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The ‘Global Agenda of Action in Support of Sustainable Livestock Sector Development’ (the Agenda) is a multi-stakeholder initiative which focuses on the improvement of resource- efficiency use in the livestock sector and in turn to support livelihoods, long-term food security and economic growth.

The Agenda is built on the notion that demand growth for livestock products will likely continue for decades as incomes and human population continue to grow. Such demand growth will need to be accommodated within the context of a finite and sometimes dwindling natural resource base and will be faced with the need to respond to climate change, both adapting and mitigating.

In response, the Agenda proposes a change of practices through policy and institutional change, research and development, capacity building and accompanying investments that will lead to efficiency gains in natural resource use and reduced emission intensity, while providing social, economic and health benefits.

The Agenda is novel in three ways; (i) its theme is on natural resource use efficiency as an approximate expression of environmental sustainability (ii) it seeks to catalyze a change of practice at the level of decision-makers, through multiple pathways; and (iii) it harnesses the synergies brought about by multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

The Agenda is open to all stakeholders who agree with its objectives, its theme and the types of action, including information sharing, the development of metrics, resource assessments, technology exchange, capacity building, policy analyses and development, and communication and outreach.

Stakeholders have agreed that, initially, the Agenda should focus on three areas:

1. *Closing the efficiency gap:* Application of existing technology and institutional frameworks to generate large resource use efficiency, economic, and social gains
2. *Restoring value to grasslands:* Harnessing grass/rangeland’s potential to contribute to environmental services and sustainable livelihoods
3. *Towards zero discharge:* Reducing nutrient overload and greenhouse gas emissions through cost effective recycling and recovery of nutrients and energy contained in animal manure

The Agenda’s stakeholders have also decided to adopt ‘Do no harm’ principles for the implementation of its activities. In order to be able to operationalize this, the development of *due diligence assessments / guiding principles* for other environmental, social, economic, public health, and animal welfare outcomes – that are not directly addressed by Agenda activities-, is required.

In this respect, the Agenda’s Secretariat is has been preparing a base-document to ensure the application of the ‘Do no harm’ principles in respect of animal welfare in the implementation of its activities.

The Agenda’s Secretariat wants to consult a broad range of stakeholders interested in animal welfare to ensure the applicability of this base-document, before arriving at a draft document that will be submitted for discussion by the Agenda’s Multi-stakeholder platform meeting in Nairobi in January 2013.

The attached draft document is thus proposed to form the basis of a future ‘do-no-harm’ due diligence assessment for Agenda-related activities if it’s stakeholders wish to develop these further. The Agenda’s Secretariat would be grateful for your comments and suggestions on this document, particularly in respect to (i) their global livestock systems/sector relevance; (ii) their pitch (too ambitious; not ambitious enough); and (iii) their future practical application.

**We look forward to receiving your feedback by 10 December 2012**.

*Draft – November 2012*

**The Global Agenda of Action in support of sustainable livestock sector development:**

**Base document for the development of the Agenda’s proposed**

**‘*do-no-harm*’ due diligence assessment in respect of animal welfare.**

**Definition**

Animal welfare concerns the physical and mental well-being of animals. It is affected by their genetic background, their environment, their treatment and the interactions between these. Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing. (OIE, 2009)

**Approach**

A three-level approach is adopted here.

1. As the top level, principles for animal welfare are outlined in the next section. These are an expression of the fact that welfare is not a simple, single variable but is multifaceted and affected by varied influences. The principles below are adapted and expanded from (a) the definition given above, (b) the Five Freedoms (FAWC 2009), recognised worldwide, and (c) the criteria of the Welfare Quality Project (2009), which involved countries from Europe and Latin America.
2. Second, factors relevant to animal welfare are listed as an example of how (i) welfare in animal production systems may be assessed, (ii) ways in which it can be improved may be identified, and (iii) circumstances that would lead to poor welfare may be prevented. These factors include both inputs (such as system design and animal treatment) and outcomes (effects on the animals).
3. Finally, recommendations on many or all of these factors are found in existing standards, codes and legislation, produced by national and international bodies. New recommendations are not made here, but these could form the basis of a future ‘do-no-harm’ due diligence assessment for Global Agenda-related activities if stakeholders wish to develop these further.

1. **Animal welfare principles**

The following principles are central to the responsibilities of owners and those caring for animals.

1. **Nutrition.** Animals should be well nourished, by provision of sufficient, appropriate food and water, to maintain health and vigour and avoid prolonged hunger, malnutrition and thirst.
2. **Environment.** Animals should be kept in an environment that provides the conditions and facilities needed for health, comfort and normal behaviour including movement and rest. This is usually best achieved in conditions that closely resemble the animals’ natural environment, with additional shade and shelter where needed.
3. **Health.** Animals should be selected, bred and managed to maintain health and physical fitness, avoiding pain, injury and disease wherever possible and treating them promptly when they occur.
4. **Behaviour.** Animals should be able to express innate, non-harmful behaviours, including social behaviour, while conditions that cause harmful or abnormal behaviour should be avoided or corrected.
5. **Handling.** Animals should be managed to avoid fear and distress, by appropriate design of facilities, careful treatment during handling and transport (where transport is necessary), and use of humane methods for slaughter.
6. **Animal welfare factors**

Factors relevant to animal welfare are listed as an example of how (i) welfare in animal production systems may be assessed, (ii) ways in which it can be improved may be identified, and (iii) circumstances that would lead to poor welfare may be prevented

**A. Nutrition**

1. Diet appropriate to the type of animal and stage of life, with sufficient quantity, quality (e.g. including fibre) and nutrients, will help to maintain the animal’s health and vigour.
2. Restricting or withholding feed causes hunger, with the impact on welfare increasing with time.
3. If the diet is appropriate, animals will normally eat the amount that is best for their health. Force feeding overrides the physiological system balancing hunger and satiety, jeopardizing animal health.
4. Competition for feed can be avoided by provision of adequate feeding space, or by carefully managing automatic feeders.
5. Changes in the diet, including weaning, are best introduced gradually.
6. Early weaning is stressful, and can cause a weight gain setback.
7. Care should be taken to avoid access to toxic plants or other harmful, edible materials.
8. A sufficient and accessible supply of clean drinking water contributes to maintaining the animal’s health and vigour.

