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Reorganized IMS pushes for trade liberalization and boosts membership

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Following the 1989 World Meat Congress in Paris, the IMS made decisive moves to increase membership, reorganize its administration and finances, improve communications and raise its international profile with industry and government.

These issues were tackled by the newly constituted Executive Council under the presidency of Alberto de las Carreras, with Chris Oberst as Treasurer, charged with the task of managing the finances of the organization. One of his principal duties was to ensure the timely settlement of membership subscriptions, with the suspension of members who were in default of payment. His business acumen as Treasurer and subsequently as President, enabled the IMS to improve and stabilize its financial position and management structure.

Also elected to the Council were Louis Gérard Biret, whose energy and ambition for the IMS were matched by his personal generosity towards it, together with the Italian, Fernando Schellino, a founding member, and magnanimous supporter of the organization, and Louis de Wijze from The Netherlands. Each of them was fired by the urgency of making the IMS succeed as the representative organization of the meat and livestock industry worldwide.

Copious correspondence attests to the detailed identification, and prospection of potential members, while meetings of the Executive Council were dominated by progress reports on the membership position and the gradually improving financial situation.

Alberto de las Carreras concentrated his prospection activities in South America. Chris Oberst was active in prospecting and recruiting to membership meat organizations in English-speaking countries, such as Australia, New Zealand and the United States. As an international meat trader, Louis-Gérard Biret was a persuasive and successful recruiter of meat trading organizations throughout Europe and Africa. The result of this intensive activity was that membership more than doubled, rising from 24 (most of whom had not been paying their membership subscriptions), to 52 members from 25 countries in 1991.

Given the interest and involvement of the French meat industry in the successful Paris Congress, and the personal commitment of Louis-Gérard Biret to its development, it was agreed to transfer the IMS headquarters from Brussels to Paris, where it was initially based in Biret's office in Boulevard Pasteur. Paul Ricard, who had been closely involved in the preparations for the Paris World Meat Congress was appointed office manager. Ricard set himself the task of reorganizing the IMS and improving its image, creating a closer relationship between the IMS and its members, and publishing a monthly Newsletter which would contain "confidential" information non-accessible to existing publications. The Newsletter had been a long-cherished ambition of senior IMS members, particularly de las Carreras and Biret.

Its aim was to inform members, as well as to strengthen the link between them and IMS headquarters. The first issue, which appeared on 1 April 1989, was the successor to an earlier market information bulletin, OPICARNE, at least seven issues of which were published in Buenos Aires in 1984 and 1985.

The monthly Newsletter increased the frequency of its publication to every two weeks in October 1989, with Loek

Boonekamp, an agricultural economist, preparing and editing the news content.

Interbev, the French meat and livestock institution which had organized the Paris Congress, reinforced its strong support for the IMS, by providing it with an office in the premises of the CIV, the French Meat Information Office, at 11 rue de Lafayette, Paris. This became the IMS headquarters on 18 September 1989. The progress of the IMS during that period and for the following thirty years was greatly facilitated by the personal implication of Interbev's Chief Executive, Jean-Louis Bignon. Indeed the French meat sector, through its representative organizations and individual companies has, since its installation in Paris, proved to be a constant mainstay of the IMS.

Paul Ricard left the IMS in June 1989, and was replaced by Denis Agniel from Interbev. Christophe Genty, also from Interbev, was subsequently appointed to the part-time post of Secretary in February 1990. While benefiting from the largesse of both Biret and Interbev regarding its Secretariat, the IMS paid an agreed rent and associated costs to both organisations.

The Eighth IMS World Meat Congress took place in The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London, from 24-26 April 1991, under the direction of Chris Oberst, Director General of the British Meat and Livestock Commission, while Bob Bansback, a senior manager at the MLC, managed its organization. The Congress, under the theme "The Meat Industry – Keeping Pace with a Changing World", attracted 550 participants.

The objective of the IMS to promote the international trade of meat - keenly shared by the host organizers – was amply reflected in the Congress programme and sessions. The event took place against the background of the ongoing GATT Uruguay Round multilateral trade negotiations, and the evolving trading situation of the emerging Central and Eastern European countries, together with the importance of world meat trade to key countries in South America and parts of Africa. Another key factor was the structural changes in the European Community in the context of the Single Market.

Alberto de las Carreras stepped down from the Presidency after the London Congress and Chris Oberst was elected to the post. The incoming Executive Council was also strengthened by the addition of Allan Frazer of Meat and Wool New Zealand who was appointed Treasurer, and Philip Seng, CEO of the United States Meat Export Federation.

