

Consortium Management Response to the External Review of CRP Livestock and Fish

The Consortium appreciates the CGIAR-IEA (2016) Evaluation of CGIAR Research Program on Livestock and Fish (L&F) and concurs with the major recommendations of the panel (as they appear in the Executive Summary and Chapter 8 of Volume 1 of the report). The evaluation essentially covers phase I of the CRP (since January 2012) and part of the extension phase in 2015 (since field visits and analysis continued by the panel from April to September 2015).

All recommendations are specific to the CRP and the Lead Center; the Consortium agrees with these recommendations.

The Recommendations of the Evaluation

Recommendation 1: Capitalize on the benefits of being a CRP

Consortium response: Agreed. This is a call for the CRP to act more as an entity, including in its presentations to donors and international forum debates on livestock, poverty and development, rather than representation being made by the individual Centers (ILRI, CIAT, ICARDA and WorldFish). This is a recommendation of importance to this CRP in its continuation and more generally to emerging CRPs in phase II.

Recommendation 2: Increase synergies between livestock and aquaculture

Consortium response: Agreed. The evaluation reports that this did not happen adequately in phase I with livestock and fish components being conducted essentially separately. However, the CO has encouraged interactions between the two fields where it makes sense to do so e.g. assistance to the start up of molecular genetic approaches to aquaculture breed improvement, in aspects of feeds research, in value chain research for animal source foods, food safety and nutrition. Even if Livestock and Fish CRPs are pursued separately in phase II (2017 on) it will be important to create synergies in these sorts of domains. Whilst ecosystem research will obviously be largely different, both CRPs, and Fish CRP in particular with relatively sparse CGIAR linkages otherwise, should take advantage of such inter-program collaboration. It is needed by both CRPs to create critical mass in value chain syntheses and learnings (also a finding of the evaluation).

Recommendation 3: Streamline the portfolio

Consortium response: Agreed. This principally refers to the number of value chains being addressed by the program. Even if this is livestock- or aquaculture-specific in the future, a focusing of the research is required, linked to an objective assessment of available budget, so that each value chain will be supported by an adequate complement of production-related

and social scientists (gender, markets/livelihoods, institutions, food systems) to produce a critical mass and to follow the most important aspects for research. Similarly, the program as a whole should maintain a sufficient capacity for synthesis and cross-chain learning. The evaluation does not make specific recommendations on how streamlining should be exercised and so this should remain a key objective for the CRP(s) in phase II.

The initial value chain research emphasis of the program has been on productivity. However, the evaluation also identifies that the Livestock & Fish CRP can contribute to the IDOs of improved nutrition and the alleviation of poverty. Very little (apart from the work on mola fish, which is a rather specific example; risk in the Vietnam pig value chain) is said in the report on how nutritional improvements will come about and the relationship with A4NH is not elaborated in detail. The Consortium wishes to see how the contribution of animal source foods to targets for improved nutrition will be met in phase II in a concerted fashion across the CGIAR portfolio. This, and the expected goals for poverty alleviation through livestock (writ large) must be part of the new program planning and narrative for phase II proposals.

Recommendation 4: A higher profile for environment and natural resources management (NRM).

Consortium response: Agreed, subject to a better elaboration of the environmental agenda to be undertaken in phase II. The ISPC has urged the formulation of a more comprehensive treatment of livestock and the environmental issues associated with livestock value chains. The evaluation recommends raising the environmental agenda for livestock to the level of a flagship. There could clearly be several entry points to this research, including through the research and management of livestock GHG emissions in key value chains; in relation to the development of feeds and forages; and as part of the resilience agenda in more fragile livestock systems. The phase II programs need to identify the entry points and provide a convincing pathway to the targeted deliverables and beneficiaries to be reached in the next six years of the program(s).

Recommendation 5: Establish a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system based on the [program's] Theory of Change (TOC)

Consortium response: Agreed as a priority. The evaluation notes that it could not conduct the sort of assessment that it anticipated since the M&E system, the necessary performance figures and, in general terms, the extent of impacts, were not available. The evaluation provides several extenuating circumstances regarding the development of program management tools, IDO targets and changes in the theories of change. However, this remains as a key criticism of CRP management. Donors will not invest in livestock research if the progress and outcomes cannot be measured against a feasible framework. The Livestock program has agreed to the addition of a key M&E position as it develops phase II. This is equally important to the Fish CRP. In the interim, the Consortium will place increased emphasis in annual reporting against the program of work and budget of the L&F CRP.