**B. Environment**

1. Access to the outdoors and vegetation, when conditions permit, provides a varied environment, natural stimuli, and freedom to express natural behaviour.
2. Protection from adverse weather and predators is recommended for animals kept outdoors.
3. In housing, floors that are totally slatted, slippery or too rough are likely to cause physical injuries. Provision of bedding for lying areas is recommended.
4. An appropriate lighting pattern is most readily achieved by the use of natural light, with an uninterrupted, dark resting period at night.
5. Extreme temperatures and humidity should be prevented, where possible, and good air quality ensured.
6. Freedom of movement is important, and requires provision of sufficient space for animals to get up, lie down, stretch their limbs, turn round and walk.
7. Facilities appropriate for animals of different types and stages of life contribute to their development, health and vigour; they may include, for example, nests and perches for chickens, loose material and wallows for pigs, and water for swimming for ducks.
8. Facilities and fixtures need proper maintenance to prevent injury.
9. Cages, crates, narrow stalls and feedlots that provide a barren environment restrict the ability of animals to show normal behaviour including exercise.
10. Farm animals are all members of social species, and with the exception of brief confinement for veterinary inspection and treatment, housing in social groups is usually best.

**C. Health**

1. Breeding animals solely for growth or prolificacy has caused health and other welfare problems, and a balanced breeding programme will include robustness, absence of health problems, and other traits advantageous to welfare such as longevity.
2. Antibiotics are appropriately used to treat diseases, but use of antibiotics, growth hormone, genetic engineering or cloning to increase production is likely to cause or mask welfare problems.
3. Housing and management of animals are best designed to avoid pain, injury and disease wherever possible.
4. Regular inspections (for example daily) are necessary to identify any sick, injured, thin or obese animals, allowing them to be treated appropriately and the causes addressed.
5. Euthanasia on the farm is sometimes necessary, so an appropriate method should be available, and trained personnel available to use it.
6. It is possible to avoid the need for most mutilations with good husbandry. When mutilations are judged necessary (e.g. castration), anaesthesia and pain relief should be used if possible. If marking is necessary, non-invasive methods (such as collars) may be an option.
7. A positive approach to planning of health care is useful. If possible, the farm should have regular contact with a veterinary surgeon and a health plan should be documented. When there are health and welfare assessments, results should be recorded, and contingency plans should be in place for emergencies.

**D. Behaviour**

1. Animals will be able to express normal behaviour if they have sufficient space, proper facilities and company of their own kind, so they are best kept in small, stable groups at low stocking density in a varied environment.
2. Where possible, animals should be provided with an environment in which they can express species-specific natural behaviours such as foraging (poultry and pigs) and grazing (ruminants).
3. Interactions between mother and young are important in all farm animals, so where this is practical, and particularly in mammals, young should be kept with the mother until they are largely independent.
4. When animals are kept in an artificial environment, environmental enrichment can be used to stimulate varied, non-harmful behaviour and to prevent abnormal behaviour.
5. Abnormal behaviour may indicate poor welfare and may injure the animal performing it (e.g. repetitive, stereotypic locomotion) or other animals (e.g. aggression, cannibalism).

**E. Handling**

1. Management can be planned to avoid fear and distress from birth to death.
2. Caretakers can be trained in animal welfare and in the management of animals to promote good human-animal relationships. Having a sufficient number of caretakers is important to ensure good animal care.
3. Handling facilities such as races, gates, fences and crushes can be designed and managed to minimise stress, whether used regularly (e.g. for milking cows) or occasionally. Electro-immobilisation is a stressful and painful procedure and should, if possible, not be used.
4. Animals can be moved by low-stress methods, using implements such as flags and rattles rather than sticks or electric goads. Dogs should preferably not be used to move animals. If used, they should be properly trained and under full control.
5. Methods of controlling animals that are intentionally painful or injurious, such as cutting leg tendons, should be avoided.
6. It is best to plan the whole production system to minimise the number of occasions on which live animals are transported, and to keep any necessary journeys as short as possible.
7. Particular welfare problems are caused by transporting females in late pregnancy or young, sick or injured animals. It is therefore good practice, before a journey, to inspect the animals, to assess whether they are fit, and only to transport those in proper health.
8. Procedures and facilities used for loading, transporting and unloading animals have strong effects on welfare and can be designed to minimise problems, for example by providing gentle-sloping ramps.
9. Animals to be slaughtered for food or killed for other reasons should be treated humanely before and during slaughter, including animals of low economic value.
10. Humane killing can be achieved by killing the animal instantaneously, or by rendering the animal unconscious and insensible to pain, either instantaneously or by a non-aversive method, until death ensues.

**References**

FAO (2009) Capacity Building to Implement Good Animal Welfare Practices. Report of the FAO Expert Meeting, FAO Headquarters (Rome), 30 September – 3 October 2008. Available at: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0483e/i0483e00.pdf>

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