

Enhancing Livelihoods of Poor Livestock Keepers through Increased Use of Fodder

(IFAD Technical Assistance Grant No. 853)

**Report on Second Co-ordination Meeting
ILRI, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
10-12th November 2008**

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Background

This meeting was the second co-ordination meeting for the IFAD TAG 853 project entitled: Enhancing Livelihoods of Poor Livestock Keepers through Increased Use of Fodder. During the previous meeting in Syria various cross-country activities had been proposed focusing on cross-country trainings as a way of increasing coherence of project activities across the three project countries. During the current meeting participants took the chance to update on progress towards project goals across the project, and to plan for 2009.

In brief, the project is designed to “Work with partners and farmers, to strengthen the capacity of poor livestock keepers to select and adopt fodder options and access market opportunities to enable them to improve their livelihoods and the sustainability of their farming systems”. Project activities are targeted in three countries: Ethiopia, Syria and Vietnam. The project uses an innovation systems framework and links closely with a sister project funded by DFID in India and Nigeria (DFID Fodder Innovations Project; DFID-FIP). The objectives of the current meeting were to:

- Understand progress and lessons from research conducted to date in each location
- Consider variation across the study countries and sites and identify the main issues limiting fodder innovation in different contexts
- Share experiences on ways of assessing feed scarcity and designing interventions that fit into the system. Begin to develop a simple tool to do this.
- Share experiences on how actors have been engaged in the fodder/livestock development process in the three study countries and draw out some lessons on best practice principles for developing multi-stakeholder alliances.
- Find out what DFID-FIP project has been doing and talk about mechanisms for drawing joint lessons.
- Agree next steps and time frame

The Meeting Programme is included as an appendix to this report (See Appendix 1) and the various Powerpoint presentations made over the course of the meeting were distributed to participants on CD at the meeting and are referred to at appropriate points through this report.

Session 1. Welcome, introductions

The meeting began with some welcoming remarks on behalf of ILRI from Dr Shirley Tarawali, Theme Director for ILRI's People, Livestock and Environment Theme. This was followed by an opening address by Dr Seyoum Bediye, Chair of the FAP Ethiopian Advisory Committee and Livestock Director for the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research. Antonio Rota then updated participants on developments relating to the new IFAD Community of Practice for Livestock (see Powerpoint "A Rota CoP Presentation.ppt"). The session closed with a round-table introduction of all workshop participants.

Session 2. Background, context and objectives

The purpose of this session was to agree on the overall aims of the meeting, to provide a brief overview of the project and to introduce the evolving conceptual framework for the project.

An overview of the project objective and conceptual framework was presented:

- Objectives of the meeting and briefing on desired outcomes (*see PowerPoint presentation titled: "FAP overview for Ethiopian Coordination Meeting 10-12 Nov 2008.ppt"*)
- *Overview and Conceptual Framework of the project Alan Duncan (see PowerPoint presentation titled: "Objectives- FAP Ethiopia Coordination Meeting 10-12 Nov 2008.ppt")*

Among topics which came up in discussion were the following:

- Different scales do have different sets of stakeholders with different personal, cultural, and political dimensions, but there is an understanding that overlapping occurs among the different scales.
- The project needs to produce documents on lessons and learning from FIP and FAP projects and produce tools like Institutional mapping for future IFAD projects.

Session 3: Progress and lessons

In this session, each country team presented a summary of activities achieved and planned in each country.

Vietnam (See Powerpoint presentation: "Progress report Vietnam 2008 final.ppt")

In Vietnam, there has been good progress at both pilot learning sites. Effective local project teams and partnerships have been established and have led to productive project activities in 2008. The country update from Vietnam highlighted various activities falling within the four project outputs. These included stakeholder analyses, livestock production and marketing studies, assessment of year-round feed supply, participatory

diagnoses of constraints and opportunities for improved feeding systems, formation of farmer focus groups to evaluate the utility of planted forages, and improved diets for cattle fattening and cow-calf production systems. A close collaboration has been developed between the two pilot learning sites.

Among topics which came up in discussion were the following:

- *The involvement of women in project activities?* Around 30% of FAP beneficiaries are women.
- *Ways of engaging multiple actors in activities?* Communities in Vietnam are well organized and involving actors was relatively easy. Discussions were held with officials at district level and they identified actors at province and commune level. As people in the country are well organized they actively participate in regular update meetings and discussions.