While the IMS has never been an aggressive lobbying organization, its mission has been to defend and promote the interests of the meat sector, and it has sought opportunities to do so with relevant intergovernmental institutions. So, given the vital importance of international trade to many of its members, the newly-elected President, Chris Oberst, acted quickly to arrange a meeting with the GATT International Meat Council to introduce the IMS, advise it on international meat market trends, and show its support for trade liberalization.

The meeting was held at the GATT in Geneva on 20 June 1991, and a further IMS-GATT Meat Council meeting took place again in Geneva on 19 June 1992.

Laurence Wrixon

Invitation to attend the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock

The IMS and its members have been working together with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock.

This partnership of key representatives from governments, the private sector, civil society and academia committed to sustainable livestock sector development, aims to catalyze and guide the continuous improvement of livestock sector practices to address three big challenges of our time: resource scarcity, demand growth, and poverty.

You are cordially invited to attend the seventh MSP meeting "Achieving multiple benefits through livestock-based solutions", which will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 8-12 May 2017. As usual, there will be a delegation from IMS. If you would like to attend this meeting, please register

directly at the following:

Meeting in Ethiopia

Why participate in/support the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock?

It is important to engage and provide a private sector perspective based on the best scientific evidence, recognizing the diversity of production systems across the world. The debate on sustainability is complex. The discussion needs to take place in a fair and balanced manner -we cannot affect the outcome if we are not part of the discussion.

Livestock Sector is Key to Sustainable Development

The livestock sector fundamentally contributes to sustainable development -this is a vision IMS believes is relevant to all its members, applying to all livestock species, production systems (big or small) and all countries (developed or developing). Private sector engagement in the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock is needed to show concrete examples of how we have always, and can continue to sustainably feeding the world with high quality, nutritious protein.

The following text is an abbreviated summary of the synthesis document produced from last year's Global Agenda meeting in Panama in June 2016. The IMS is one of many partners in this multi-stakeholder discussion. This means we will probably not agree with all participants on how certain issues are presented, in particular on sensitive areas like animal welfare and AMR. The full text, including detailed discussion of how livestock is linked to each of the Sustainable Development Goals can be found on the FAO website:

Synthesis in English
Synthesis in French
Synthesis in Spanish

Livestock and the sustainable development goals

On 25 September 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Agenda sets out 17 aspirational objectives, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), associated with 169 targets, which will serve governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society to chart the path of human advancement over the next 15 years. (http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment).

The 17 SDGs integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - and are indivisible. That means no one goal is separate from the others, and all call for a comprehensive and participatory approach. All goals are also universal, in the sense that the 2030 Agenda is relevant to all nations. However, while the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an internationally endorsed framework accepted by, and applicable to, every nation, major gaps still remain in international awareness and consensus on how its various goals and targets are to be accomplished.

The present synthesis aims to provide an overview of the linkages between livestock and the SDGs in order to support Agenda partners in achieving the UN SDGs by helping them assess the full importance of the livestock sector's potential contribution. Using scientific facts and figures obtained by FAO experts and from the literature, it describes how livestock are connected to the different Goals. It also uses elements from a working paper currently being developed by the Animal Production and Health Division of FAO and presents the outcomes of the Global Agenda multi-stakeholder partnership meeting in Panama in June 2016.

This document builds on the premise that livestock is positioned at the interface of the world's human and natural systems, which has been at the basis of the Global Agenda's understanding of sustainability. Humans have been shaping their environment, the natural system, since the dawn of agriculture at the very least. Agriculture uses natural resources (land, water, biodiversity, forests, fish, nutrients and energy) and environmental services and transforms them into agricultural products (food, feed, fibre, fuel) that serve not only immediate needs but also provide economic and social services (food security, economic growth and poverty reduction, health and cultural value).

Approaches to sustainability must therefore address the interactions and trade-offs occurring within and between the human and natural systems as a consequence of farm production, and decide how best to reduce their impact (as recognized in FAO's *Principles for Sustainable Food and Agriculture*). The SDGs could

therefore be grouped into those that describe people's needs and aspirations (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and education, gender equality, reduced overall inequality, and peace and justice); those that describe environmental or "planet" requirements (water, energy, marine systems, land and biodiversity, and climate); and those that describe desirable processes by which to achieve a better balance.

Priorities for the livestock sector's stakeholders

During the multi-stakeholder partnership meeting of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock in Panama (June 2016), about 190 participants from 45 countries representing different sectors – private sector – public sector- NGO's- Academia/Research – Social Movements – Donors – Intergovernmental and multilateral Organizations- discussed the roles of livestock in achieving the SDGs. They expressed their interest and considered their priorities from different perspectives: as individuals, as a constituency and as a group of thematic knowledge. Though all SDGs were seen as important and relevant to livestock, 5 out of 17 received significantly higher priority from all perspectives: SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 15 (life on land) and SDG 17 (partnership for the goals). When asked as individuals, partners also prioritized SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production).

