



Reclaiming Livestock Keepers' Rights

to produce and have continued access to their diverse livestock breeds

There is urgency for pastoralists and other livestock keepers to be able to reclaim their rights, including their rights to food and food sovereignty

This will help secure their livelihoods and their diverse livestock breeds

Meetings in 2007 will address this need

Pastoralists and other Livestock Keepers can challenge Governments: they have an opportunity this year to challenge governments about the perilous situation of their livelihoods, their reduced access to resources and the resulting losses of their livestock breeds. An intergovernmental conference on conserving livestock diversity, organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), in September 2007 should address these issues. Their voices must be heard.

Civil Society Action: a process with organisations of pastoralists, small-scale livestock keepers and wider civil society is preparing for the FAO conference. FAO has asked the IPC for Food Sovereignty - a global network of civil society organisations and social movements concerned with food sovereignty - to facilitate this. Pastoralists and small-scale livestock keepers will be able to present their concerns.

Change the Rules: Securing pastoralists' and farmers' livelihoods and saving livestock diversity will only be achieved if their rights get recognised in policy, laws and regulations which are then implemented.

Losing Livestock Diversity: There is real cause for concern. About 20 per cent of livestock breeds have been brought to the brink of extinction as world agriculture narrows its focus to those breeds that yield well on high-protein and concentrated energy feeds. One breed is being lost each month.

Globalisation – the main Problem: The globalisation of livestock markets is the biggest single factor hitting livestock diversity, according to FAO.

Corporate Concentration: Corporations have dramatically increased their control over the livestock industry in recent years. Only two companies now dominate the global supply of day-old chicks for industrial egg production, and four companies supply hatching eggs for broiler production. Consolidation is also occurring between feed suppliers, meat processors and "livestock genetics" corporations. Those that control livestock genetics are all headquartered in OECD countries.

Corporate Control through Technology and Patents: Hybrid breeding and other closed systems have become standard in poultry and pig breeding, and they are now emerging in cattle and aquaculture genetics. These trends have the effect of "locking up" genetic resources in the hands of a small number of global players. Corporations are also using patent law to exert control. Monsanto is seeking patents in 160 countries, not only on methods of breeding pigs but also on pig herds and their offspring. Pastoralists and small-scale livestock farmers are already excluded from industrial livestock production, and they are now losing control over their breeds.

Genetically Engineered Animals: There is also increasing development of transgenic animals containing patented genes for pharmaceutical and other purposes. In December 2006, the EU agreed a new seven-year 55-billion-euro research programme, much of which will be on biotechnology and animal genetics.

Losing Food Sovereignty: The result of all this is a food system that is dangerously dependent on a few corporations and a vulnerable, narrowing genetic base, while the broad range of diverse livestock breeds, which have been selected for every production challenge by knowledgeable livestock keepers over millennia, is fast disappearing. Livestock keepers are losing control of their livestock and their food sovereignty.

There is an urgent need for pastoralists and other livestock keepers to reclaim their rights

Join the struggle to realise Livestock Keeper's Rights

For further details see www.pastoralpeoples.org and www.ukabc.org



Livestock Keepers' Rights: Importance for Diversity

Livestock provide livelihoods, are a capital resource and provide important (agro)ecosystem services. Many breeds also have significance for cultural identity and are important in local religions.

Livestock breeds are products of purposive breeding and selection by pastoralists and other livestock farmers and would not exist without their efforts. Kept alive on-farm and in grazing territories, the breeds are essential for sustaining smallholder and pastoral production systems.

Diversity of breeds is also crucial for coping with changing environments that present new stresses and production challenges.

Livestock keepers' rights are a bundle of rights including the right to continue developing their breeds and production systems to meet new challenges. They comprise rights to the genetic resources of their animals as well as rights to grazing, water, markets and participation in policy decision making

Breed diversity allows exploitation of a wide range of ecological niches and in turn supports diverse agro-ecosystems that are essential for sustaining livelihoods and living landscapes.

To secure this diversity, livestock keeping farmers and pastoralists need the recognition of rights, which would enable them to continue

keeping and breeding their livestock such as the access to grazing and other productive resources. They also need to be assured that the genes of their livestock are not subject to intellectual property rights, that genetically modified organisms, which could affect the genetic integrity of their livestock, are not released into agricultural and pastoral environments. and that no proprietary arrangements are made that would impair (re)production such as those common in hybrid breeding.

Threats to Livestock Keepers' Rights

While companies are shoring up their control over the livestock sector, small-scale livestock keepers and pastoralists are progressively losing their rights:

- Customary **grazing and watering rights** of many pastoralists have been abolished by the establishment of protected areas, biofuel cultivation, landbanks, land grabbing, etc.
- The **right to keep animals** is jeopardised in the wake of pandemics, especially bird 'flu. For instance, in many countries small-scale poultry keepers may be losing the right to keep their traditional poultry in the vicinity of industrial chicken

complexes. Biosecurity requirements may eliminate small-scale farmers from livestock production.

- The **rights to sell** animals and their products across national boundaries have been seriously undermined, due to sometimes inappropriate animal hygiene regulations.
- The **rights to breed** animals may be threatened by patents, commercial contracts and regulations.
- Up to now, farmers and pastoralists do not have the **right to be consulted** and be heard when livestock policies are being designed.

In addition, inappropriate research and development approaches threaten pastoralists' and livestock keepers' rights to manage and derive benefits from their livestock e.g.:

- Livestock breeding programmes that prioritise imported genetic material often resulting in dilution of the local gene pool.
- The patenting of unique genetic material from local breeds e.g. the Booroola gene.
- Inadequate policies and regulations, e.g. for animal health that favour industrial production. As a result, many small-scale producers in developing countries are forced out of markets by corporate players.

Actions to realise Livestock Keepers' Rights

- Recognition of livestock keepers' rights to continue to use and develop their own breeds, to have access to their grazing territories, water and other resources needed for production, and to be able to have access to local markets.
- Acknowledgement of pastoralists' and other livestock keepers' contributions to local and national economies and the conservation of animal genetic resources.
- Adaptation of National, Regional and International policies and legal frameworks, which recognize livestock keepers' rights and provide support for their conservation efforts. These include the promotion of the systems and the use of the knowledge that has enabled pastoralists and other livestock keepers to develop their diverse livestock breeds over millennia.
- An international ban on patents of animal genes is essential for conservation as well as for the sustainable use of the diversity developed on-farm and in grazing territories.
- Recognition of the rights of pastoralists, other livestock keepers and their communities to food sovereignty – local determination of the policies they need to secure future food supplies.

- The FAO conference is called the "The First International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources" www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/genetics/angrvent2007.html
- Greenpeace reports on the Monsanto patent for a new 'invention': the pig. www.greenpeace.org/international/news/monsanto-pig-patent-111
- For more in depth analysis - see www.grain.org/seedling/