STELARR

SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS FOR LARGE-SCALE RANGELAND RESTORATION

SUSTAINABLE BEEF INVESTMENT ROUNDTABLE

Financing the transition to more sustainable and restorative beef production

The Sustainable Beef Investment Roundtable, held in Rome 2-4 October 2025, brought together more than 50 investors, producers, researchers, NGOs, and policymakers. The event was co-convened under the STELARR project with support from the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, the International Livestock Research Institute, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The Investment Roundtable provided a platform for producers, investors and supporting actors to convene and discuss good practice rangeland restoration investment cases, investment bottlenecks, challenges and opportunities, and to build relations across those striving for more sustainable beef production.



OUTCOME

Participants reaffirmed that sustainable beef is both an environmental imperative and a viable economic opportunity—but only if finance, metrics, and local realities are better connected. Discussions emphasized the need for better metrics for finance, clearer business cases, and stronger engagement with the private financial sector beyond traditional banking. Investors and banks must be able to identify projects with measurable nature value, while producers need to tell their stories and articulate their on-the-ground impact.

Investor reflections during the event reinforced that reputational risk remains one of the strongest barriers to attracting large-scale capital into sustainable livestock. As highlighted in the interview with Marcela Paranhos (***SAIL Investments***), fragmented information, inconsistent communication, and the absence of unified traceability systems often overshadow real progress in emissions reduction and supplier monitoring. Strengthening sector-wide data, building transparent narratives, and equipping producers with simple and credible communication tools will be essential to build trust and investment readiness.






Participants agreed on three priorities:

- Strengthening science-based monitoring frameworks to quantify impact, risk, and credibility (measurement, monitoring, reporting, verification of livestock emissions; nature-positive metrics; GLEAM-i).
- Developing blended finance mechanisms to de-risk early investments and attract private capital to Rangeland restoration and low-emission beef systems.
- Reframing the business case for sustainable beef, ensuring that financial viability, stakeholder engagement, and reputational risk management are integrated into project design.

The momentum generated in Rome will guide follow-up actions under STELARR, including deeper engagement with financial actors, regional dialogues to refine the investment cases, and continued collaboration to expand the global portfolio of investable, nature-positive livestock enterprises. The event underscored that advancing sustainable beef will require integrating science, investment, and strategic communication to overcome reputational barriers and unlock private capital.

INVESTMENT CASES PORTFOLIO

Participants presented 15 global enterprises demonstrating scalable models for sustainable beef production. These cases span Latin America, Africa, Oceania, and Europe, including ***Hacienda San José*** (Colombia), ***AACo*** (Australia), and ***Ol Pejeta Conservancy*** (Kenya). Each case illustrates pathways for combining productivity, restoration, and financial viability under market conditions.

The fifteen cases illustrate three dominant investment types in the global beef transformation landscape. The models show that financial performance and ecological outcomes are not mutually exclusive. Regenerative beef can be profitable, data-driven, and socially inclusive when properly financed and monitored.

International Finance Corporation highlighted how productivity improvements can reduce emissions intensity by up to 30%. ILRI and ***INIA Uruguay*** showed how restoration-based investments can yield returns exceeding conventional land uses. The portfolio serves as a foundation for STELARR's global dialogue with investors to build a pipeline of sustainable beef projects.



