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The role of livestock for ACP countries: Challenges and opportunities ahead

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Livestock in the Caribbean
Role in national economies, rural livelihoods and policies to stimulate growth and trade

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Executive Summary

Key features of Caribbean Region:

- Mostly SIDS (Belize, Guyana, and Suriname except) with total land mass of 460,000 km² and population of approximately 16 M
- Prone to natural disasters, and economies seriously threatened by climate change

Agriculture and role of livestock in economies

- Agriculture still very significant in economic growth and rural livelihoods. Regionally accounts for about 10% of GDP
- Livestock account for 11-20% of agricultural GDP in countries where it is highlighted

Livestock in livelihoods and food and nutrition security

- Approximately 60% of CARICOM nationals live in the rural areas and more than 20% of these households derive part of the livelihoods from livestock production.
- More than 20% of dietary energy and more than 50% of dietary protein are derived from livestock. However, Region is able to meet only 45% of the demand for livestock products.

Demand, production/supply and deficit

- Remaining 55% derived from extra-regional sources. Mitigating factors for failure to capitalise on opportunities to increase regional supply are very well articulated in the binding constraints of the Jagdeo Initiatives.

Binding constraints include:

- (a) SPS deficiencies, (b) inadequate financial resources for sustained R&D and investments, (c) insufficient trained human resources and (d) inadequate marketing and transportation capacities to stimulate regional trade

Policies to offset constraints, promote growth and facilitate intra-regional trade

- Recognition by regional political directorates and allied agencies of the need to focus on agreed list of commodities, including poultry, pigs, rabbits and small ruminants in order to assure minimal regional food supply for food and nutrition security
- Development of tangible mechanisms at the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) of CARICOM including, (a) development of Common Agricultural Policy, (b) promoting inter-sectoral linkages for sustainable development (c) development of regulatory processes to enshrine SPS in the regional trade, (d) serious consideration for initiating regional transport to move agricultural produce and (e) pursuance of agricultural insurance and risk management

CARDI's contribution to the process

- Regional mandate for technology generation and transfer as lead agency for R&D
- As member of COTED contribute to development of above-mentioned policies
- Development of regional Agricultural Research and Development Strategy
- Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2008-2010 cued to regional need to increase food supply
- Articulated Commodity Value Chain and Research and Application Chain as means to implement MTP