

# livestock Xchange

International Livestock Research Institute

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ILRI

## Global research with regional relevance – how ILRI works in different parts of the world

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As a global research institute, ILRI focuses its research on challenges of global importance. At the same time, it serves the needs of its stakeholders and poor livestock keepers in different regions of the world. It has to find a balance between international – global – public goods and the delivery of local or regional goods.

The different regions that ILRI works in (East, West, and Southern Africa, and South and Southeast Asia, and China) have differing priorities, partnership arrangements and ways of working. To support the implementation of ILRI research ‘on the ground’, ILRI has a network of regional representatives and offices who work closely with regional partners and across ILRI, facilitating and supporting a relevant and coherent set of activities.

Some overall issues for ILRI research in regions are:

- Consultation with enabling and implementing partners is critical. ILRI needs a presence and ways of working in each region to ensure that jointly-agreed outcomes are achieved. Approaches and partnership arrangements should fit the different



*ILRI offices worldwide*

development needs and research processes as well as ways of working in different regions. The mix of technical, institutional and policy research differ across regions and sub-regions. Given the dynamics in different regions, we need to constantly engage in regional processes with partners so we learn and adapt.



- Not all ILRI global livestock challenges have the same priority in each region and opportunities for research to contribute to development impacts vary according to local situations. Differences in development strategies (for example the role of the private sector), institutional and human capacities and other critical issues need to be reflected in the ways that ILRI works in different regions.
- Our regional activities and how they are implemented need to take advantage of cross-regional learning opportunities.

## Southern Africa

### *Regional priorities and focus*

ILRI opened its regional office for Southern Africa in Maputo, Mozambique in 2006. ILRI's strategy since then has mainly focused on two entry points:

**Improving market opportunities** - encompassing the understanding of what makes smallholders competitive, institutional analysis and food safety standards while issues of input supply chains particularly animal breeding strategies, animal health and feeding are integrated through this entry point. The focus has mainly been with cattle and goat value chains in the arid and semi-arid areas of the region.

**Reducing vulnerability and enhancing sustainability** - ILRI is partnering with research and development partners to identify cost effective risk management options that help poor livestock households cope with the shocks and enhance their resilience. Consultations to date indicate that the priority research and development issues for the region include the following: a) Decrease vulnerability and enhance resilience of people, communities and systems, especially in the marginal areas; b) Develop and promote market oriented smallholder livestock development; c) Improve animal health through capacity strengthening for improved service delivery; and d) Consolidate, maintain and promote the use of livestock information systems at different levels (e.g. local, national and regional).

### *Regional institutional landscape and capacity*

Some of ILRI's key partners include the SADC Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate which coordinates activities in food security, environment and natural resources management in the SADC region and the Center for the Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development SADC (CCARDESA). Other key partners include the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African Union/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), CGIAR centers and International development agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

The South African agricultural research system is viewed by ILRI as a key strategic partner in the development and contribution to the regional agenda. The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) provides a platform for partnership development, sharing and dissemination of research results on a case by case basis during the annual regional policy dialogues.

Since ILRI staff in the region are a very small team, ILRI works with a group of 'Champions' who participate in developing proposals in the different fields and where possible lead these initiatives. The success of the champions greatly depends on the people themselves, a good balance of expertise, and the supporting environment in their organisations.

## West Africa

### *Regional priority and focus*

In addition to the Nigeria 'hub' at IITA, ILRI opened a regional office in Mali in 2008, within the premises of its sister institution ICRISAT. ILRI's strategy in West Africa is aligned with ILRI's global livestock development challenges. Over the last 10 years research focused on: (1) **intensification of crop-livestock systems** with a focus on food-feed crops, analysis of trade-offs in use of biomass for animal feed and for soil health (SLP-led projects); (2) **Market opportunities** - determination of economic incentives and policy framework for improved livestock marketing and intra-regional trade in West Africa. (3) **(Re)-emerging diseases and animal health** - Improving the management of trypanocide resistance in the cotton zone of West Africa; Early Detection Reporting and Surveillance for Avian Influenza in Africa; (4) **Sustainable management of AnGR** with PROGEBE that provides a platform for research on productivity, markets, NRM and policy; and (5) **Climate change** with emphasis on both targeting (identifying hotspots) and adaptation.