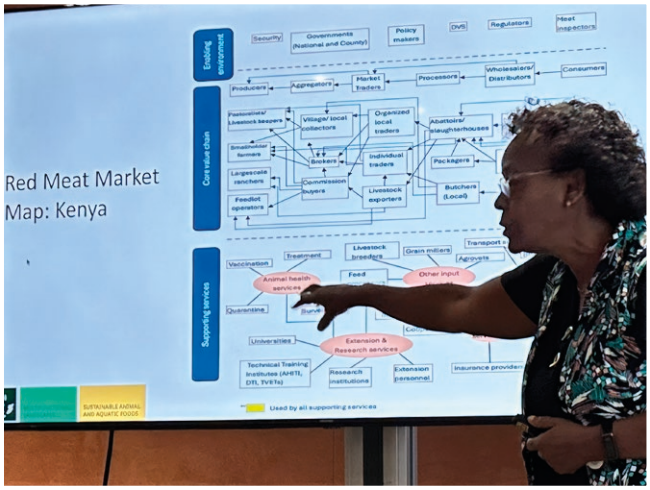


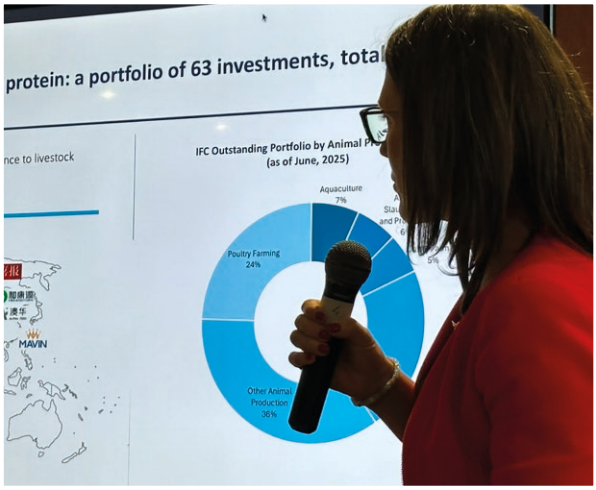
Example Cases	Investment Type	Focus	Business Model
» **Hacienda San José** » **Pristine Agriculture Group** » **COVAP Cooperative** » **Liivimaa Lihaveis** » **Australian Agricultural Company (AACo)**	Production-led regeneration	Profit + productivity + ecosystem gains	Commercial beef enterprises integrating regenerative pasture management and improved genetics
» **Elysium Cerrado Restoration (AtmosClear)** » **Ol Pejeta** » **APRAI–Ibirapuitã APA** » **Uruguayan Grassland Alliance** » **ILRI Pastoral Systems**	Nature-based restoration	Carbon, biodiversity, Payment for Environmental Services	Land-use transition financed through carbon markets and blended finance
» **Rancho El Ojo** » **El Capricho** » **Pasture for Life** » **E-Livestock Global** » **Gut & Bösel–Finck Foundation**	Market innovation & culture	Traceability, education, consumer value	Social enterprises combining technology, training, and storytelling

Event Overview

During two days of panels and a field visit on the third day, participants explored challenges and opportunities for scaling sustainable beef production. Sessions focused on (i) multifunctional landscapes, (ii) science-based metrics, (iii) enabling incentives, (iv) innovative finance, and (v) partnerships that drive measurable outcomes. A field visit to La Argentina organic beef farm near Rome illustrated practical applications of regenerative grazing and mixed livestock systems.







Thematic Highlights

Five panels showed how leading financiers are converging around a new paradigm: investing in sustainable beef is investing in natural capital, rural prosperity, and risk-resilient portfolios.

PANEL 1

Sustainable Beef in Multifunctional Landscapes.

This session highlighted how livestock can coexist with biodiversity and ecosystem services. Oscar Blumetto (INIA Uruguay) presented Uruguay's '*Nature Positive Foodscapes*' integrating native grasslands into productive systems. Julian Chará (***CIPAV***) showed how silvopastoral systems diversify income, enhance animal welfare, and sequester carbon. Seth Itzkan (***Soil4Climate***) illustrated, through striking before–after landscape evidence, how regenerative grazing can restore degraded grasslands, increase soil carbon, and improve water retention—showing that well-managed ruminants can act as agents of ecological regeneration. The discussion emphasized the multifunctionality of livestock systems and the need to value ecological integrity as part of production economics.

PANEL 2

Science Supporting Investment showcased innovations linking science and finance.

Ann Mottet, from the ***International Fund for Agricultural Development - IFAD***, noted that 65% of IFAD's portfolio includes diverse species of livestock projects, with 25% for rangelands and pasture investments. She also emphasized that many of IFAD's livestock investments target rangeland restoration directly—improving water access, feed and fodder systems, and community-based pasture governance—demonstrating that restoring degraded rangelands is central to climate

resilience and rural livelihoods. John Tauzel (***Environmental Defense Fund***) argued that cutting methane is a way to slow climate change and called for practical Monitoring, Measurement, Reporting, and Verification systems to guide credible investments. Jacobo Arango (***Alliance Bioversity International–CIAT***) presented research showing improved forages and carbon-negative systems at Hacienda San José, where *Urochloa humidicola* pastures achieved 46% lower GHG intensity and net carbon sequestration.

