their NPA–SLT processes simultaneously create the foundation for investment and the foundation for scaling. The two agendas converge. The conference’s investor reflection session, which brought together international finance institutions, bilateral development agencies, integrated livestock companies, and private sector cooperatives, identified six conditions for scaling livestock investment in the region:

- **Ensure regulatory clarity as a foundation for investment**

Investors commit capital where there is a clear, transparent policy and regulatory environment and demonstrated government commitment. National plans for sustainable livestock transformation are themselves investment enablers since they signal stability, coherence, and direction to the market.

- **Engage at the country level**

Financing is shifting from regional or global programming towards bilateral, country-level arrangements. Governments that can present coherent national livestock strategies with clear investment priorities and risk management frameworks are better positioned to attract capital from development banks, bilateral donors, and private investors.

- **Scale blended finance models**

Development banks combine commercial and concessional lending with climate funds, circular economy funds and matching grants to de-risk private investment and support smallholder participation. Cooperatives demonstrating data-driven performance are also increasingly able to attract equity investment.

- **Invest in data and digital systems**

Animal identification, traceability, disease surveillance, market performance, and environmental impact data underpin investment decisions, risk management, and regulatory compliance. Digitalization of livestock systems is an emerging priority across the region.

- **Prioritize investment in three key areas**

These key areas are integrated value chains (from production through processing and distribution), innovation and technology (including digital identification, traceability, genetics, and feed efficiency), and supporting services (market access platforms, advisory services, and financial intermediation). Food safety across the full value chain was highlighted as a top investment priority.

- **Recognize the government’s role in providing public goods**

Biosecurity systems, extension services, food safety regulation, animal health infrastructure, and data systems are public goods that depend on government investment. That investment is what makes private sector activity possible and sustainable.

## CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

Throughout the conference, gender equality, youth engagement, and social inclusion were recognized as essential to sustainable livestock transformation. Women's empowerment in livestock remains consistently lower than men's across species and production systems, and the sector faces a similar gap in engaging the next generation. Attracting young people requires modernization, viable economic returns, and technology-enabled livelihoods. These dimensions should be integrated into national planning across all four thematic areas. The International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026 also provides an opportunity to strengthen attention to pastoral and rangeland communities in regional and national action.



A female farmer with her cattle in Ban Nam village, Son La province, Viet Nam, as part of the ASSET project. (photo credit: CIRAD)

---

### Acknowledgments

The support of all co-convenors—the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Viet Nam, ILRI, FAO and CIRAD—is gratefully acknowledged. We thank all participants and partners whose contributions helped shape these recommendations. We also acknowledge the generous support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea through the ICT4Health project, the ASEAN-CGIAR Innovate for Food and Nutrition Security Program, the CGIAR Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods (SAAF) Science Program, FAO-APHCA and the French Development Agency through the PREZODE initiative.

This material is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.