Syria (See Powerpoint presentation: "IFPSMC08-SyrianReportNov10v03.ppt")

In Syria, significant progress was made in project implementation due to establishment of effective multi-stakeholder partnerships at Tal-Amri, El-Bab and Salamei project sites. The country update from Syria highlighted various activities falling within the four project outputs. These included: development of work-plans, baseline data collection, actors associated with the fodder and livestock industries, database on inter-annual variations in prices of main feed resources, a method for assessing year-round feed inventory, contract forage seed production, forage system analysis to fill the early spring feed gap, strengthening capacity of partners for fodder innovation research, and a review of policies and institutions affecting the fodder and livestock industries.

Among topics which came up in discussion were the following:

- *What is the driving force behind high demand for feed in Syria? What is the subsidy system for grain and forage crops?* The increasing demand for sheep meat is driving demand for feed in the country. Barley is one of the strategic crops in the country and the Government of Syria subsidizes strategic crops such as barley. Forage legumes, on the other hand, are not strategic crops and there is therefore no subsidy for forage legumes.
- *Issues surrounding seed distribution to project farmers? What is the state of the seed supply system in Syria?* FAP and the Aga Khan Foundation distributed forage seeds to farmers free of charge as farmers are not willing to pay for the small quantity of seed the project provides. Some farmers requested large amounts of seed. These farmers wanted the seed for commercial purposes and these requests were turned down.
- *The presentation suggested that participating farmers had relatively large land holdings. In what sense can they be described as poor farmers?* Farmers considered as poor in Syria are rich by Sub Saharan African standards. Poverty is relative in different contexts.

Ethiopia (See Powerpoint presentation: “FAP overview for Ethiopia Coordination Meeting 10-12 Nov 200.ppt”)

In Ethiopia, an action research approach has been adopted combining practical fodder introductions in the study sites with development of multi-stakeholder platforms for fodder development. The vision is for future fodder development to be achieved through facilitation on these multi-stakeholder platforms. A range of other activities were highlighted in the presentation including a formal feed resources assessment in Ada’s study site, training of extension agents and farmers in fodder management, establishment of the Ethiopian Fodder Roundtable, and development of plans for rapid market appraisal of commercial fodder trade in the 4 study sites.

Among topics which came up in discussion were the following:

- *What motivated actors to participate in the Fodder Roundtable?* Feed shortage is one of the key priorities in Ethiopia. Feed is a common agenda for many actors in the country. Fodder Roundtable facilitates sharing good practice and lessons from different actors.
- *ILRI’s seed bank has been here in Ethiopia for a long time. But very few farmers have adopted cultivated fodder in the country. What are the reasons behind this?* ILRI has been distributing improved fodder planting materials through government agencies and NGOs. But the adoption is low. Natural pasture and crop residues have been the major sources of animal feed in the country. The purpose of livestock production has not been for commercial dairy and beef. Cattle are raised mainly to yield oxen for traction power. There has not been an incentive to allocate scarce land to fodder production for subsistence based livestock production. Now it is gaining momentum due to marked feed shortages and emerging demand for beef and dairy products in the country.
- *Do you have a plan to promote feed as a marketable commodity?* Yes there is a plan to study the commercial potential of fodder trading in the country. Participants drawn from government offices were trained on Rapid Market Appraisal last week. They are expected to conduct rapid market appraisal for fodder in their respective regions. This will help to identify the commercial potential of fodder in the country.

Session 4. Capturing variation across study sites

The purpose of the session was to investigate differences in agro-ecological, institutional (actor configuration) and market conditions across the study sites with a view to identifying the key issue each site. In this session, Werner Stur presented on variation in agro-ecological, institutional and market context across study site (*see PowerPoint presentation titled: “Cross-Site comparisons”*) followed by country break-out groups to brainstorm on:

- Key elements of the agro-ecological, institutional setting and livestock market conditions in study country
- Distil the main challenges pertaining to the country in question
- Suggest way of researching and dealing with these main challenges

The country group discussions are summarized as follows:

Vietnam

Key elements:

Agro-ecology: hot conditions, flooding, unsuitable soils, small landholdings, reliance on crop residues.

Institutional setting: Government has a strong role in Vietnam. Need to foster local ownership of project activities.

Market conditions: Product quality issues, lack of infrastructure, poor understanding of market conditions among farmers.