### *Regional institutional landscape and capacity*

One major advance in building strong partnership in West Africa has been ILRI's engagement with CORAF. ILRI is contributing in the four regional projects on sustainable intensification of crop-livestock systems in West and Central Africa funded by AusAID. This strengthens ILRI's direct involvement with several NARS partners in the sub-region with ILRI playing a strategic role in supporting partners on research methods. This has also created opportunities for ILRI to collaborate with a large livestock based NGO (APESS) that will enable research outputs to be structured in appropriate ways that result in outcomes.

ILRI has engaged with FARA at a more strategic level in identifying pilot sites for the Sub Saharan Africa Challenge Programme and developing the concept of research-development domains. Following our work on Avian Influenza, new opportunities to work with USAID have emerged recently within the framework of its 'Feed the Future' program focusing on the sustainable intensification of crop-livestock systems in West Africa. In the future, greater engagement with ECOWAS could create opportunities for ILRI to contribute to livestock policy at regional and national levels.

## Asia

### *Regional priority and focus*

ILRI's Regional Office for Asia was opened in New Delhi in 2003. A key challenge is the size and the heterogeneity of the region in terms of diversity of livestock systems and differences in institutional landscapes in the region. It contains some very strong national research systems such as in India and China as well as many smaller and poorer countries lacking in research capacity.



Of the major global livestock challenges identified by ILRI, five have particular relevance to Asia:

- Intensify crop-livestock systems in a sustainable manner
- Enhance livestock based adaptations to climate change
- Control emerging zoonotic diseases
- Improve food safety and access to livestock markets
- Conservation of tropical livestock breeds and genetic resources

### *Regional institutional landscape and capacity*

An important feature of the livestock research and development landscape in Asia is its heterogeneity. Countries such as India and China have large agricultural research systems with well trained researchers and access to state-of-the-art research facilities. Some smaller and poorer countries in the region have very weak national systems.



Laos for example has no veterinary school and until recently had only about 20 qualified vets in the country.

This huge range in research capacity coupled with the differences in institutional arrangements for research and development and different political systems for decision making, results in very different demands for international research collaboration from a centre like ILRI. A notable feature of most research is the lack of interdisciplinary and in many cases a lack of linkages between research institutions and development.

Regional agricultural research associations are not as well developed as in Africa. The Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes (of which ILRI is an Associate Member) is a network of NARS with representation from farmers associations, civil society and international research institutes with a number of small initiatives such as information sharing and biotechnology. Its main activity is to arrange regional meetings on selected topics. Of the two main geopolitical organizations in the region, ASEAN is the stronger, while SAARC has very limited capacity, making regional cooperation more difficult.

## Future opportunities and challenges

To be effective and credible in different regions, ILRI needs to continue to build up a critical mass of researchers in different places. While support and backstopping from staff in Nairobi and Addis Ababa is crucial, ILRI's research can only be implemented effectively with staff based locally. As ILRI grows, a balance needs to be de-

veloped between maintaining critical masses of researchers in different regions.

The research for development agenda is increasingly driven by the needs of the development community and funding for such programmes is often available at regional or even country level. To ensure that ILRI can and contribute to the development agenda we will need to strengthen our engagement with such regional and country-level programmes.

While ILRI's activities in different regions offer great opportunity to compare and learn lessons across regions (e.g. comparing the development of goat value chains in India and Mozambique), the CGIAR reforms and the CRPs offer new opportunities. For example the CRP on 'More Meat Milk and Fish by and for the Poor' is designed to allow comparison and cross learning from research on different value chains across regions. CRP1.1 'Dryland Systems: Integrated Agricultural Production Systems for the Poor and Vulnerable in Dry Areas' has study sites in different regions that will allow cross-region comparisons and learning. However the challenge will be for the effective and efficient management of information across research teams and across research partners in different parts of the world.

Finally, there will be a greater demand for better targeting communication efforts and knowledge management based on an understanding of the needs of the different clients and partners in the different regions. Strategic communication and knowledge management will be a critical competency for improving the agenda setting and synthesis and integration of knowledge that ILRI aspires to in the future.

*On 9 and 10 November 2011, the ILRI Board of Trustees hosted a 2-day 'liveSTOCK Exchange' to discuss and reflect on livestock research for development.*

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