

Shirley Tarawali, Michelle Geringer, Fritz Schneider

Key findings and conclusions of the ‘Sustainable livestock and climate smart agriculture: joint action for common challenges’ workshop of 25 June 2015

Introduction

The event “Sustainable livestock and climate smart agriculture: joint action for common challenges” was co-organized by the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture, FAO and the International Livestock Research Institute and took place at the Swiss Pavilion at Expo 2015 Milan, 25 June 2015.

The meeting began with an opening overview of livestock sector issues given by Mr Adrian Aebi assistant director general of the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture, highlighting the importance of the livestock sector for the future sustainability and to address development challenges. He addressed and summarized these challenges by mentioning both potential merits and potential risks of enhanced livestock production in the decades to come.

The meeting was organised as a first conversation between three different initiatives operating at the nexus of livestock-environment-climate change-sustainability in order to explore opportunities for synergies and to build on the strengths of the different initiatives.

Presentations of three global initiatives

In a first part of the workshop the three initiatives *the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL)*, *the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA)* and *the Global Research Alliance (GRA)* presented their initiatives focusing on:

- rationale, objectives, stakeholders and governance and relevance to sustainable livestock development issues
- outline of major activities and examples of recent achievements
- potential future contributions towards achieving the SDGs post 2015 and potential links and overlaps to the other agendas/alliances present in the seminar

One of the goals of the workshop was to identify synergies, potential areas of collaboration towards sustainable livestock development in view of the emerging Sustainable Development goals post 2015 (SDG's post 2015) of these three different initiatives operating at the nexus of livestock-environment-climate change-sustainability

GASL. The global agenda for sustainable livestock (Neil Fraser, chair of the guiding group): The global agenda is a multi-stakeholder platform, voluntary and diverse membership. It covers all aspects of livestock sustainability: environment and climate change, health and equity. The agenda is inclusive and can claim the merit to have brought together a very broad array of stakeholders with a very wide range of objectives within the livestock sector.

GACSA. The global alliance for climate smart agriculture (Achuo Enow, coordinator of the facilitation unit): Is a similar multi-stakeholder initiative, but is broader because it covers the whole of the agricultural sector. It focuses specifically on climate related issues, and has a strong emphasis on political, enabling environment and investment dimensions.

GRA. The global research alliance on agricultural greenhouse gases (and specifically the livestock research group within this) (Martin Scholten, co-chair): Focuses in particular on research, and on practical, science-based solutions to produce more food with less emissions. Livestock is one of three focus areas next to paddy and cropland. The GRA has a strong Livestock Research Group with its own specific objectives and agenda.

“Sustainable livestock and climate smart agriculture: joint action for common challenges”

Workshop at Expo Milano, Swiss Pavilion, 25 June 2015

Shirley Tarawali, Michelle Geringer, Fritz Schneider

GASL is the agenda with the focus on livestock globally, whereas the other two alliances focus more on climate and environment and include livestock as an important player towards sustainable and climate friendly food production.

Following each presentation, participants considered if there were any gaps or surprising elements that had arisen. Three things in particular were noted in this regard:

- Gender, the important roles of women in raising and managing livestock, and in relation to livelihoods
- Anti-microbial resistance: a hot topic at the moment which would fall within the remit of the ‘health’ dimension of the GASL, although it was not specifically mentioned
- The diversity of the livestock sector that precludes having a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to any of these pertinent issues

Discussion

How much collaboration between the presented initiatives is feasible and desirable?

Participants also considered the connections between the three initiatives in terms of whether they should really be combined into one, or remain totally separate. There were a diversity of views, with most in favour of retaining the comparative advantages of each but strengthening the interactions and ensuring there were no areas of redundancy. It is however interesting to note that the ‘final beneficiaries’ – in the form of farmer representation were more in favour of having a single entity – it would be simpler for them to relate to a ‘one stop shop’. However:

- GRA + GACSA collaboration is important because then researchers have an exchange with a knowledge based group so that the researchers know which challenges and knowledge is required.
- GACSA primary focus is on dealing with people and the well-being of people in an environment for future generations. Need to keep the uniqueness of each organization and to use the comparative advantage can get more details of the livestock sector.
- GASL identified potential with GRA to provide solution and that GASL help to implement the knowledge because of the broad array of stakeholders. For GACSA the GASL can provide enhanced knowledge about the livestock sector.

The sustainable development of the livestock sector needs to become more efficient. Therefore, close collaboration of the three initiatives - for example as outlined above - is a must. A supporter of the individual engagement of the three pointed out the need of horizontal integration of the objectives of the initiatives. Focus on government but also research/scientific knowledge needs to be incubated. The sector needs more practical approaches so that the knowledge can be transferred to farmers. The conclusion was to keep the uniqueness of each initiative and make best use of the potential synergies towards joint efforts for sustainable livestock sector development.

The three presenters and participants then engaged in discussions to identify potential areas of synergy and next steps in that regard. In doing so, visualising the three initiatives and three overlapping circles was used with the discussions aiming to ‘unpack’ the areas of overlap, think about appropriate interfaces and ensure in particular there would be no duplication of efforts (Figure 1).

At the highest level, there was considerable consensus that the role of the livestock sector in contributing to the SDGs should be emphasised and there should be further efforts between the initiatives to develop common messages. It was also apparent that all initiatives have an emphasis on informing and/or enabling positive changes, whether in practise or policy areas.

To some extent, these initiatives could be viewed as ‘experiments’ which will inevitably evolve, both in their own right as well as in their relationships one with the other.