Key innovation challenges: Feed scarcity is a major issue. Need to find options that are suitable to local conditions. Lack of nutritional understanding among farmers and other stakeholders.

Research questions: Testing for suitable fodder options, dealing with feed scarcity, improving nutritional understanding, developing linkages with other stakeholders including vets.

Syria

Key elements:

Agro-ecology: low rainfall, low productivity due to soil, large farm size, heavy reliance on crop residues,

Institutional setting: Strong governmental control, subsidies and price control as policy instruments, land tenure issues, gender is a big issue.

Market conditions: Strong seasonality based on religious festivals. Strong export market for sheep. Well-developed fodder market. Arable strategic crops are state-controlled limiting flexibility in feed sources.

Key innovation challenges: How to increase productivity in harsh environment. How to bring in private sector actors. How to deal with pricing policy for barley.

Research questions: Can conservation agriculture bring benefits? Is there room for building innovation capacity within such a tight institutional framework? Can the existing system deal with change? With the more limited actor network, is it easier to develop linkages? Does the policy environment enable innovation? Does the subsidy system and its resulting market distortions influence fodder supply? What is the nature of the forage seed supply system?

Ethiopia

Key elements:

Agro-ecology: Moderate rainfall, land degradation, invasive weeds, small landholdings, heavy reliance on crop residues.

Institutional setting: Strong community values and societal bonds and bylaws. Good foundation for delivery of extension services, but low delivery.

Market conditions: Emerging market structure and some political support. Lack of improved dairy cows. Poor awareness of market opportunities.

Key innovation challenges: Dealing with feed scarcity, developing fodder markets.

Research questions: Not articulated.

Session 5 Assessing feed gaps and intervention opportunities – approaches

The purpose of this session was to review the different approaches that are being used across the study sites for assessing feed gaps and designing solutions.

Each country co-ordinator made brief presentations on approaches in the three study countries.

Vietnam (See Powerpoint presentation: “Assessing feed scarcity - Vietnam.ppt”)

Syria (See relevant slides in Powerpoint presentation: “IFPSMC08-SyrianReportNov10v03.ppt”)

Ethiopia (See Powerpoint presentation: “Feed scarcity assessment - FAP Ethiopia Coordination Meeting.ppt”)

Participants then broke into two groups to do the following:

- Brainstorm on the main elements that need to be captured in assessing feed gaps
- Devise a simple method for assessing feed gaps and suggesting options for dealing with it. This will include setting out the main information needed and a strategy for collecting the information.

The discussion can be summarized as follows:

Main elements: Seasonal feed availability, seasonal labour availability and seasonal price variation.

Tool: Use seasonal calendars to

- assess feed gaps over season
- assess seasonal variation in labour supply and prices of feeds
- assess cropping calendar in relation to animal feeding

Use key informants and knowledgeable observers drawn from different sections of society as information sources.

Consider value chain.

Session 6: Actor-oriented approaches – experiences and lessons

The purpose of this session was to review experiences in establishing multi-stakeholder alliances for fodder/livestock development in the three study countries. The session began with a brief presentation from Ranjitha Puskur (See Powerpoint presentation “FAP meeting_Nov 2008.ppt”)

Participants then broke into two groups to discuss the following:

- Share experiences in bringing together diverse actors around a fodder development initiative
- Identify the main challenges experienced
- Draw up a list of good practice principles

The discussions can be summarized as follows:

Group 1

Good practice principles: Open discussion with all stakeholders at district level leading to agreement on how to work. Identify and agree clear roles of project team. Frequent feedback to all stakeholders and agreement on plan. Report to local government monthly. Consultative process at various levels for joint planning. High level policy support for linkage creation/facilitation. Personal rapport building – attention to human factor.

Group 2

Challenges: Working together is a new experience at expert level in Ethiopia. Limited capacity in partnership skills. Lack of resources. Agro-ecological constraints. Weak planting material system. Limited technical capacity in fodder management and utilization. Lack of experiences in commercialization of smallholder production. Low morale in Government sector. Identifying influential people.

Good practice principles: Ensure financial commitment of all players. Maintain open communication. Focus on knowledge dissemination pathways. Enhance capacity as a way of increasing commitment. Focus on scaling out.

