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Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

Global Changes in Livestock-Based Systems, Does it Matter for the Poor?

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Abstract

The growing markets and rapid growth in demand for livestock products has been termed the livestock revolution. It is driven by rising income, urbanisation, and changing consumer preferences particularly among a growing middle class. Expanding domestic and export markets for livestock and rapidly growing demands create growth opportunities for livestock producers in the developing world. Globally there is a geographic shift in livestock production from the developed to developing countries. However, recent trends in the developing world like the lengthening of livestock food chains, vertically integrated livestock food chains, and increasing market concentration in the sector can marginalise smallholder producers and other poor people who depend on livestock for their livelihoods. The livestock revolution therefore has so far seemed to bypass the livestock sector in the least developed countries where the bulk of the poor live. Moreover, the increased production of livestock is also expected to come from the same or declining resource base. In many cases, this may lead to degradation of land, water, and animal genetic resources in both intensive and extensive livestock systems.

This study investigates the distribution of livestock systems (intensive versus extensive) over time and across countries and relate this to economic variables (such as livestock contribution to agriculture GDP, poverty index, market access), production systems variables (such as farming systems, technology, productivity) and environmental variables (such as water, land use and degradation). By doing so this research tries to enhance the understanding of relevant characteristics and trends in livestock systems at a global level. Additionally this study will conduct regional analysis for Africa, to analyse the relation between livestock systems, livestock productivity and poverty index levels in more detail. By doing so we aim to answer the question: Global changes in livestock-based systems, does it matter for the poor?

Keywords: Farming system, global changes, livestock production, poverty, trends