The role of livestock in developing communities: Enhancing multifunctionality

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Abstract/Description
This book is the product of a Satellite Symposium on the Role of Livestock in Developing Communities: Enhancing Multifunctionality, held as part of the 10th World Conference on Animal Production (WCAP) in Cape Town, 22 – 28 November 2008. The Symposium, jointly organised by the University of the Free State (UFS) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) aimed to stimulate critical thinking on the role of livestock in livelihood strategies for the poor in the developing world as a contribution to address the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The livestock sector in developing countries contributes more than 33% to agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and is one of the fastest growing agricultural subsectors. The livestock sector has been experiencing what has been coined the "Livestock Revolution". Population growth, urbanisation, and most importantly, increasing income have resulted in a rapid increase in demand for livestock products, which is likely to continue well into the future. This growth of the livestock sector presents both enormous opportunities and challenges. This book therefore comes at an opportune time for both policy makers and practitioners in developing countries, and the international community. Livestock is a major contributor to food and nutritional security, and serves as an important source of livelihood for nearly 1 billion poor people in developing countries. Its importance in attaining the MDGs should therefore not be underestimated. The book aims to provide critical information and knowledge on the importance of livestock in the global effort to alleviate poverty and promote human health. It describes and evaluates case studies, examines theoretical frameworks, and discusses key global policy development issues, challenges and constraints related to smallholder livestock-production systems around the globe. The book is written for academic professionals, industry experts, government officials and other scholars interested in the facts and issues concerning the contribution of livestock to the social and economic progress of developing countries.

AGROVOC Keywords
livestock; developing countries
Livestock technology can enhance or improve the productivity capacity, welfare, or management of animals and livestock. New developments in the past 8-10 years have made huge improvements to the industry that make tracking and managing livestock much easier and data-driven. This technology can come in the form of nutritional technologies, genetics, digital technology, and more. Sensors are being developed to monitor real-time milk quality, health, and pregnancy hormones. In addition, virtual fences exist that can move animals wearing a sensor to be moved remotely from one area of a pasture to another. Livestock farming has undergone a significant transformation in the past few decades. Production has shifted from smaller, family-owned farms to large farms that often have corporate contracts. Most meat and dairy products now are produced on large farms with single species buildings or open-air pens (MacDonald & McBride, 2009). Animal feeding operations are developing in close proximity in some states, and fields where manure is applied have become clustered. When manure is applied too frequently or in too large a quantity to an area, nutrients overwhelm the absorptive capacity of the soil, and either run off or are leached into the groundwater. In developed countries, firstly, primary food production is linked to the problem of overproduction, and primary food production is increasingly replaced by the emphasis on food and fuel manufacturing. This policy focus on various entrepreneurial roles of agriculture for rural development has given rise to the concept of ‘multifunctional agriculture’ in Western Europe; it is seen as compatible with commercialization of agriculture and protection of direct payments for agricultural commodity producers (Banks and Marsden 2000; van Hylenbroeck and Durand 2003; MacCarthy, 2005). dissertation will seek to establish the concept of ‘agricultural multifunctionality’ as the key notion of agricultural sustainability for small-scale farmers in developing countries.