

Questions and Answers

Antonio Rota from IFAD

How do you think national governments and international institutions like IFAD can work together to ensure plans and policy around 'building back better' don't have crucial gaps, such as the omission of working livestock?

For IFAD, country-level policy engagement is about collaborating, directly and indirectly, with partner governments and other country level stakeholders. We do this to influence policy priorities or the design, implementation and assessment of formal policies that shape the opportunities for inclusive and sustainable rural transformation. The country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) and project design documents assess the policy and institutional aspects that affect the outcome of IFAD-supported projects and their impact on the poo. Wherever appropriate, they offer clear and realistic plans for supporting national policy processes. In this context, building and engaging in active partnerships with experienced institutions/organizations, centres of excellence and farmers organizations is a way for IFAD to access knowledge, good practices and data which will inform and guide country-level policy engagement process. This will ensure our determined efforts in avoiding crucial gaps, such as the omission of working livestock and other critical matters, which are instrumental to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

Can you offer any examples where the effectiveness of the ploughs that working animals use have been improved?

I can refer to my direct experience in promoting animal traction in Sahelian countries such as Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso to improve agronomic practices such as ploughing, planting, and weeding from manual to more "mechanical". The immediate effect is the expansion of the area of cultivation and the increase in crop yield. This last element is also due to the increased availability of manure (in a context of limited access to chemical fertilizers) and its easier incorporation in soil due to animal traction. It is important to note that linked to the introduction of animal traction, there are also opportunities for local artisans to produce adapted equipment for cultivation and their maintenance and/or repair.

You referenced the 'tractor graveyards' you have seen - a good example I think of the linear economy which we have promoted in recent years. In answer to those you spoke of who urges 'modernisation.' Can we promote working equids as a good example of the circular economy we might seek in the future?

The traditional "take-make-dispose" approach of linear economies where raw materials are collected, then transformed into products that are used until they are finally discarded as waste is showing its limits. It is clear, at least for me, that we cannot continue in this way: this especially in the context of the undeniable global climate change and the consequent escalating public concern and economic impact resulting from the increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events. Circular economies offer a difference vision and the 3R approach: "reduce (use of natural resources), reuse and recycle" seems to move in the right direction of an increased eco-effectiveness of production systems. In this context, working animals would have an important role especially for smallholder producers, particularly those located in remote areas and/or with difficult access (e.g. mountain areas).

Ligia Monges Matute from OCTUPAN

What are the key lessons you have learned from your experience in designing and implementing agro-ecological interventions that other organisations should take on board?

¿Cuáles son las lecciones clave que ha aprendido de su experiencia en el diseño e implementación de intervenciones agroecológicas que otras organizaciones deberían tomar en cuenta?

OCTUPAN recognises that the approach to the welfare approach has helped to change the institutional vision, from the agro-ecological practices in the productive units and the contribution of the equines in the strengthening of the livelihoods to the incorporation of this in diagnoses and community plans, which are provided by the organization.

Awareness of the importance of working equines for producer families, their contribution to nutritional food security and their contribution to reducing the workload of women, since they are the ones who use them for many domestic tasks, for example; carrying water and move the children from their house to the school.

An important aspect to learning is that we have to work with different areas inside the organization, not only the people or area that is working in the project with Brooke. All us staff have to participate in the training process - in this way we are building a collective awareness and understanding of the One Welfare approach. It is not only for people with specialties in veterinary medicine, or related careers.

All of this motivates us to make visible the importance of these animals for rural families and to continue learning to treat our animals with more compassion.

Does the use of equine dung enter into the valuation of the agricultural value chain/agro ecology? If so, how?

¿El uso de estiércol equino entra en la valoración de la cadena de valor agrícola / agroecología? ¿y cómo?

It is important to consider not only its contribution with manure. Equines play an important role in the agricultural value chain - they provide manure for the production of compost, they move materials and water to the garden and move the production obtained from the garden to the house and the market. They are part of the diversity species that we found in the production system.

In this way, we realise that the production system must also provide food, water and a safe shelter, to guarantee that their role in the value chain will be safe.

In exercises carried out, it is calculated that their contribution ranges between USD800.00 and 1500.00, to each family per year.

Dr Thanammal Ravichandran from ILRI

May you expand on how the innovation systems were established?

The prerequisites for establishing innovation systems/innovation platforms (IPs) are:

- Preliminary baseline/ situational analysis to identify the issues in any value chain.
- Mapping the stakeholders along the value chain
- Selection of right organisation/institution/stakeholders as members of this IP. Active stakeholder engagement is important to develop a shared understanding on the complexity of the issues and stimulate joint actions required across the levels to address them. Right representation from farmer group is mandatory for addressing issues pertaining to their livelihood.
- External agencies facilitate the formation of the IP, initial dialogues/meetings and follow up of actions.

Have these become self-sustaining networks, or have external agencies continued to play a role in keeping these networks active?

