

The Imperative of Policy Research for Scaling Improved Forages in the Tropics

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INTRODUCTION

- Improved tropical forages can enhance livestock productivity, combat land degradation, mitigate climate change, increase resilience, and improve rural livelihoods.
- Policies are essential for creating an enabling environment that incentivizes farmers to integrate these forages into their production systems. This involves addressing regulatory barriers, providing financial support, and promoting knowledge dissemination through extension services.
- Policy interventions can foster innovation in forage breeding, agronomy, seed systems, and value chain development, thereby enhancing the resilience and adaptability of farming systems to climate change and other external pressures.

OBJECTIVE

To provide a perspective on the critical role of policy research in facilitating the widespread adoption and scaling of tropical forages.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

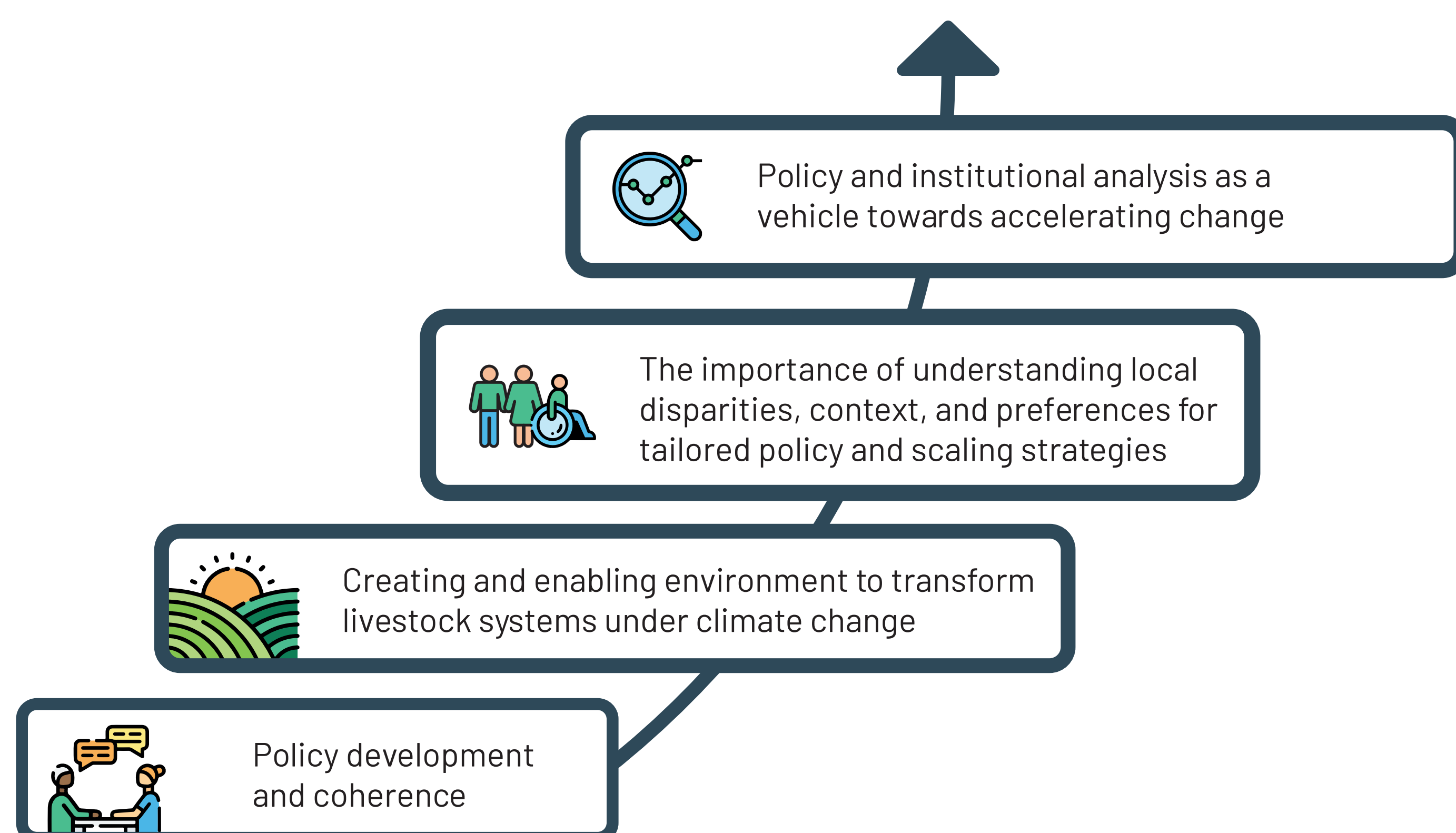


Figure 1. Key elements of policy analysis in agriculture.

WHY POLICY ANALYSIS?

Public policies encompass everything from problem identification to action evaluation, influenced by political will, stakeholder coordination, and program continuity. National Development Plans often emphasize resource conservation and emission reduction but lack specific indicators.

Public policies are one of the main alternatives for promoting the adoption of sustainable practices by addressing challenges such as unfamiliarity, high costs, and risk aversion. Effective policies must highlight both the benefits and potential drawbacks.

