

**Proceedings of the Workshop on ‘Implementation of the National Livestock Development Policy (2007) and National Poultry Development Policy (2008) – Impact on Small-holder Livestock Rearers’**

**Dhaka, Bangladesh**

**5th April, 2011**



*Convened by:*

**South Asia Pro Poor Livestock Policy Programme**

*(a joint initiative of the National Dairy Development Board and FAO)*

**BRAC, Bangladesh**

**SOUTH ASIA**  
**Pro Poor Livestock Policy Programme**  
A joint initiative of NDDB and FAO



The South Asia Pro Poor Livestock Policy Programme (SA PPLPP) and BRAC, Bangladesh, jointly convened a workshop on ‘Implementation of the National Livestock Development Policy (2007) and National Poultry Development Policy (2008) – Impact on Small-holder Livestock Rearers’, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 5th April 2011. The workshop was designed with the objective of assessing the implementation of the two policies<sup>1</sup>, and in particular the impact of policy implementation on the livelihoods of small-holder livestock rearers. The identification of issues for modification and / or inclusion in the two policy documents was a key expected outcome of the workshop. Workshop deliberations and recommendations will form the basis for policy dialogue processes towards a more central role for small-holders in livestock development. Policy dialogue will be led by BRAC, in the capacity of SA PPLPP programme partner in Bangladesh, in collaboration with other stakeholders.

Participants at the day-long workshop included representatives from the Department of Livestock Services (including District and *Upazila* Livestock Officers), Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI), staff from Agricultural Universities, NGOs (such as the Bangladesh Association for Social Advancement (BASA) and Helen Keller International), representatives of the World Poultry Science Association – Bangladesh Branch (WPSA-BB), feed mills and the national poultry association, as also media representatives.

The first session of the workshop was chaired by Dr. Khan Shahidul Huque the Director General, Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute.



Mr. Rume Ali, Managing Director, BRAC Enterprises, delivered the welcome address highlighting workshop objectives and expected outcomes, as also major constraints faced by the livestock sector in the country. These included disease out-breaks, particularly avian influenza and the recent outbreak of anthrax, and the extremely low levels of livestock productivity. He stressed on the importance of the workshop in bringing together stakeholders who were instrumental in the policy development process, and jointly assessing implementation of the two policies with the objective of enabling a more inclusive and pro poor policy agenda.

Mr. Ciro Fiorillo, FAO Representative In-charge, in his address, briefed about FAO’s role in the development of the livestock policy. He stressed on the importance of the current workshop in assessing the implementation of the policies, but cautioned against frequent changes in policy documents. He further informed that while policies should provide overall direction, there is need for action plans based on these policies to facilitate implementation. In his view, some of the constraints

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<sup>1</sup> The National Livestock Development Policy was issued by the Government of Bangladesh in 2007, and the National Poultry Development Policy was issued in 2008 (refer Annexure A).

faced by small-holders in expanding livestock production were the lack of feed and fodder and poor quality genetic stock.

The key-note address was delivered by Prof. Dr. A.K. Fazlul Haque Bhuiyan, Department of Animal Breeding and Genetics at the Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh. The presentation commenced with a detailing of the importance of livestock rearing, particularly for the poor. In Bangladesh, rural poverty ranges from 44 percent to 53 percent, with about 20 percent of rural households living in extreme poverty<sup>2</sup>. Livestock rearing is an important component of agriculture, contributing approximately 3 percent to GDP with an annual growth rate of 2.73 percent. Dr. Bhuiyan thereafter articulated the vision and objectives of the two policies, and priority focus areas. Policy formulation followed a collaborative process led by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, and the Department of Livestock Services (DLS), the two agencies responsible for policy implementation. Other stakeholders who played a key role in policy formulation included research organizations, universities, multi-lateral and bilateral agencies (such as FAO and Danida), NGOs such as BRAC, community based organizations, farmers and livestock rearers.



Key issues presented by Prof Bhuiyan in his presentation are detailed below:

- Changes that have resulted from the implementation of the two policies are (i) an increased awareness on the importance of livestock rearing as a poverty reduction strategy; (ii) the import of livestock products, genetic stock, feed, vaccines and medicines now follows clear guidelines; (iii) there exist guidelines for private sector poultry and dairy farms.
- Major programmes that have been initiated include the CARE, Bangladesh and BRAC programme on strengthening the dairy value chain, the BRAC asset transfer programme for the ultra-poor, the pilot research projects on

### Livestock in Bangladesh

- Livestock is a major component of agriculture (crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry)
- Contribute around 2.73% to GDP (Economic Review, 2008-09)
- Growth rate 3.46% in GDP (Economic Review, 2008-09)

