
CHALLENGE PAPER

Women and Livestock: A Global Challenge Dialogue Initiative

Executive Sponsors –

John McDermott, Research Director, International Livestock Research Institute
Patti Kristjanson, Leader, Innovation Works, ILRI

Champions –

Jo Luck (CEO, Heifer International)
Jeffrey Sachs (Director, Earth Institute, Columbia University)
Katherine Sierra (Chair, Consultative Group on International Agriculture)
Government of Denmark

Prepared by –

ILRI Organizing Team: Julius Nyangaga, Ranjitha Puskur, Robin Reid, Delia Grace, Don Peden, Jean Hanson, Hanne Hansen, Patti Kristjanson, Annita Tipilda, Joyce Wanderi, Nancy Johnson, Harriet Mutsaert, Howard Elliott

June 20, 2008

Table of Contents

1. PURPOSE OF THE CHALLENGE PAPER	3
2. THE KEY CHALLENGE BEING ADDRESSED IN THIS CHALLENGE DIALOGUE	3
3. BACKGROUND ISSUES AND EVENTS THAT HAVE LED TO THIS KEY CHALLENGE	4
4. ASSUMPTIONS DRIVING THIS CHALLENGE DIALOGUE	5
5. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AT THE END OF THE DIALOGUE	8
6. CRITICAL ISSUES/QUESTIONS AND POTENTIAL ACTION OPTIONS	9
7. NEXT STEPS.....	10

This initiative is using the Challenge Dialogue System (CDS™) developed by Innovation Expedition Inc. See www.innovationexpedition.com for more information.



Women and Livestock: A Global Challenge Dialogue

1. Purpose of the Challenge Paper

The purpose of this Challenge Paper is to prompt an electronic conversation amongst a diverse range of people and institutions throughout the world around the Key Challenge stated below. To facilitate and structure this conversation, we have adapted the Challenge Dialogue System (CDS™) developed by Innovation Expedition Inc. CDS is an eight step approach culminating in the synthesis and integration of ideas, leading to directed actions. This collaborative process of co-creation is one in which questions and partially formed notions get put on the table for the purpose of sparking collective learning and new thinking.

The electronic dialogue initiated with this **Challenge Paper** will lead to at least one face-to-face workshop late in 2008, possibly followed by regionally-focused workshops.

You will be asked to give your reactions and feedback to particular questions at various points in the **Challenge Paper**. We ask that you use the attached **Feedback Form** to do so. You are invited to email this to Joyce Wanderi, at j.wanderi@cgiar.org **before Aug. 15, 2008**.

Feedback received about this paper will help shape the workshop and subsequent dialogue activities. We regret that, due to practical constraints, not all dialogue participants will be able to participate in the workshop(s). This makes your response to this paper even more important.

This document is by no means perfect or authoritative, nor are we aiming to make it so. This is not an academic paper that we need to 'get right'. Rather, it is presented to prompt reactions and comments; to **serve as a catalyst for initiating an open discussion among colleagues**. We are not looking for a simple "yes" or "no" to these ideas and questions. We are looking for reactions that lead to further discussion, learning and insights, and new ideas for how we can best address this particular challenge.

We look forward to your comments and contributions to the ideas presented here. We aim to bring many sources of knowledge together, so no assumptions or questions are set in stone and answers or conclusions have been drawn. Feel free to respond to any or all of the input requests, and to provide additional information or comments as necessary. Our goal is to co-create plans for joint proposals, activities, outputs with new partners, and undertake any new research in a more integrated way that increases the probability that any new knowledge created will lead to action contributing to sustainable poverty reduction. While some people will be disappointed that the outcomes are not clear at this point, in our experience, our collective knowledge will lead to much better outcomes, some we have not yet thought of.

2. The Key Challenge Being Addressed in this Challenge Dialogue

To engage a group of knowledgeable and influential thinkers and doers around the world to take up the challenge, initially through an open and creative dialogue, of fighting poverty through women and livestock and in so doing co-create new ways to empower women livestock keepers to further develop themselves, their families, their communities and their nations.

