



THE LIVESTOCK REVOLUTION: A Pathway from Poverty?

MEDIA RELEASE

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NOT BY BREAD ALONE: RIDING THE NEXT FOOD REVOLUTION

Participants at an international conference in Canberra today heard of a revolution in agriculture that is being largely ignored but is having significant impacts on sustainable development, world trade, the spread of diseases and on the environment.

“The demand for livestock products for human consumption is increasing at an astonishing rate in developing countries, and this will impact farmers and economies everywhere,” said Dr Carlos Seré, Director General of the International Livestock Research Institute, Kenya speaking today at “The Livestock Revolution: A Pathway from Poverty?”

“This Livestock Revolution is making increased livestock production inevitable and arguments against it academic. Unlike the Green Revolution, this revolution is being driven not by new technology but by rising consumer demand in the developing world,” said Dr Seré.

Dr Seré’s alerted the audience to both threats and opportunities for Australia and its poorer neighbours from this Livestock Revolution in his keynote address that followed an opening by The Hon Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs. The full day event included a range of other international and national speakers including The Rt Hon Mike Moore, the former Director General of the World Trade Organisation; Dr Chris Delgado from the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington; Dr Gardner Murray, Australia’s Chief Veterinary Officer, and Dr Martyn Jeggo, Director of the Australian Animal Health Laboratory.

“Governments and farmers in developed and developing countries are ignoring the expected social, economic and environmental impacts of this revolution,” warned Dr Seré.

“Livestock contribute to the livelihoods of 70% of the world’s poor including farmers, traders and labourers. This next food revolution will dramatically expand production and consumption of animal products in the developing world,” he said.

Dr Seré warned of the possibility of the developing world missing out on the positive impacts of the Livestock Revolution.

The ATSE Crawford Fund wishes to thank its sponsors and supporters for this event including: AFFA, AusAID, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, ACIAR, CRC for Innovative Dairy Products, CSIRO Livestock Industries, Dairy Australia, GRDC, IFPRI, ILRI, Meat and Livestock Australia, and University of Sydney Orange

“The “Livestock Revolution” can provide tremendous opportunities to relieve poverty and hunger worldwide and could increase the ability of millions of poor people to move out of a subsistence existence and to join the market economy. But, the competitive advantages of the smallholder farmer may be lost to large-scale commercial producers, should public international research not place these concerns high on the world agenda,” he concluded.

Dr Chris Delgado, Senior Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington, provided previously unreported results from IFPRI’s global food model for livestock, fish, and feeds of the livestock, with valuable insights on development policy, environmental and food safety issues.

Dr Delgado reported that consumption of meat in developing countries increased by a factor of five from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s - almost triple the increase in developed countries. Milk consumption in developing countries rose nearly threefold, or more than double the increase in developed countries.

“The market value of this Livestock Revolution totaled approximately \$155 billion (1990 US\$), more than twice the market value of increased cereals consumption during the Green Revolution,” said Dr Delgado.

“For the most part, these increases in meat and milk consumption are propelled by the demand-side factors of population growth, income growth, and urbanization. The trends fueling growth in animal product consumption are expected to continue well into the next twenty years,” he said.

“IFPRI projects annual aggregate developing country consumption growth from 1997-2020 to be 3.0% for meat and 2.9% for milk. These increases dwarf the corresponding developed country growth rates of 0.8% and 0.6%,” he said.

“The major result of the projections is to underscore the increasingly important role of developing countries in driving world markets for meat, milk, and feed grains. China’s role in particular cannot be ignored. As incomes grow and markets liberalize in China, their consumers and producers will be major forces on the world scene,” he said.

“This growing demand in developing countries will translate into impacts on world markets. Saturation levels of consumption have largely been reached in developed countries. As a consequence, net feed and meat imports into developing countries will rise by 2020. Maize prices only increase modestly to 2020, and meat and milk prices will slightly decline,” he reported.

Speaking of the possible impact of this next food revolution, Dr Delgado reported on possible consequences for:

- ~~///~~ the nutrition of the poor and poverty reduction
- ~~///~~ income growth and participation in rapidly growing markets
- ~~///~~ the trade position of countries in both the North and the South
- ~~///~~ environment and public health
- ~~///~~ related industries such as feed grains.

“What is required is a broad view of the future dynamics of the world food economy,” he advised.

“What is certain is that the Livestock Revolution will continue for the foreseeable future,” he said, echoing Dr Seré’s comments, “and it will greatly affect the world’s environment, public health and the livelihoods of the poor. Getting favourable rather than disastrous outcomes from it in developing countries will require active involvement of all livestock producing

countries in developing new policies and technologies to address the new opportunities and challenges,” he said.

For further information, to receive the range of other media statements from the conference or to arrange interviews contact Cathy Reade at the ATSE Crawford Fund on 0413 575 934. The program, all press releases, bios and abstracts from the event are at www.crawfordfund.org