Session 7. Lesson learning and meta-analysis

The purpose of this session was to share information on how the DFID-Fodder Innovation Project is progressing and how generic lessons can be drawn from FIP and FAP. The session began with an update on progress on the DFID-FIP project from Peter Bezkorowajnyj (See Powerpoint presentation: “FIP II Update Presentation (12 Nov 08),ppt”)

This was followed by a discussion session. Among the main points discussed were:

- *Description of the work with Key Partner Organisations as “experiments” rather than as “action research”?* FIP does not conduct conventional experiments on fodder. Rather it experiments with different approaches and methods arising from the innovation systems perspective under different contexts. In fact action research on fodder is part and parcel of the experiment. Developing and field testing approaches and tools are one of the objectives of FIP. Then the project documents lessons learned.
- *How funds are allocated to the partners?* This is also part of the experiment. The money allocated mainly contributes to paying for the time of the innovation coordinators.
- *Incentives for partners?* Sharing best practices, approaches and methods are more important than monetary incentives.
- *What are the similarities and differences between FIP and FAP?* FIP focuses on developing conceptual frameworks, approaches and tools. FAP is more about action research on the farmers' fields using an actor-oriented approach. FAP is concerned about development outcomes. Another difference lies in the countries in which they operate and length of time since the beginning of research activities. There is an initiative to form a FIP-FAP coordination group by involving the coordinators of the two projects and Innovation Systems specialist from IPMS. There is a plan to do a meta-analysis by Dr. Seife Ayele. There are a lot of similarities and opportunities to share experiences between the two projects.

Seife Ayele then made a presentation on his proposed meta-analysis of FIP and FAP.

This was followed by a discussion session. Among issues discussed were:

- *What is a boundary organization? FAP does not use boundary organizations. It works with government ministries and how does that fit into the concept of boundary organization?* FIP uses KPOs as boundary organizations while FAP is concerned with generating practical lessons on how things work in different contexts. FIP is trying to document the capacity of the system, how transformation/changes happen. Boundary organizations are a set of individuals who influence others for changes to happen. Boundary organization is a relative term. Some people refer to knowledge brokers. Extension workers can be considered as boundary organizations in case of FAP. Changing the behaviour of government organizations to make them good brokers can be a sustainable strategy. It is a question of exploring which organization works best in which context.
- *What are the expected lessons for project design by funding organizations?* The outcome of the study will be documented as policy briefs, research briefs and presented to key donors and key policy makers.
- *Coordination of large number of actors is a daunting task. But if we work with few actors the transaction cost is too much.* Knowing the appropriate number of actors required for effective innovation really requires in-depth

empirical evidence to make conclusive recommendation. But it is always important to be pragmatic in involving actors. It is situation specific

- *Experimenting approaches is good. But we need to focus on impacts in terms of poverty reduction. Why is there so much focus on experimenting then? Once we know how a network and alliance works well, utilization of knowledge for poverty reduction will be easy.*

Session 8. Project management and next steps

The purpose of this session was to wrap up the proceedings and provide guidance on how the project should develop in 2009 and to agree on roles, responsibilities and timescales for any key activities that emerge from this discussion as appropriate. Each country identified key areas they will be working on for the coming year as follows:

Vietnam	Syria	Ethiopia
Expand within current pilot site to more farms using lessons for 2008	Study of fodder seed marketing	Joint actor planning for fodder intervention
Case study material for extension services	Training of actors/ monitoring and learning	Rapid market appraisal of fodder
Continue Village learning activities to improve local innovation capacity	Policies and institutions	Analysis of policy/institutional environment
Linkage with development component to scale out to new areas	Testing of options	Cost benefit analysis (Fodder vs. Cereal crops)
Assess year-round feed supply		Innovation capacity diagnosis

There followed a **brainstorming session on areas that the project could focus on next year.**

- Seed supply system
- Workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms
- Fodder markets-growing fodder for sale
- More case studies within countries and draw lessons across countries
- Need for standard format for data collection
- Identify key issues/themes
- Capture human side of benefits at household level
- Capture voices at various levels
- Clarify mechanisms for doing policy/institutional analysis
- Strengthen linkages with IGAD
- Develop communication materials
- Identify target groups-appropriate type of material to different clients
- Scaling out-
- How can farmers make more money out of livestock?
- More of income/market driven development
- Making the shift from fodder technology to commodity

The session continued with a feedback session on the **Field Visit** (for programme see Appendix 2). The following points were made:

- Activities could be more market/income driven – need to make the shift to commodity from fodder
- Land holding major constraint-need adequate area to demonstrate benefits
- Need for targeting and using some progressive farmers as champions
- Still top-down- not much participation of actors in discussion and choice of options
- Farmer field school and village learning activities may be beneficial
- Ada'a Dairy Cooperatives operate at below capacity in milk processing due to feed constraint, challenges in packaging, huge demand in Addis for milk

Antonio Rota concluded the session by emphasizing that this is an important grant for IFAD. Majority of IFAD investment projects have a fodder element and therefore this grant is very relevant to IFAD activities. Important outputs from this project could include:

- a. Case studies: personal stories of how farmers have benefited from fodder development activities
- b. Methodologies and tools for use in Investment Projects
- c. Material packages encapsulating lessons to transfer to other IFAD projects.

Alan Duncan closed the meeting with a few words of thanks.

Appendix 1

Agenda

Day 1	Monday 10 November
	Session 1. Welcome, introductions Chair: <i>Shirley Tarawali</i>
0830	Welcome address: ILRI <i>Shirley Tarawali</i>
0845	Opening remarks: <i>Seyoum Bediye (EIAR)</i>
0900	Update from IFAD with opportunity for questions <i>Antonio Rota</i>
0915	Introduction of participants
0930	Group photo and coffee break
	Session 2. Background, context and objectives Chair: <i>Seyoum Bediye</i>
1000	Objectives of the meeting and briefing on desired outcomes (things to think about during presentations) <i>Alan Duncan</i>
1015	Overview and Conceptual Framework of the project <i>Alan Duncan</i>
	Session 3. Progress and lessons Chair: <i>Alan Duncan</i>
1100	Country presentation – Vietnam <i>Werner Stur et al</i>
1130	Discussion
1045	Country presentation – Syria <i>Asamoah Larbi et al</i>
1115	Discussion
1130	Country presentation – Ethiopia <i>Alan Duncan et al</i>
1200	Discussion
1215	Summing up
1230	Lunch
	Session 4 Capturing variation across study sites Chair – <i>Werner Stur</i>
1330	Preliminary presentation on variation in agro-ecological, institutional and market context across study sites – <i>Werner Stür</i>
1400	Interactive session in country groups to distil the key agro-ecological, institutional and market system issues.
1500	Reporting back
1530	Tea/coffee
	Session 5 Assessing feed gaps and intervention opportunities – approaches Chair – <i>Asamoah Larbi</i>
1550	5 minute country presentations from Ethiopia, Syria and Vietnam
1620	Break-out groups to develop simple approaches for assessing feed gaps and designing interventions.
1720	Reporting back and general discussion
1800	Close
1900	Depart for dinner in Addis

Day 2	Tuesday 11 November
Field trip to Godino and Kaliti	

1600-1800 – Steering Committee Meeting - Chair *Alan Duncan*

Session 6. Actor-oriented approaches – experiences and lessons

Chair – *Ranjitha Puskur*

- 0830 5 minute presentations on experiences and approaches in Syria, Ethiopia and Vietnam
- 0900 Break-out groups to identify the main problems encountered and ways of dealing with them.
- 1000 Reporting back and general discussion
- 1030 Coffee

Session 7. Lesson learning and meta-analysis

Chair – *Bruno Gerard*

- 1100 Report on progress from FIP *Peter Bezkorowajnyj*
- 1120 Discussion on learning opportunities and linkages with FAP
- 1145 Presentation of study plan for meta-analysis of project approaches and policy influences on livestock/fodder development – *Seife Ayele*
- 1205 Discussion on how the work will be implemented in the three study countries
- 1245 **Lunch**

Session 8. Project management and next steps

Chair – *Alan Duncan*

- 1400 Brainstorming on the year ahead
- 1500 Review and agreement of tasks and responsibilities *Alan Duncan*
- 1530 Closing remarks – Antonio Rota, Alan Duncan
- 1600 Close
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Appendix 2

Programme for FAP Co-ordination Meeting Field Visit

- 08.30 Depart ILRI Campus
- 10.00 Arrive Godino for visit to FTC and farmers' fields
- 11.30 Depart Godino
- 12.00 Lunch at EMDTI
- 13.00 View Fodder plots
- 13.45 Depart EMDTI
- 14.00 Visit to Genesis Farm/Ada Dairy Coop
- 15.00 Depart for Addis
- 16.00 Arrive Addis