ROLE OF POLICY RESEARCH

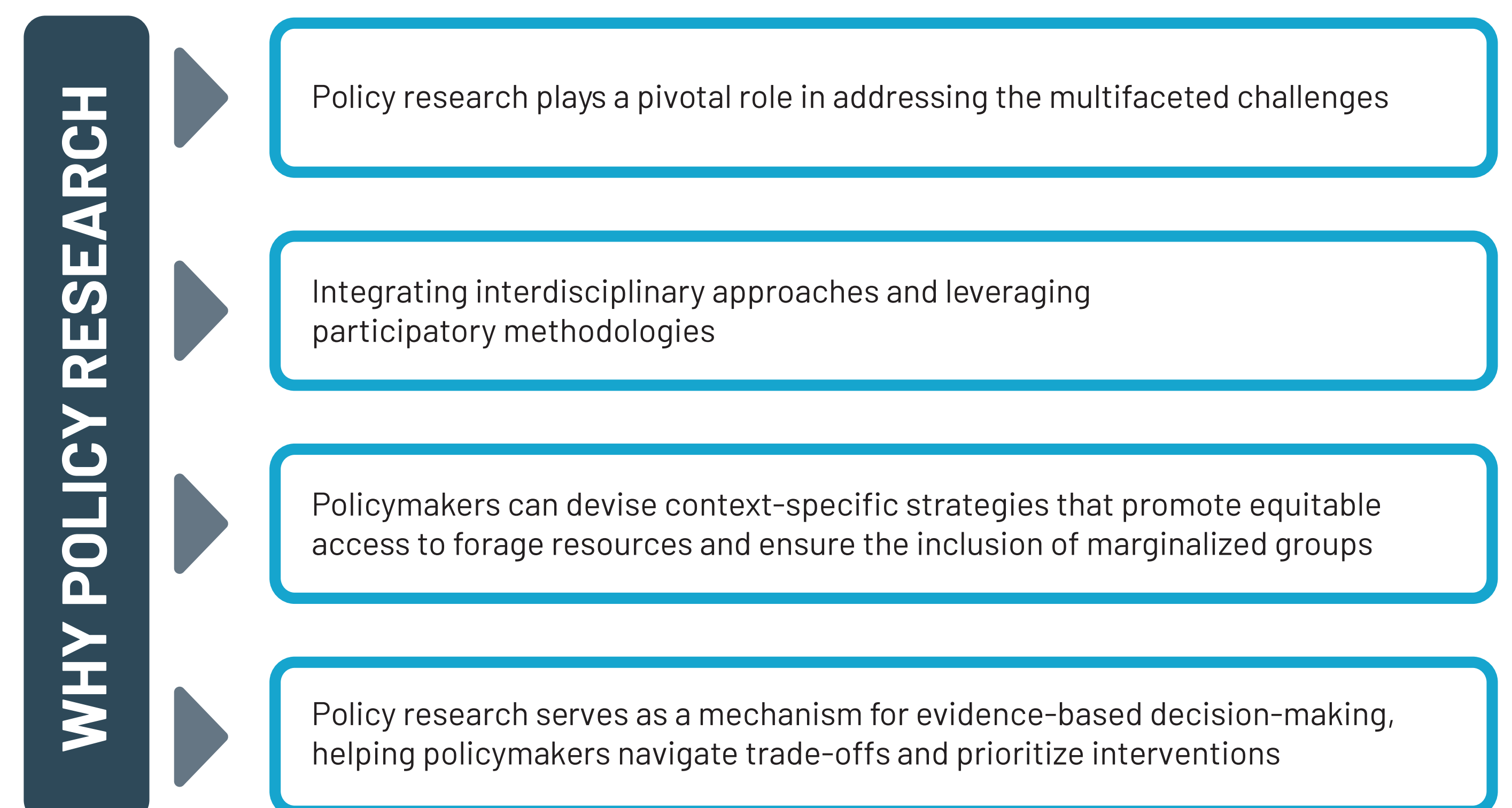


Figure 2. The importance of policy analysis.

EXAMPLES OF RECENT POLICY ANALYSES FOR FORAGE-BASED LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Recent work highlights the importance of policy analysis in implementing sustainable practices in livestock production. An example is the analysis of Colombia's Sustainable Cattle Policy (Diaz-Bacca et al., 2023; Sandoval 2023), which shows how barriers and challenges identified during the design and discussion phases affect policy implementation and development.

These studies indicate that policy implementations require institutional and financial support to solidify as roadmaps. National government leadership is necessary to coordinate institutions along the cattle value chain.

Additionally, comparative public policy analyses offer valuable benchmarks for policy design and implementation. For example, a recent analysis of public policy development for sustainable livestock farming in Colombia, Argentina, and Costa Rica identifies the different challenges and progress these countries face regarding regulation and sustainability programs (Moreno-Lerma et al., 2022).

This research emphasizes that, although the policies achieved so far provide valuable contributions, it is necessary to view them as a first stage in a long-term process. This process requires the contribution of all stakeholders, from international organizations to public entities, cattle producers, unions and associations, the private sector, academia, and society.

CONCLUSIONS

- Public policies are a key element in identifying and solving social issues. In the agricultural sector, they are essential for driving the transition to sustainable food systems.
- However, it is necessary to promote research in this field, especially in the design and implementation stages where the greatest challenges are found, according to recent studies in the area.

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