PANEL 3

Partnerships for Sustainable Investment explored African and Latin American perspectives.

This session highlighted how partnerships across science, finance, and production are essential to scale sustainable livestock.

Abdrahmane Wane (ILRI) framed Africa's rangelands as a high-return investment in food security and climate resilience, citing initiatives such as Mali's PPR vaccine and Guinea's livestock project (35% financial Internal Rate of Return). Fabio Medeiros (***The Nature Conservancy***) showcased Brazil's ***Innovative Finance for the Amazon***, ***Cerrado and Chaco***, which has mobilized over $5.2 billion in commitments, combining traceability, compliance, and credit incentives through state programs like Pará's Sustainable Cattle Initiative. Gerardo Evia (***Vaquería del Este***, Uruguay) argued that while differentiated markets improve management and certification, premiums remain limited, calling for direct incentives such as biodiversity and regenerative livestock credits. Panel members emphasized that durable sustainability in beef systems depends on linking scientific evidence, financial innovation, and producer-centered incentives.

PANEL 4

Carrots and Sticks: Incentives and Regulations.

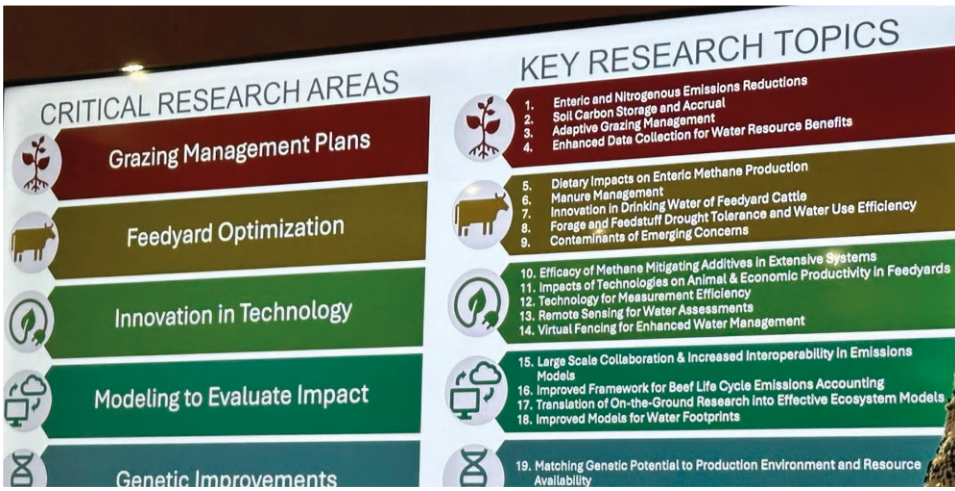
This session examined how regulatory and financial tools can accelerate adoption of sustainable practices. Shruthi Shankar from ***Boston Consulting Group***, presented models for aligning feed innovation with farmer incentives across Africa, where feed constitutes up to 70% of livestock production costs. Lessons from the EU, Denmark, and New Zealand showed how sequencing voluntary measures before mandatory policies enhance adoption and equity. Fernando Bellese from the ***World Wildlife Fund*** introduced the Global Traceability Framework for Beef and Leather. The framework aims to advance transparency across value chains. Jhon Gutiérrez (***GANSO***, Colombia) introduced the GANSO Sustainable Livestock Standard. This certification framework evaluates environmental, social, and economic performance at farm level and has become a regional benchmark for zero-deforestation beef in Colombia. Financial institutions in Colombia recognize the GANSO Standard as a reliable instrument to assess and finance sustainable livestock projects.

PANEL 5

Innovative Finance for Sustainability

This highlighted the evolution of financial instruments that link profitability with environmental outcomes. This panel brought together three leading financial institutions: (i) the ***International Finance Corporation***, (ii) ***SAIL Investments***, and (iii) ***Rabobank*** to explore how capital can be aligned with sustainability outcomes in the beef value chain and land-use systems. All three emphasized that the transition to sustainable beef needs long-term, data-driven finance instruments that connect environmental integrity with economic resilience.





