



**THE CRAWFORD FUND**  
*For a Food Secure World*

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **SIMPLISTIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT SOLUTIONS NO PANACEA FOR POOR LIVESTOCK KEEPERS IN TRANSITION FROM SMALLHOLDERS TO 'SMARTHOLDERS'**

There is no moral equivalence between those who make bad food choices and consume too much animal-source food, and those many hungry people who, with no food choice at all, consume far too little.

This was a message from Dr Jimmy Smith, Director General of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). ILRI is chaired by Australian Prof Lindsay Falvey and its patron is Australian Nobel Prize Laureate Peter Doherty. Dr Smith is in Australia (Canberra and Melbourne) for public addresses and meetings on the critical role of livestock in global food and nutrition security, and to counter some of the simplistic solutions to sustainability and health suggested for the livestock sector.

"The livestock sector is under pressure from those in rich countries and communities who say that to save our planet we must get rid of livestock, or that to save our health, we must stop eating meat. Some of us probably do consume too much meat as well as sugars, fats and highly processed foods and I have no argument with those advocating not over-consuming such foods. I do argue strongly against those who say that those who eat so little meat should eat even less," said Dr Smith, who manages ILRI's effort to improve food security and reduce poverty through research for better and more sustainable use of livestock.

"What will help raise livestock productivity by smallholder farmers and herders in low-income countries, while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental harms, are today's many scientific advances in such fields as livestock genetics, breeding, feeding and nutrition. Many of these come from Australia, which shares much of the sub-humid and semi-arid agro-ecologies of the developing nations of the world."

"The central importance of livestock in the developing world is going to continue because per capita consumption of animal-source foods there is still low. Consumption of meat in Africa, for example, is just 13 kg per person per year, while in Australia, it's closer to 100 or more kg."

"Livestock contribute not only by ensuring that enough food is produced, but also by helping to balance nutrient consumption and to diversify diets. There is also the income, manure and ploughing that animals provide, which contribute directly to crop production and form part of the income, food and nutritional equation for the poor," said Dr Smith, who previously led the World Bank's Global Livestock Portfolio.

"Employment in the livestock sector—through opportunities in producing, processing and selling animals and their products, as well as in the provision of inputs and services that will underpin sectoral transformation—also offers major opportunities for addressing the 'youth bulge' in poor countries. Africa's 19–25-year-olds, for example, are a large percentage of the continent's total population and how they will all find employment is very important for national peace and prosperity."

"Despite the varied and significant role that livestock play in development, the percentage of official development assistance (ODA) that agriculture gets is less than 5%, and the share that livestock gets of that agricultural ODA is again less than 5%. So the livestock sub-sector of agriculture gets a minuscule amount of ODA, despite the fact that the livestock sub-sector makes up 40% of agricultural GDP in developing countries."

"ILRI and our partners in Australia and around the world believe we must do more to help men, women and young people to grasp opportunities to help meet the rising demand for animal-source foods and to encourage the transition of nearly a billion people from being smallholders to 'smartholders,'" he concluded.