Discussions and negotiations for setting up priorities in different groups revealed that public and private sector have similar priorities (SDG 2, 3, 8 and 15). They also confirmed some of the existing thematic areas of work in the Global Agenda (e.g. improving efficiency and tools for measuring progress) and shed light on current gaps and emerging issues.

The multi-stakeholder partnership adopted the Panama declaration recognizing the important contribution of the sector to the UN Agenda 2030 and the need for concerted action and for an agreement to work towards policy reforms, institutional development and investments for sustaining practice change in livestock. With this declaration, partners of the Global Agenda accepted the challenges of sustainable development and showed determination and willingness to engage.

Cross-sectoral integration and national prioritization of SDG targets

Livestock – SDG linkages are many, revealing the diversity and complexity of livestock systems, and the different purposes they fulfil. The importance of these linkages varies among countries and location. Efforts to address one Goal will typically very often have impacts on others. For example, actions and policies aiming at increasing renewable energies from biomass (SDG 7) can have negative impacts on SDG 6 on water (through irrigation of energy crops) and on SDG 2 on hunger (through competition for land between food and energy production). Efforts aiming to improve productivity in agriculture to end hunger can also contribute to poverty reduction (SDG1) through increased income for small farmers and to achieving SDG 15 on land (through limiting expansion of agricultural land).

To achieve the 17 SDGs, 169 targets have been identified. Achieving the SDGs will require analysing the 169 targets and how they link together, and prioritizing them to address national specificities. Many governments have separate agencies addressing different sectors such as agriculture, water, energy and climate, and identifying cross-sectoral priority targets will support more integrated and coherent policies. SDG targets should be seen by countries as building blocks that they can pick from and arrange to fit the local context and capabilities.

Interactions between targets can be viewed in three ways: one target can be *dependent* on one or several other targets (e.g. increasing access to irrigation for agriculture requires a steady supply of freshwater); it can impose conditions on other targets (e.g. sustainable food and agricultural systems set a condition on how water should be used more efficiently); and it can reinforce them (e.g. improving water-use efficiency helps improve yields sustainably). *Trade-offs* may also appear in how targets interact, e.g. when food and energy production compete for the same water or land resource. When they do, targets should not be excluded but carefully addressed in a cross-sectoral approach, to identify win-win solutions or ways to mitigate negative impacts.

Measuring progress: the role of knowledge

Harmonized indicators are essential in order to measure progress. A sound indicator framework will turn the SDGs and their targets into a management tool to help countries develop implementation strategies and allocate resources accordingly; and provide a report card to measure progress towards sustainable development and ensure the accountability of all stakeholders. The mechanics of SDG monitoring are still being worked out, but an emerging consensus suggests that the focus of SDG monitoring will be at the national level.

Complementary monitoring will occur at regional and global levels. Since SDGs and targets are interdependent, many indicators should contribute to monitoring more than one target.

Developing indicators and metrics requires tools and methodologies. They include protocols and analyses that can be applied to all production systems and regions. For example, measuring nitrogen-use efficiency or estimating losses from a disaster related to climate change needs a harmonized accountability method, with specific data requirements. Independent and impartial national capacities are needed to measure progress, but there is a strong lack of capacity in many countries. Some indicators exist, but data is not systematically collected on a routine, harmonized, and comparable basis – particularly in low-income countries, and for key social and environmental metrics. International effort is therefore necessary to continue generating and disseminating knowledge for efficient and fair monitoring of progress in achieving the SDGs.

In the current list of proposed indicators, only 1 is specific to livestock (yield gap in livestock production) but a large number of indicators for agriculture and food systems have a livestock component (e.g. nutrient use efficiency, genetic diversity, percentage of wastes water flows treated, greenhouse gas emissions, annual change in forest area, nutrition). This confirms the need for integrated approaches also in measuring progress and illustrates the need for the sector to engage in developing sound indicators.

Based on such comprehensive perspective, the key to addressing livestock sector development within an SDG framework lies in developing integrated tools and actions that address the specific priorities and development needs of countries and locations. There is much to be gained from connecting disparate knowledge in the social, economic, environmental and technological realms, and the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock provides the adequate platform for these connections. ■

Striking again

A labor problem at a small meat company in the American Midwest both echoes the past and points to the future.

Holten Meats in Sauget, Illinois, a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri (Sauget is just across the Mississippi River from downtown St. Louis), isn't a large company, but it has had a long history as a supplier to the foodservice trade of high quality beef products, including its signature product, the "Thick N Juicy" hamburger patty. Lately, though, what has put Holten into the news is a labor strike by its union workforce.