#### Ruminant livestock population

Species	Number (million heads)
Cattle	22.87
Goat	20.75
Buffalo	1.21
Sheep	2.68
Poultry	246

#### Supply and need picture

Product	Need	Available
Milk	240 ml/day	43ml/day
Meat	120 g/day	21 g/day

Source – Department of Livestock Services, 2005

- Cattle density is high (12<sup>th</sup> in World, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Asia), but **huge deficit indicates the poor quality**

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/bangladesh>

developing and conserving indigenous poultry, goat, sheep and cattle breeds (collaborative research projects by the Bangladesh Agricultural University, BLRI and NGOs), UNDP/FAO/Grameen's project titled 'Community Livestock and Dairy Development Programme (CLDDP), the BRAC Dairy and Food Project focused on the formation of milk producer cooperatives, a research project on the development of a beef cattle breed, and the formation of a National Dairy Development Council<sup>3</sup>.

- Initiatives by government institutions following the issuance of the two policies include community based projects on buffalo and sheep farming in high potential areas, breed up-gradation through progeny testing programme, the development of a bio-safety protocol, preparation of a National Avian Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan, procurement of 35 incubators for 17 hatcheries, establishment of a regional duck breeding farm and hatchery, a project on the conservation and development of *desi* (local) poultry birds, support services for small-holder dairy and poultry farmers in 22 districts, commencement of a Livestock Disease Prevention and Control Project, as also an Animal Nutrition Development and Technology Transfer Project. Dr. Bhuiyan highlighted that in spite of these interventions, the private sector appears to play a major role in the livestock sector (mainly poultry) in Bangladesh with a large number of initiatives. However, information on these initiatives is not widely available.
- The results of the two policies (which articulate a pro-poor focus) on small-holders is not clear.
- While the policy environment appears conducive to an increased focus on the poor (as detailed in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Plan of Action (2008-2015) of the National Food Policy and the National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction), policy implementation continues to face constraints such as inadequate funds, absence of a dynamic implementing agency, persistence of low productivity and high risks (such as diseases, inadequate feed supply, low and variable prices of inputs and livestock products, and market issues).
- The coverage of veterinary services is insufficient and the sector suffers from the absence of an autonomous institution for quality control of services and medicines. Further, there is a lack of private veterinary diagnostic centres, clinics and hospitals. Preventive vaccines are always in short supply, and the capacity for disease investigation, surveillance, quarantine services and response to disease outbreaks is limited.
- Small-scale livestock rearers have extremely limited opportunities to access credit, and while for agriculture, loans are available at 2% interest rates; similar opportunities are not there for the livestock sector. Production extension services are weak and insufficient, with DLS extension officers appointed at the district level. There are currently no insurance programmes for livestock.
- Constraints faced related to feed and fodder include the absence of a long-term fodder development programme, lack of incentives to facilitate fodder cultivation in *khas*<sup>4</sup> lands and alongside roads/ embankments, as also inter-cropping; and a priority need for an animal feed act to ensure quality.
- With regard to breed conservation and development, Dr. Bhuiyan high-lighted that there is an indiscriminate use of exotic breeds and strains and poorly designed breeding schemes. The sector suffers from the absence of an animal registration, recording and genetic evaluation system, and there is a rapid loss of locally adapted breeds of all species.
- Constraints that limit market access for small-holder livestock rearers include the absence of collective marketing of livestock products and limited access to price information.
- While a policy framework is in place, this is often by-passed, particularly for the import of chicks and eggs. Cross-border trade is not adequately controlled, and official trade is often allocated to inexperienced traders.

In his recommendations to further strengthen the pro-poor focus and extend the reach of existing policies, Prof. Bhuiyan recommended developing strategies and action plans to facilitate implementation of the two policies, specific budgetary allocations, a greater emphasis on small-holder livestock rearers in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, support for the adoption of proven good practices in livestock rearing and extension of the services of the Department of Livestock Services up to the village level. Other recommendations included the need to support the promotion of indigenous breeds, restrict the introduction of cross-bred livestock under small-holder production systems where

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<sup>3</sup> As mentioned by Prof Bhuiyan in his presentation, this is yet to be made functional.

<sup>4</sup> Government owned fallow lands.

resources are limited, mobilizing farmers to form organizations to enable economies of scale in both accessing inputs as also markets, and designing an insurance system for livestock resources targeted at the poor.

