



CONFERENCE LIVESTOCK FUTURES

During a conference on Livestock Futures organised by LPP and held in Bonn on 6-7th September, one of the working groups discussed “Biocultural Protocols and Approaches to Access and Benefit-Sharing for Animal Genetic Resources”. LPP has been involved in the development of six Biocultural community protocols (BCPs), three of which were presented during the workshop (Pakistan, India, Kenya). The recommendations below were endorsed by the conference.

The workshop concluded that BCPs were valuable for the communities concerned as as means of

- Documenting bio-assets, production systems, products
- Empowering communities, giving a voice to pastoralists and other small-scale livestock keepers. (In line with rights-based policy)
- Raising awareness about culture and tradition to address challenges, such as cross breeding and product innovations
- Invoking rights (grazing, breeding and political)
- Information exchange and communication with other stakeholders
- Increasing benefits through controlled animal sale and fixed price
- Building up an international BCP community (that may function as a community-of-practice)

Participants also recommended that BCPs should be expanded to other traditional livestock keepers and pastoralists. The scope could be expanded to include monitoring of breeds, ecosystems, degradation of land.

Pillars of a BCP are shared production systems, breeds, traditional knowledge, landscapes, communities or professions, histories/heritage and culture.

BCPs should be established within national boundaries and take into account shared resources and customary rights, while also allowing for adaption, flexibility, and transition.

With respect to the process, the participants emphasized that it should be initiated and owned by a community, which may invite other stakeholders if appropriate. It was recommended to officially launch a BCP in order to obtain government recognition and follow up.

The group cautioned that BCPs should not be used for delineating political and spatial boundaries.

Access and Benefit-Sharing

The participants noted that livestock in traditional communities has both private and public goods characteristics. Livestock breeds represent specific combinations of genes and are also the result of

collective breeding. Therefore benefits should be shared on one hand, but not be linked to direct access to genes. BCPs may be useful to establish breeds as the “prior art” of communities and they therefore represent community claims over animal genetic resources. They are useful as means of raising awareness about a community’ contribution to breed development.

Can ABS be used to reward livestock systems that conserve biological diversity?

Small-scale livestock keepers provide a collective service by maintaining breeds and stewarding eco-systems. These services can be rewarded monetarily at national level through payments for environmental services, such as carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation. Furthermore, they can be rewarded through the provision of an enabling environment that supports them to continue their livelihood and breed conservation activities (livestock keepers rights, grazing rights, services).

At international level, a benefit sharing fund/pool should be made available to support communities which maintain and use local breeds.

How to finance the Benefit-Sharing fund?

The participants discussed various options for financing the benefit-Sharing Fund, which could include:

- Request livestock sector input companies to pay erosion tax
- Compensatory payments by genetic companies after a biodiversity audit

These payments could be made in the context of an international agreement or voluntarily in the context of corporate social responsibility.

The GPA funding strategy could be developed into a benefit sharing fund

Conditions for receipt of funds would be that the beneficiaries have a BCP in place. Furthermore, communities should have direct access to the Benefit-sharing fund (no obligatory government involvement)

The Benefit-sharing fund could be used for activities such as

- Education and awareness raising about local breeds, fairs
- Product development and marketing
- Research on local breeds and production systems
- Women empowerment, food security and breed management
- For conservation breeding
- Legal support for rights (grazing, breeding, etc.)