Recommendation 6: Build private sector partnerships for technology delivery

Consortium response: Agreed. The CO reads this recommendation in conjunction with recommendation 3, to create critical mass around a smaller number of value chain targets, and the evaluation's urging to create a theory of change for addressing higher CGIAR targets, including the practical means to increase the impact of livestock (L&F) research to date.

Recommendation 7: Maintain the governance but with some adjustments

Consortium response: Agreed in principle for the remaining year of operation of L&F (however, it will be necessary to reconsider the governance arrangements for Livestock and Fish CRPs separately in phase II). The evaluation's framing of this issue focusses on the role of the Science Advisory panel, or SPAC, and its relations with the lead Center Director General and Board, but also recommends a much more strategic style of CRP management, rather than simple coordination. As "coordination" tends to lead to the status quo of separate Center contributions, the Consortium expects that new governance arrangements will drive the/each CRP forward in alignment with recommendation 1 and not simply as a collection of Center projects.

This is a matter of importance for follow up by the System Office in the future.

Recommendation 8: Modernize the financial management system

Consortium response: Agreed. The One Corporate System should be reviewed and its utility assessed against other possible alternatives. Real time program management is required for the Livestock & Fish CRP and its possible derivatives, to be managed adequately against program goals (recommendations 1, 3 and 5).

This recommendation (both on the improvement of the One Corporate System and in moving to improved real time program management and reporting) aligns with the concerns of the Internal Audit Unit for CRPs at large and should be a priority for follow up by the System Office/System Council.

Recommendation 9: Maintain the value chain approach but manage it more efficiently

Consortium response: Agreed (in line with comments to recommendation 3). The new CRPs developed for phase II also need to show (both through the ToC and through program design) both how IPGs are created and how smallholder/poor beneficiaries will profit from CRP research. This should be aligned with the evaluation's discussion of the realism of the program's slogan that benefits will be realized "by and for the poor". Maintaining adequate synthetic capacity for program learning *and* a focus on outcomes and impacts will be required.

Recommendation 10: Generate more high-quality published outputs

Consortium response: Agreed. This was also the finding of the Elsevier report on CGIAR publications. The L&F CRP did produce some high quality publications in phase I, particularly, for instance, papers relating to livestock and climate and environmental effects of

aquaculture. The evaluation believes it could and should produce more, including refereed publications on the specific and synthesized results of value chain research. Publications are one measure of science quality, and the evaluation generally found that the quality of the program's lead scientists was high. However, the evidence of livestock research impacts beyond papers was low. There was some success in setting up institutional mechanisms for the future. There is still a bridge to cross for both Livestock and Fish CRPs in translating the program of work not only into IPG outputs but also outcomes which will satisfy the results-based management imperative of the CRPs in phase II.

Consortium's Overall Response

The evaluation should be considered as the review of a programmatic experiment to more closely integrate the workings of two areas important to the CGIAR portfolio (research on livestock and fish) around value chains for animal source foods. The premise of the program is supported although much of the first three years of the program has been spent in setting up the value chains and partnerships and there are relatively few concrete outcomes. The bulk of published program outputs result from legacy research of the contributing Centers. The recommendations of the evaluation, although provided as brief statements, rest on substantial analysis and synthesis by the panel and are introduced adequately and contextualized in the text of the report. The bulk of the findings of the evaluation are appropriate and each needs to be addressed in the future, notwithstanding the submission of separate Livestock and Fish CRP pre-proposals in August 2015.

The CRP Management response fully accepts all of the Evaluation's recommendations and provides adequate actions in response. It however notes that, in the expectation that Livestock and Fish will be separate CRPs in phase II, some of the follow up actions will depend upon the new formulation of activities and management in the respective CRPs in 2017. Nevertheless, ILRI as continuing lead Center for the Livestock CRP in phase II undertakes to implement the response to the applicable recommendations in the new Livestock CRP.

The Consortium thanks the evaluation panel Chair and her team for producing a well-argued and readable report of utility to both the L&F CRP and its staff and stakeholders, together with clear guidance for the development of phase II programs.