Following the key-note presentation, Dr. Khan Shahidul Huque, Director General, Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute, thanked SA PPLPP and BRAC for the initiative taken in organizing a workshop to assess policy implementation, and mentioned that this was the first forum where the results of the two policies were being discussed. In his remarks, he questioned the use of the terminology pro-poor for livestock rearing. In his view, livestock development would automatically lead to rural poverty alleviation. Likewise, he questioned the focus on women's empowerment, since, in his view, livestock development affects both men and women. He mentioned the difficulty in policy implementation since regional variations in the resource base are not addressed in policy documents. Other points mentioned by Dr. Huque, included the declining contribution of goat rearing although certain regions demonstrate immense potential, and a lack of coordination and human resource allocation (as also expertise) for livestock development that limited the potential of the sector. He proposed a bifurcation of the Department of Livestock Services with separate departments for livestock and fisheries.

Following Dr. Huque's comments, questions and feedback were invited from participants.

Participants mentioned the important role of marketing, and how this was often overlooked in livestock development programmes. Prof. Bhuiyan in his response highlighted the role of the private sector, and that livestock development programmes should promote close collaboration between the public and the private sector. The lack of preventive vaccines, shortage of production as also a weak distribution system was mentioned by participants as constraints in livestock development. Private sector response to this priority need has been extremely limited on account of the high initial investment required for vaccine production. The possibility of the government setting up a Public Limited Company for vaccine production was raised.

Participants also questioned the often contradictory interventions by the government, such as focusing on improving domestic milk yield, while at the same time supporting the import of milk powder. While programmes have been initiated on beef cattle fattening, import of cattle from neighbouring countries is permitted. Illegal smuggling of livestock into the country is a reality and this adversely affects livestock development programmes. Other issues raised were the absence of regulations for the use of additives in feed, and the limited focus on promoting the use of poultry litter and cow dung for renewable energy.

Participants also questioned the focus on cross-breeding, particularly for resource poor households who find it difficult to sustain the increased feeding and other input costs. The absence of a strategy and action plan to facilitate implementation of the two policies was also mentioned.

The lack of human resources for livestock development, and the need to restructure the DLS were other issues raised by participants.

**The second session of the workshop** was chaired by Dr Md A Saleque, Consultant (Livestock and Agriculture) at BRAC. The session comprised group work followed by presentations on the five workshop themes detailed below:

1. Veterinary Services, Animal Health and Disease Control (including Bio-security)
2. Access to other inputs such as credit, extension services and insurance.



3. Feed and fodder
4. Breed Conservation and Development
5. Access to Markets

The five groups were required to focus on the following specific aspects under each theme:

1. What changes (if any) have resulted from the implementation of the National Livestock Development Policy (2007) and National Poultry Development Policy (2008)?
2. What has been the impact of these changes on small-holders? Has policy implementation facilitated greater participation/ benefits to small-holders?
3. What are factors that have facilitated policy implementation, and what are factors that have constrained/ hindered policy implementation?
4. What needs to be done to ensure that small-holder livestock rearers benefit from the implementation of these two policy documents?
5. Recommendations to further strengthen the pro-poor focus and reach of the two policies.

Each group nominated a rapporteur who presented the groups observations and recommendations to the plenary.

In the area of **veterinary services**, participants mentioned that while a number of Acts and Government Orders had been issued, there was insufficient manpower to both implement as also monitor policy implementation. Further, to ensure effectiveness of disease surveillance mechanisms, diagnostic facilities needed to be extended to the *Upazila* level. Farmers needed to be trained on different poultry and livestock diseases to enable better understanding and reduced disease incidence. Veterinary services should be available at the village level, and institutional systems should be developed to facilitate this. Better management of waste from slaughter houses, particularly during disease outbreaks was highlighted as a priority need.



Regarding **access to credit, extension services and insurance**, participants shared that the two policies have not brought about any specific changes in the small-holder livestock sector. However mention was made of government schemes for cash compensation of poultry flocks in the case of avian influenza outbreaks. A minimum of 100 birds per household is required to avail of this compensation. The group felt that the same norms for loans as applicable to agriculture should be followed for livestock as well. Linked with this is the need to introduce loan schemes that do not require mortgage. It was felt that these interventions would benefit the poor, for whom livestock rearing was a key livelihood activity. The possibility of Self Help Group (SHG) based loan schemes was also presented. Other priority needs were the development of insurance products for the livestock sector. A related issue was that improved disease control systems could motivate the private sector to intervene and develop appropriate insurance products.

