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“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation:
Trade-offs and synergies”

Competing narratives for livestock development and policy

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Abstract

This presentation will offer a new narrative for livestock development and policy, focusing on extensive livestock and pastoral systems from across the world. Making use of half the world’s land surface, rangelands are an important site for the production of animal-source foods and other products, generating livelihoods for millions. Yet extensive livestock systems are poorly understood, with herders and their livestock frequently cast as the villains of climate change and environmental destruction. The new narrative challenges these assumptions and suggests alternative pathways for development and policy around five intersecting themes: mobility, land and environment, climate, diets and markets. The new narrative highlights the potentials for livestock systems to enhance the environment and biodiversity, while limiting impacts on the climate. The narrative in turn means development pathways that recognise pastoralism and extensive livestock production as productive, modern systems based on mobility, flexibility and adaptability, and embedded in local social relationships and collective networks.