3. Background Issues and Events that have led to this Key Challenge

3.1 Research and experience indicates clearly that livestock offer a fundamental way in which poor people in rural areas, particularly women, accumulate assets that allow them to climb out of poverty. Livestock also buffer households from disaster and prevent them from falling into poverty. Studies also show that health problems – both human and animal (linked to loss of livestock assets) are important reasons for households' descents into poverty. Thus an explicit targeting of efforts towards poor female livestock keepers can help increase the number of households that escape and decrease the number that fall into poverty.

3.2 We are aware that many projects and programs around the world are helping poor people, and women in particular, through livestock (see examples below and background paper¹), and feel that there is much to be gained at this point in time from taking a systematic approach to learning more about what is working (or not), where and why.

3.3 In order to identify key researchable issues and opportunities for women livestock keepers in different areas, ILRI needs to be working with a wide and diverse range of individuals and organizations, and has an important role to play as a convenor and catalyst of multi-partner, innovative new approaches.

3.4 Empowering women necessitates the re-ordering of families, communities and societies that also include men. Thus any effective change in women's lives implies that lives of other household members may also change. For example, we see cases where men and boys may take a primary role in trekking animals to distant watering points. It is now well known that animal production will increase if drinking water can be delivered to the homestead so that animals can drink at least once a day rather than every two or three days after a long walk. Combining provision of drinking water at home with zero grazing will increase production. Often, it will also reduce labour costs imposed on boys, enabling them to go to school. If girls are then assigned the job of collecting grass for zero-grazed animals, increased labour costs may force them out of school or decrease their time for doing homework if they are attending school. We recognize the need to address the issue of women's empowerment as part of the re-ordering of gender relations and that progress will depend on doing this in ways that involves win-win outcomes for both men and women.

3.5 We believe that a systems perspective is needed to address poverty processes that are extremely complex and systems-specific (e.g. issues and approaches in intensive dairy systems are very different than mobile pastoral systems). What this means is that the scope of our partnerships need to include individuals from private sector organizations, communities, governments, non-governmental organizations, and a wide range of national and international researchers from different disciplines. If we are to more explicitly work towards empowering female livestock keepers, we need to build even broader and stronger relationships, partnerships and strategies aimed at accomplishing this.

¹ [Tipilda and Kristjanson. 2008. Women and Livestock: A Review of the Literature](#)

3.6 Recent lessons from diverse projects that have had success at 'linking knowledge with action'² (e.g. resulted in pro-poor women policy or institutional changes) suggest that one ingredient for success lies in bringing together diverse stakeholders in 'safe arenas', where jointly agreed upon 'new' rules of engagement reign (e.g. respect for diverse viewpoints, equal footing for indigenous and 'scientific' knowledge, etc.), leading to innovation and co-creation of solutions. This Challenge Dialogue aims at achieving such a 'safe arena' for co-creation of new ideas and approaches aimed at empowering women livestock keepers and improving their livelihoods.

Input request #1 (you may want to address the input requests after reading the next 3 sections):

Please use the **Feedback Form** to provide your thoughts on the Key Challenge and Background Issues and Events:

What questions do you wish to raise about the Key Challenge?

What critical information or perspectives on the Background Issues and Events are confusing to you? Are there other related issues or events that you feel should be added?

4. Assumptions driving this Challenge Dialogue

4.1 Women play important roles as producers of food, managers of natural resources, income earners, and caretakers of household food and nutrition security. Giving women the same access to physical and human resources as men will increase agricultural productivity, just as increases in women's education and improvements in women's status over the past quarter century have contributed to more than half of the reduction in the rate of child malnutrition.

4.2 Women's labor and other contributions to livestock production are seldom valued or even recognized. If we were able to put a number on the value of women's livestock work globally, it would raise awareness of this important contribution and current constraints and opportunities for increasing this value to society.

4.2 Livestock can provide an asset ladder out of poverty; even very poor women can afford small livestock that require few purchased inputs; the sale of livestock products such as milk and eggs provide continuous/steady cash income; and women enter into the market economy via such products.

4.3 Livestock can provide a safety net, helping poor households from falling into poverty – livestock is often the only asset a poor woman can own/control (acting as a bank account) and livestock can be sold to meet emergency and family health needs.