Donors present challenged the initiatives to articulate the tangible outputs they are delivering, and it was further recognised that there is sometimes a tension between such short-term delivery and the time and effort needed to build up such, often quite complicated, multi-stakeholder engagements and the underpinning processes. Specific examples were given in regard to the GASL where some partners had taken time to buy in and be part of the processes. Important for all though, and especially for the donors to be sure of value for money is that there should be no duplication of effort, hence these discussions and the way forward were seen as an important first step in this context.

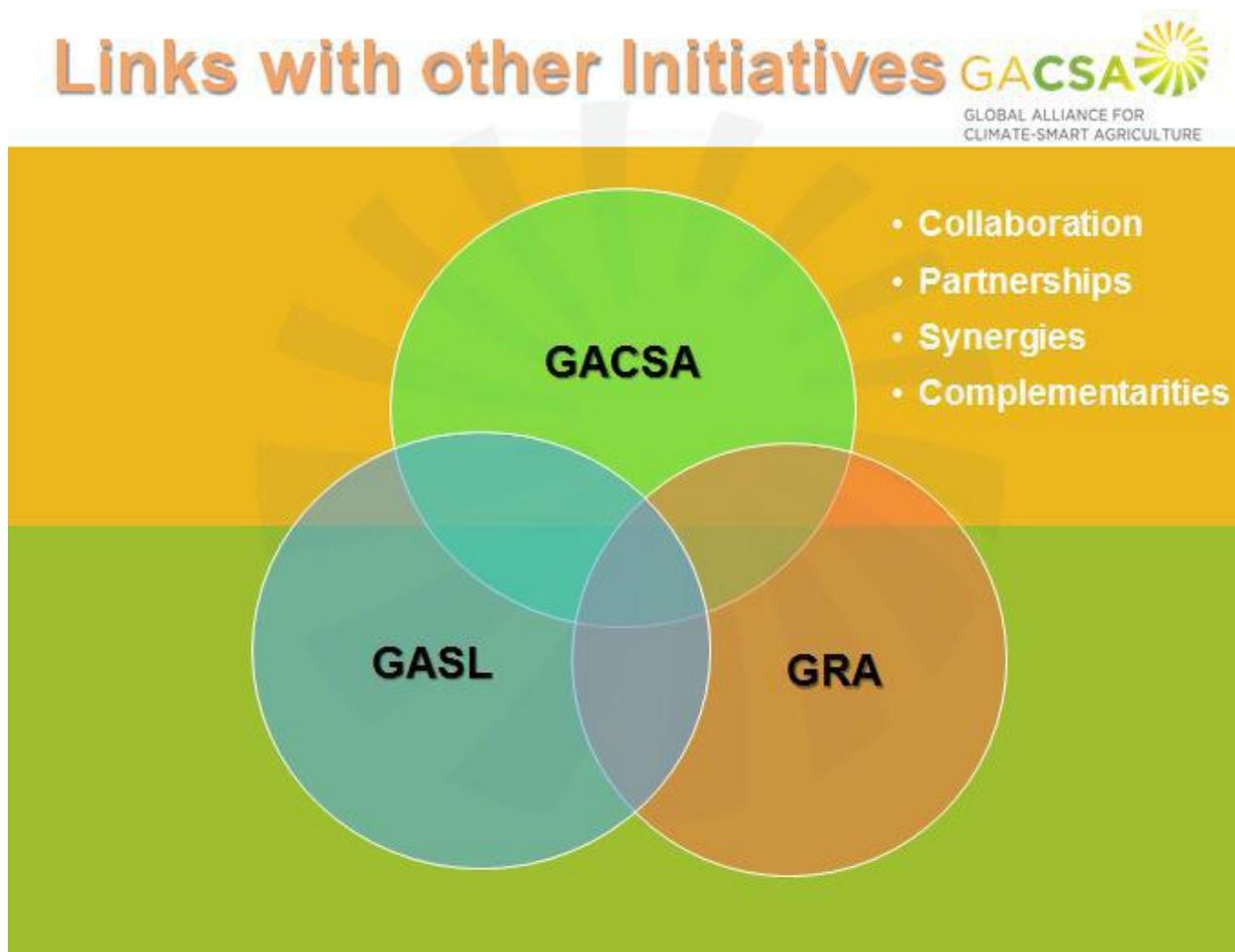


Figure 1: Schematic indicating potential synergies between the three initiatives

Next steps

As next steps a number of initial discussions between the initiatives were planned, to enable the lead persons to tease out the key intersections and ways of working together and included:

- Ensuring appropriate communication and knowledge sharing opportunities are identified and used so that the membership of each initiative can know about the others and how they interface
- Demand for more transparency in their fields of operation. There should be further efforts in communication showing the use of potential synergies between the initiatives to develop common messages
- There is a potential to organise for a broader on line consultation amongst the wider membership and possibly on a regional basis, to facilitate such awareness and engagement
- A number of initial bilateral discussions were planned as next steps, to enable the lead persons to tease out the key intersections and ways of working together.
- In particular GACSA was tasked to arrange for a next tripartite discussion to follow up

These discussions were acknowledged as an important first step in fostering dialogue between the three initiatives, with the potential for further evolution based on the planned discussions. It will be important to share these results as they evolve and at an appropriate future time to reconvene and plan specific and potentially deeper coordination mechanisms

The final point to make though is that this is too important to miss. The delivery of the SDGs will be hampered if the livestock sector is not included, as it presents a tremendous opportunity to address these through concerted and coordination action, which it is incumbent on all of us engaged in the livestock sector, which ever initiatives we participate in, to foster.