



Livestock Brief

IGAD Livestock Policy Initiative
A Living from Livestock

IGAD LPI Brief 3

Making International Food Safety Rules Serve the Interests of the Poor Developing Country Livestock Producer

Three trends converged in the 1990s. First, consumers in the developed world became strikingly aware of the vulnerability of their food supplies and the international dimensions of food safety hazards. Second, the development of international economic law (especially concerning trade) accelerated. And finally, researchers became aware of a 'livestock revolution' that might help reduce poverty in the developing world. The realization of this potential, however, may be somewhat dependent on the first two. Many developing country advocates worry that international food safety rules have the potential to present new barriers to developing country food exports. There is especially concern that the system creating international food safety rules is biased against poor developing country producers. An important question, then, is what can be done to ensure that international rule-making processes consider poor developing country livestock producer interests?



It is clear that today the interests of poor developing country producers of livestock food products are not directly represented in international food safety rule-making. Indirectly, their interests may be represented by their own governments but developing country participation in relevant rule-making activity is limited. Additionally, developing country government interests will not necessarily be the same as those of their own poor producers.

Identification of strategic entry points for those wishing to make international rule-making friendlier to poor livestock producers involves understanding: (1) the international institutions and organizations that are the rule-making system; and (2) the activities and interests of states and other key actors.

The International Rule-Making System

In the past, the Codex Alimentarius Commission was the agency responsible for the development of public international food safety rules, although the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) created some rules relevant to livestock food product safety. These rules took the form of voluntary standards & guidelines for state practice and recommendations for protecting human health.

Since 1995 the World Trade Organization (WTO) has linked the international rules created through these international organizations to its own rules regarding trade as defined by the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)



Measures. Especially important are provisions for a SPS Committee and links to the WTO's enforcement mechanism (the Dispute Settlement Mechanism). This enforcement mechanism makes OIE and Codex rules suddenly appear less voluntary and more important.

While the WTO, Codex, and OIE are central to international food safety rule-making, other organizations play important supplementary roles, including: the International Organisation for Standardisation, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization.

The above describes the public international rule-making environment, but increasingly private rules are important. Private organizations such as EurepGap are increasingly setting the standards that private buyers require their suppliers to meet. Those standards are often different from the public standards and represent an additional hurdle a potential exporter must overcome.

Actors and Interests

International food safety rules affect the interests of a wide and diverse range of international actors. States, however, are the primary rule-makers.

Developed countries have a number of advantages over developing countries in international rule-making. Two obvious advantages are the greater resources they can draw on when negotiating new rules and the fact that developed countries played the key roles in creating the current international rule-making system. However, just as important

may be the fact that developed countries are 'repeat players' in the international legal system, due to the greater number of issues that involve them. This allows them to accumulate expertise, form connections with other key players, and focus on long-term strategies. In contrast, developing countries tend to have few interactions with the international legal system; they are usually 'one-shotters'. This often translates into less experience and strategies that focus on short-term gains.

Non-state actors are also important. They typically impact rule-making through direct lobbying of governments and international organizations, and through seeking to influence the scientific community's understanding of the issues. The agri-food industry is a key player in international food safety rule-making. Indeed, much of the science guiding international standard-setting comes from industry scientists. Consumers groups, especially Consumer's International, are the most important public interest groups.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Influencing the development of rules requires an understanding of the international organizational environment and the capacities and interests of relevant actors. Specifically, it is important to consider (a) the unique rule-making dynamics of each organization; (b) the degree to which these organizations are embedded in other international organizations (Codex is embedded in the UN system, for instance); (c) the dynamics that formal and informal linkages between these organizations create; (d) the relevant differences in capacities of states for participation in these organizations; (e) the different situations of repeat players and one-shotters; (f) how coordination among one-shotters can provide some of the advantages of repeat players (for instance, through regional organizations); and (g) the relatively high level of engagement by industries and consumer groups compared to those with pro-poor concerns in lobbying for rules and shaping scientific discourse.

These factors are important determinants of the constraints and opportunities the current international rule-making system has for poor livestock producers and their advocates.

Recommendations for making international rule-making friendlier to poor producers consider two perspectives. From the perspective of poor producers and their advocates the primary routes to influencing international rule-making include: influencing their own country's position in international organizations; lobbying those training country delegates to international organizations to include a focus on the relationship between food safety rules, poverty reduction, and the needs of poor livestock producers; establishing transnational alliances with other poor producers and/or NGOs; and contributing to the scientific understanding of food safety concerns in their unique contexts.

Developing country governments, on the other hand, have more options for representing their own interests in international rule-making. While their participation in international organizations is historically less than that of developed countries there are signs of improvement in recent years. Important activities they can engage in include: greater coordination at the national level among ministries and individuals responsible for developing



policy positions in all international food safety organizations; improving the quality and quantity of delegations to international organizations; forming alliances with other similarly-situated countries on issues of particular concern; and lobbying for technical assistance to comply with international standards and with a goal of complying with private international standards as well. They can also do much more to actively include poor producer interests in their policy-making.

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IGAD

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) assists and complements the efforts of the Member States to achieve, through increased cooperation:

- Food Security and environmental protection
- Promotion and maintenance of peace and security and humanitarian affairs, and,
- Economic cooperation and integration.

Read more on IGAD at: <http://igad.int>

THREE agreed areas of capacity building:

- Capacity to develop policies through broad participation, so that policies reflect the voice of poor men and poor women whose livelihoods depend on livestock;
- Capacity to employ information and analysis in the elaboration of policies, so that policies are evidence based;
- Capacity to understand and respond to the livelihoods needs of the poor and of women, rather than aspects of the livestock sector which may well not benefit poorer groups.

FOUR project outputs:

IGAD LPI is developing these capacities by making sure that the necessary support mechanisms are institutionalised into government planning. In so doing, IGAD LPI delivers the following four outputs:

- Increased awareness among stakeholders of the potential contribution of livestock sector to growth, food security and poverty reduction, by improving the process of PRSP formulation in each IGAD member country in order to ensure that livestock's potential is understood and well articulated into the process and strategically built into PRSPs;
- Policy options and implementation strategies in place for the livestock sector identified, by supporting IGAD member states to formulate and implement a regional policy framework on animal health in the context of trade and vulnerability;
- Systems in place for livestock policy information, analysis, decision-support and monitoring of policy change, by putting in place the capacity for livestock information management in the governments of IGAD member states;
- Established networks of professional and grassroots organisations for effective stakeholder representation in policy-negotiation by institutionalising the participation of civil society and community based organisations in policy dialogue.



IGAD LPI

ONE clear purpose:

The IGAD LPI's purpose is to strengthen the capacity in IGAD, its member states, and other regional organisations and stakeholders, to formulate and implement livestock sector and related policies that sustainably reduce food insecurity and poverty.

This means raising capacities to do things differently, in terms of making the policy making process inclusive of the poor, evidence-based and livelihoods focused.

TWO areas of focus:

To achieve its purpose, IGAD LPI has established multidisciplinary stakeholder fora in all IGAD member states, through which the project supports engagement with two policy areas;

- At the national level, livestock and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)/National Development Plans
- At the regional level, the Regional Policy Framework on Animal Health in the Context of Trade and Vulnerability (RPF).