The **feed and fodder** group presented that the scarcity of fodder and the high cost of feed are serious constraints in the expansion of the livestock sector. The need to develop low-cost feed formulations and the promotion of fodder cultivation on embankments, *khas* lands and *char*<sup>5</sup> areas were presented as possible options to increase fodder availability. The use of high-yielding varieties of rice, and the resultant reduction in the availability of rice straw as fodder were other constraints mentioned. Some of the recommendations provided by participants towards further strengthening the pro-poor focus

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<sup>5</sup> Riverine, sand and silt land masses.

were provision of adequate subsidies for import of feed ingredients and additives; availability of feed analysis facilities at the district level; strengthening of marketing systems for feed and fodder and introduction of post harvest technologies like silage making and feed preservation. The use of growth promoters particularly for fattening of cattle for meat was raised as a serious concern, and the need for regulation to control this was highlighted.

For **breed improvement**, the group presented that the Bangladesh Agricultural University and the Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute have undertaken research initiatives regarding the conservation of indigenous breeds of cattle and chicken. These projects, particularly those for chicken, are in a nascent stage and are also being supported by the Department of Livestock Services, BRAC and World Vision Bangladesh. The group expressed that though some activities have been initiated under this theme, it is too early to assess their impact on small-holder poultry rearers. It was felt that policy documents required strengthening, particularly for breed development for poultry. The policy mentions introduction of cross-bred and exotic birds to increase production, while at the same time highlighting the need to conserve indigenous poultry breeds. The participants presented that 'conserving while utilizing' would hold the key to successful conservation as it would enable breed conservation programmes to be implemented by communities themselves. Linked with this was the suggestion to form Indigenous Cattle and Chicken Breeders Associations separately to promote breed conservation.



Regarding **market access**, participants mentioned that while the policy documents mentioned a range of interventions, implementation responsibility and how implementation is to be undertaken was not detailed.

The presentations were followed by the final workshop session on presenting recommendations and suggesting the way forward towards strengthening the pro-poor focus of the two policy documents. This

session was chaired by Md. Ashraf Ali, Director General, Department of Livestock Services.

The session commenced with participant feedback and questions on the presentations. Participants raised the need to strengthen livestock marketing channels and infrastructure, improve the availability and supply system of preventive vaccines, restrict and limit the import of milk powder that adversely affected domestic milk production and prices, as also limit the import of cattle, eggs and chicken from neighbouring countries. Participants reiterated that the often contradictory approaches of the government with regard to imports were a serious hindrance to improving livestock production.

Other concerns raised by participants related to the absence of a strategy and implementation framework following the issuance of the two policies. In his concluding remarks, Md. Ashraf Ali, Director General, DLS, complimented the five presentations as also the active feedback from participants. He mentioned that a lot of work had gone into developing the two policy documents, which in his view were among the best policy documents. He requested the workshop organizers to strongly recommend interventions to facilitate credit for livestock development, as also livestock insurance schemes. He stressed that implementation of livestock development programmes was constrained by the acute shortage of staff in the department. Of the 1500 staff positions, over 500 are

currently vacant. He requested that the workshop recommend the continuation of tax exemptions for poultry which are currently expected to be withdrawn in June 2011. He suggested that these remain until 2025 which would facilitate the development of the sector.

**Recommendations and Follow-up Action:**

- A key issue that emerged during the workshop was the absence of significant interventions on the ground to translate the two policies into action. Therefore while a focus on small-holders has been articulated in the two documents, interventions have not been designed to better target and reach out to the poor. A priority need is therefore the development of an action plan to implement each of the articulated thrust areas in the two policy documents. The action plan should be time bound, and detail the responsible agency as also the budget required for various interventions.
- Group presentations and participant feedback in the plenary sessions strongly brought out the need to restructure the Department of Livestock Services, and provide extension and input support up to the village level. These observations were corroborated by both the DG, BLRI as also the DG, DLS who mentioned the lack of staff as a serious constraint. Other challenges facing the livestock sector in Bangladesh are the limited availability of preventive vaccines and the absence of an action plan and strategy to implement the livestock policies. The private sector is reluctant to intervene in the provision of vaccines in spite of demand on account of the high initial investment cost. The establishment of a Public Limited Company manufacturing livestock vaccines, with adequate distribution network up to the village level also emerged as a key recommendation.
- Although there are good policy documents in place, with some action related to guidelines for livestock import, by and large in the livestock sector, it was 'business as usual' with limited ground results of the two policies.
- A follow-up workshop is recommended in the form of a working group that could provide inputs to the DLS on translating the pro-poor focus of the two policy documents into grass-root action.

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<sup>i</sup> Photo Credits: SA PPLPP Coordination and Country Teams, AKFH Bhuiyan