Forty years ago, this would hardly have been news at all. Strikes were common at American meat companies, as the industry made the wrenching transformation from being city-based (several U.S. cities had districts that are still sometimes called "butchertowns") to rural-based. This transformation coincided with the change from shipping carcasses (often called "swinging meat") to shipping meat, beef especially, in boxes. As it happened, the move from cities to rural locations also allowed the industry to remake its labor force from one that was highly unionized to one that was less so.

None of this happened without fights, and those battles were sometimes brutal. The history of labor strikes at just one company, IBP, is extraordinary. There was violence, dozens of arrests, and even the involvement of organized crime. Other major companies also endured labor strife. The last truly headline-making labor strike in the industry occurred in 1985, when unionized workers at Geo. A. Hormel & Co. in Austin, Minnesota, walked out. That strike dragged on for months, and pitted neighbor against neighbor and family against family in the otherwise stereotypically friendly community of Austin. A film about the strike, "American Dream," directed by Barbara Kopple, won the Academy Award for Bes Documentary in 1991.

Relative calm

But since then, labor in the U.S. meat industry has been relatively calm. Partly this is due to organized labor's diminished influence in American manufacturing overall, and partly it's due to the fact that the big, rurally located boxed meat companies gradually, eventually won the war. The towns hosting large meat plants now have names such as Garden City, Kansas,

and Ottumwa, Iowa, not Chicago, Illinois, or New York City, New York.

While the United Food and Commercial Workers and Teamsters together still represent a significant portion of the meat workforce, they don't wield nearly the power that the old Amalgamated Meat Cutters union did back in the 1950s. True, the old fire occasionally reignites, as it did last year when the Teamsters struck or joined picket lines at several facilities operated by U.S. Foods, a large meat supplier to the foodservice trade.

So the strike at Holten, which employs about 300 workers, is, like an old hit record from 40 years ago suddenly appearing in a contemporary playlist, an unexpected echo from the past. But perhaps only on the surface. Where the meat industry's labor battles of decades ago tended to be about wages, the Holten employees are striking over the ability of night-shift workers with seniority to apply for day-shift positions.

According to a spokesman for UFCW Local 655, as reported in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, a night-shift worker cannot use seniority to bid for an open day-shift job if it becomes available. Rather than allow senior employees to move to a different shift when a position opens up, the union said, Holten frequently hires new employees to fill those day jobs. The spokesman said the company had offered to make seniority rights part of its company policy, but no such language had been included in the contract offered to the union. Unlike a contract, company policy can be changed at any time, the union pointed out.

On the same side

In a way, the fact that the dispute is over whether seniority counts anymore is indicative of the state of labor in the meat industry. Gradually, workers have given up valuable contracts bit by bit, but seniority was always considered a sacrosanct element of any union contract. Longevity and loyalty, not to mention a long history of paying union dues, ought to be rewarded, goes the thinking.

The fact that even this element is now up for negotiation shows that more than wages, more than benefits, more than whether time for donning and doffing work clothes and equipment should be compensated (this was a big point of contention in the past between meat companies and the unions and the subject of several lawsuits), now the simple availability of jobs is at the center of organized labor's concerns.

Indeed, the chief concern now in the American meat industry regarding labor actually has workers and employers on the same side: namely, immigration. Over the past several years, raids by federal agents from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency to round up immigrants who are suspected of being in the U.S. illegally have disrupted operations at several meat companies. As noted in a previous IMS Newsletter, the American meat industry depends on labor supplied by immigrants. ICE raids can cost tens of thousands of dollars per day in lost production, and are hugely disruptive to immigrant communities.

While meat companies use certification procedures such as "e-verify" to determine if job applicants are legally in the U.S., no system is perfect. With renewed pressure from the Trump Administration on so-called "illegal aliens," the concerns occupy meat company executives as well as employees out on the production floor. Forty years ago, no one could have guessed that one day there'd be a labor battle in the industry in which hourly wage workers would be on the same side as high-paid occupants of the executive suites.

Steve Bjerklie, Contributing Editor, *Meat & Poultry* Magazine; correspondent, *The Economist*

Upcoming Events

April 25-26, 2017	Symposium of the Veal Sector, La Baule, France
May 10-12, 2017 (sold out, registration closed)	Economics Workshop, Paris, France
September 18-19, 2017	Symposium: Future Industrial Meat Production, Taastrup, Denmark
October 3-6, 2017 (exact dates to be announced)	Nutrition and Health Committee, Paris, France Animal Care Committee, Paris, France Sustainable Meat Committee, Paris, France Marketing Workshop, Cologne, Germany
October 18-20, 2017	China International Meat Industry Exhibition, Qingdao, China
May 30 - June 1, 2018	**World Meat Congress, Dallas, Texas, USA**

Further information about these meetings can be found on the IMS website.