Olivia Elliot from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) explained that the institution has built a US $4.1 billion agribusiness portfolio, guided by rigorous performance standards and the ***IFC's Practices for Sustainable Investment in Livestock***. These practices connect biodiversity and animal welfare outcomes with financial performance. She also noted that the IFC aims to scale this portfolio to US $9 billion by 2030. Spending will be guided by performance standards that promote biodiversity conservation, decarbonization, and animal welfare.

She highlighted IFC's sustainable protein advisory work and case studies such as Hacienda San José in Colombia and Metagro in Mongolia, where climate-smart beef systems combine improved forages, pasture restoration, and shorter production cycles to lower greenhouse gas intensity. As IFC's framework shows, productivity improvements can cut emissions by up to 30 percent while supporting food security and rural livelihoods.

Marcela Paranhos (***SAIL Investments***) presented SAIL's experience embedding Sustainable Value Creation into every loan covenant. Through its ***&Green Fund***, SAIL has financed deforestation-free supply chains in Latin America. There financing is protecting and restoring over 3 million hectares of forest and improving livelihoods for more than 68,000 people through ***Marfrig*** in Brazil and ***Hacienda San José*** in Colombia. Her message was clear: when treated as a strategic driver of value, sustainability reduces operational risk and opens access to lower-cost capital and markets more conscious of environmental safeguards. SAIL's blended finance approach demonstrates how purpose-built credit mechanisms can transform high-risk sectors into investable opportunities for climate and nature gains.

Gert van der Bijl (***Rabobank***) outlined the bank's global plan to Align Finance with Sustainability Outcomes in Beef. Rabobank's €25 billion animal-protein portfolio (about 9 percent of its Food & Agri business) is being steered through instruments such as the ***Responsible Commodities Facility*** and ***Renova Pasto***, which blend public and private capital to fund zero-deforestation soy and the restoration of degraded pastures in Brazil. The bank's emerging ***Biodiversity Monitor*** provides farmers and lenders with standardized indicators that link sustainability performance to financial incentives. These include soil nitrogen balance to permanent grassland cover. According to Rabobank, achieving emission-reduction targets "depends on strong signals from regulators and markets, coupled with credible data and producer engagement."





Field Visit: La Argentina Farm

During the field visit to ***La Argentina*** organic beef farm near Rome, participants saw firsthand the application of rational grazing in Mediterranean conditions (*Pastoreo Racional Voisin*). Led by agronomist Mariana Donnola, participants saw how adaptive grazing and mixed livestock-poultry systems can increase dry matter production, animal welfare, and profitability while reducing feed costs and external inputs. The farm produces 5,823 kg liveweight annually (145.5 kg/ha) with minimal concentrate use and sells directly through short value chains.

Participant Feedback

Participants' feedback was unanimously positive according to the Mentimeter survey completed by participants; 100% of respondents found the event useful. When asked what the meeting had provided, the most frequent responses were knowledge sharing (21 votes), better communication (15), and new partnerships (13).

Participants also highlighted new technical innovations (8), investment opportunities (6), and the creation of new reporting tools (5). These results reflect the event's effectiveness in fostering collaboration, generating actionable insights, and strengthening connections between science, finance, and sustainable beef production.

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank all those who participated and contributed to the Sustainable Beef Investment Roundtable for sharing their ideas, experiences, and insights toward building a more sustainable and resilient global beef sector.

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Their participation made this Roundtable a space for genuine dialogue and global collaboration to accelerate sustainable beef systems for people, nature, and climate.



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STELARR
Project–Driving Private Investment in Rangeland Restoration

The Sustainable Investments for Large-Scale Rangeland Restoration project (STELARR) links rangeland restoration efforts to livestock value chains. **The project supports companies in aligning rangeland restoration investments with sustainability goals while unlocking financial, environmental and social returns.**

STELARR also drives the development of global rangeland monitoring and certification systems to ensure traceability, impact measurement and credibility. For investors, it offers a strategic entry point for sustainable value creation and an emerging natural capital asset class with strong growth potential.

The Global Environment Facility-funded STELARR project is implemented by the International Union for Conservation and executed by ILRI in partnership with the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, the International Center for Agricultural Research for Dry Areas, the Center for International and World Agroforestry Centre Forestry Research, and the Sustainable Fibre Alliance.