² Kristjanson et al., 2007. Linking International Agricultural Research Knowledge with Action for Sustainable Poverty Alleviation: What Works? Available at: http://www.ilri.org/Link/Files/InnovationWorks/Files/ILRI_Harvard_Innovation_Synthesis_%20Final.pdf

- 4.4 Small ruminants are more environmentally sustainable than large animals; the environmental 'footprint' is much larger for larger ruminants and rich livestock keepers (backyard chickens are not the culprit of degraded environments); poor women are typically custodians of fragile environments; and interventions that are good for women can be good for the environment and vice versa.
- 4.5 In many low income countries, 60-70% of city residents are producing livestock and there is scope to enhance livestock-related benefits for poor urban livestock keepers as well.
- 4.6 Increasing women's capacity for more informed decision making is critical; while women often feed, milk, care for and market livestock and their products, they do not always control the income earned, so men cannot be excluded from efforts aimed at increasing women's social capital and their participation in markets.
- 4.7 For the most part, the private sector is not serving the needs of female livestock keepers as it is perceived to be a low-margin area of business, yet even the resource poor have sophisticated animal health, feed and breeding needs. There may be missed opportunities here and a better understanding of these so-called pro-poor market opportunities is needed.
- 4.8 Resource-poor women are key economic actors (they earn the school fees for children, market small surpluses, grow the food). However, they often lack human rights, are unable to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS, and can be deprived of assets at the death of the spouse. In the course of progression from HIV to full-blown AIDS there is a decapitalization that typically takes place, as follows:
- a. Divert financial resources to medical care (loss of financial assets).
 - b. Withdraw the daughter from school to pay for medicine and have someone as care-giver (loss of human capital for the future; ensuring future poverty; decline in equal rights of women).
 - c. Sell large animals for treatment (loss of economic assets).
 - d. Sell small ruminants (loss of economic assets).
 - e. Sell poultry (almost total depletion of assets).
 - f. Switch to low labor intensity crops (poor nutrition, loss of human capital, maybe environmental impact is loss of environmental capital)
 - g. Farm the children out to relatives and community members (breakdown of family)
 - h. If the community has endemic HIV/AIDS, other families may not have the ability to help (breakdown of social capital)
 - i. The village disappears and survivors migrate (loss of social capital).
- 4.9 There are numerous examples from around the world of livestock-related technologies, policies, strategies and approaches that are helping poor women (see background paper cited above). We can learn from them, and need to find creative ways in which to engage community members in this dialogue. Examples include:
- Micro-credit for women poultry producers in Bangladesh
 - Dairy goat groups in Tanzania and Kenya

- 'One health' approach, e.g. joint delivery of human and animal health services in pastoral areas in Chad
- Women's dairy cooperative societies in India and training of female extension workers
- Heifer International's 'passing on the gift' of livestock approach in 53 countries
- Community animal health workers in Tanzania
- Female camel milk collectors in Somalia
- Women's fodder tree groups in East Africa highlands
- Pastoral women livestock marketing groups in northern Kenya

4.10 These types of approaches need to be scaled out more broadly to reach more female livestock keepers, and other opportunities sought. This will require policy and institutional change and joint action. Some kind of a consortia or network is needed to help raise the profile of livestock-related opportunities for women and identify and implement innovative approaches and pro-poor actions.

4.11 Cultural norms often exclude women from the proceeds of larger livestock production, while smaller livestock is an area that men mainly enter when proceeds/income get substantial, e.g. when women succeed in developing a good stock of poultry, their husbands get interested in taking over. However, cultural practices are constantly changing, so working on changes that prevent women from engaging equally in livestock management and trade may have potentially high payoffs in terms of poverty reduction.

4.12 In general, men are not interested in village poultry production (though some societies in West Africa and Vietnam, for example, differ from this picture) and there are fewer culturally exclusive norms around chickens (and in fact, some cultures exclude men from poultry production), again pointing to underexploited livelihood opportunities for women that are often constrained by lack of access to information, inputs and markets.

Input Request #2: Please use the **Feedback Form** to provide your feedback to the assumptions by noting:

- Assumptions which require more clarification for you to understand
- Assumptions with which you strongly disagree
- Additional assumptions you would like to see added

5. Expected Outcomes at the end of the Challenge Dialogue

The Organizing Team guiding this dialogue suggests the following *possible outcomes* from this Challenge Dialogue for consideration:

5.1 A new platform for targeted pro-poor women and livestock R&D activities, including a shared Vision and Roadmap for a Women and Livestock Global Consortia — A roadmap/plan that has broad based buy-in of the Challenge Dialogue participants and lays out a vision and plan of how, together, we can help make a difference for female livestock keepers and their families and communities. This consortia will help raise the profile of livestock-related opportunities for women and identify and implement innovative approaches and pro-poor actions.