- Initially external agency plays a major role in facilitation of dialogues, joint action plan and follow-up of actions.
- Once the IP members take the ownership of the platform, each stakeholder becomes a facilitator in a pro-rotas basis for organizing meetings, follow up of actions etc.
- One of the stakeholders in the IP take a lead role to facilitate the discussion to arrive at the joint action plan and follow up of actions.

How can we strengthen partnership between research institutions and grassroots organisations?

- Create an IP for addressing working livestock issues in which policy makers and research institutions to be included.
- Complex issues (hard win) can be taken for deeper research with research organization in a collaborative project.
- Both need to complement each other through long term partnership for working livestock- multi-stakeholder approach (IP)

Ilaria Sisto from FAO

Do any international institutions, e.g. FAO, have any plans to tackle the trade in donkey skins?

As far as I know, FAO has no specific plan to tackle this issue. There are NGOs, such as Brooke and The Donkey Sanctuary that are working to address it. More information on FAO's work related to animal production and welfare can be obtained from Daniela Battaglia at Daniela.battaglia@fao.org.

How do you make sure gender-sensitive interventions achieve sustainable lasting change over the long-term, and overcome harmful attitudes towards women in local communities when it comes to their relationship with working livestock?

FAO recognises that persisting inequalities and discriminatory social and cultural norms are at the root of the underperformance of agriculture and livestock development in many countries. The organisation has extensively documented the importance of closing the existing gap between men and women in accessing productive resources, services and employment opportunities (known as the “gender gap”). As part of its work to empower smallholders and family farmers to secure inclusive rural transformation and sustainable agriculture and food systems, FAO supports governments and other national and international partners to develop an enabling environment for addressing the specific constraints and barriers that men and women, especially in rural areas, are facing. Special attention is also given to unleash the potential of women to gain more control over productive resources, advisory agricultural services, rural institutions, decent employment and decision-making processes.

In recent years FAO is giving increased attention to the adoption of gender-transformative approaches that move beyond treating the symptoms of gender inequalities and discrimination, such as the unequal access to resources and benefits, to addressing the underlying causes rooted in discriminatory gender norms and behaviours, and the unequal power relations. FAO works with decision-makers across sectors and simultaneously focuses on the empowerment of women (individually and collectively), engaging also with men as allies for change. The main aim is removing structural, political, economic, cultural and social barriers that increase inequalities and limit women's access and rights to resources and assets, and increase their participation in decision-making at all levels.

FAO's gender work is guided by the Policy on Gender Equality, the goal of which is to achieve equality between women and men in sustainable agriculture and rural development for the elimination of hunger and poverty. The main gender equality objectives of FAO are: 1) Women and men have equal voice and decision-making power in rural institutions and organizations to shape relevant legal frameworks, policies and programmes. 2) Women and men have equal rights, access to and control over natural and productive resources, to contribute to and benefit from sustainable agriculture and rural development. 3) Women and men have equal rights and access to services, markets and decent work and equal control over the resulting income and benefits. 4) Women's work burden is reduced by enhancing their access to technologies, practices and infrastructure and by promoting an equitable distribution of responsibilities, including at household level.

FAO assists countries by fostering appropriate governance and supporting the formulation and implementation of gender-responsive legal and regulatory frameworks; advocating for the integration of gender equality concerns in sectoral policies and programmes; producing the evidence basis for gender-responsive planning; and strengthening the local capacities.

Rouguiatou Ka from Brooke

Your insights into the economic contributions of working equids in Burkina Faso and the need to protect their welfare as a result was fascinating. What role do you think governments can and should play in improving animal welfare?

To preserve the donkey species' welfare, it is necessary to:

Better take donkeys into account in the national epidemiological surveillance system in order to better control threats such as strangles, African horse sickness and equine influenza,

Urge the Ministry of Agriculture to include equids in existing agricultural projects and programmes; and

Improve or apply existing texts: adapt all application texts to the animal health code and enforce this in Burkina Faso.

Are any plans to try and stop the transfer/sale of donkeys into northern Ghana to supply the smoked meat trade, primarily in Kumasi?

Existing legislation needs to be enforced in Ghana and neighbouring countries. We are working to adopt a sub-regional strategy to address existing shortcomings, including cross-border smuggling. To achieve this, we need to adopt a regional approach and work closely with ECOWAS.

Questions to all panellists

How can we incorporate animal welfare into the SDGs? At present it is largely neglected.

Suggestions from our panellists include:

- Conducting further and more comprehensive studies on the economic impact of poor animal welfare on the health and welfare of human, and rural development.
- Continuing to raise awareness of their contribution by profiling their role on a variety of different platforms, using evidence to support our messaging.
- Emphasizing the link between strong rural livelihoods and agricultural development, and animal welfare.
- Working with governments on national and sub-regional legislation on animal welfare with clear indicators.
- Ensuring that the contributions of NGOs in this field are included in national reports, especially on SDG 2 and 6.