With this outcome, it will be important to understand:

- *how* this new consortia will operate and be resourced;
- *where and in what livestock systems* we will initially focus our activities;
- *who* will be participating and what roles the various participants will play;
- *what* criteria and standards will be used to evaluate the success of the consortia;
- *when* identified priority activities will be implemented.

5.2 Increased Awareness of the Importance of Women’s Contribution to Development through Livestock leading to greater pro-poor women-focused investments — This could be accomplished through:

- A high profile international conference building on this Challenge Dialogue process tied in with a communications campaign
- A plan for a comprehensive assessment of the value of women’s contribution to economic development through livestock-related activities (who will lead such an effort; funding strategy, etc.)
- Communication efforts that build upon the compilation of existing knowledge from the group of participants.

5.3 Building on 5.1, Development of Possible Future (What-If) Scenarios that can be used to develop a future vision and strategies to achieve the vision.

5.4 Documentation and Outreach Regarding Immediate Research, Development and Extension priorities

Input Request #3: Please use the **Feedback Form** to provide your feedback on expected outcomes - What expectations do you have for this Challenge Dialogue (as in: "I would consider this Dialogue a success if...")? What reactions, questions or suggestions do you have with regard to Expected Outcomes? What additional outcomes would you like to see added?

6. Critical Issues/Questions and Potential Action Options

- 6.1. Are there enough technologies, strategies, techniques, etc. 'on the shelf' for boosting productivity and marketing of livestock and livestock products by women? What is the potential for increasing food security, improving nutrition, increasing incomes and lowering vulnerability through these instruments?
- 6.2. Is there value in also increasing women's access to livestock assets (i.e. numbers?), or improving their management and marketing skills to boost productivity, sales and incomes, or both?
- 6.3. Often, when women's groups are perceived as being highly successful, they become politicized or hijacked by powerful males. What strategies, policies and institutional changes are needed to overcome this unfortunate behaviour?
- 6.4. How do we go about raising the profile of women and livestock and engaging more people to work on gender and livestock from across the globe – e.g. on a project basis, through mentoring, via visiting scientists, post-docs, virtual networks, other approaches?
- 6.5. What would be the top 3 quick successes this initiative might focus its initial efforts on? What criteria might be used to identify and measure 'success'?
- 6.6. Can bringing together people with knowledge and practical experience that are having a positive impact on sustainable development outcomes through livestock-related interventions lead to: 1) better targeting of interventions; 2) increased investment; and/or 3) improved policies?
- 6.7. Possible areas of engagement/potential activities for this consortia that have been suggested include:
 - High profile paper highlighting issues/opportunities/successes
 - Sourcing funding and developing a global prize for the best women-livestock initiative
 - Joint development of concept notes for action research
 - Your suggestions...?

Input Request #4

Please use the **Feedback Form** to provide your reactions to some or all of these critical issues/questions and your ideas regarding things we could together more effectively than we can do as individuals/organizations (**potential Action Options**).

7. Next Steps

1. The above material establishes a starting point for our Dialogue. Consider all of this information as a work-in-progress. Your reactions to this information are very important. Participants are requested to use the separate Feedback Form to note their reactions to some or all of the input requests in this Challenge Paper. You are welcome to share it with colleagues and partners. Please send your feedback form with your last name on it directly to: Joyce Wanderi at: j.wanderi@cgiar.org by August 15, 2008
2. The Organizing Team will send out a compilation of responses 'as-is' (un-attributed) in late August. Next, we will synthesize the input from participants and use it as a basis for producing Progress Report #1, which will be distributed by late September, **2008**. It will inform the design of an efficient, action planning workshop that we are hoping to tie in with a high profile event to raise awareness.
3. This will be followed by a workshop(s) in late 2008 or early 2009 aimed at developing an **Action Plan aimed at moving ahead with the recommendations of this Challenge Dialogue.**

Many thanks for your anticipated contribution!