



KEY NOTE ADDRESS ON FARMERS PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVESTOCK IN SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION FOR FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION AND CLIMATE ACTION BY ELIZABETH NSIMADALA, PRESIDENT, EASTERN AFRICA FARMERS FEDERATION (EAFF) ON 19TH JUNE 2025 IN BONN, GERMANY

Distinguished excellencies, all protocols observed.

My name, and Position. am part of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation community which is an umbrella of national farmer federations, apex cooperatives, apex women and youth organizations representing more than 25 million farmers.

Our central role as a farmers' organization is to contribute to feeding the continent while preserving and protecting our environment by empowering our members; ensuring we have the right partnerships, contributing to the policy discourse, sharing important information and knowledge, providing leadership in the sector and strengthening our member institutions at all levels.

Our members are involved in all value chains including the livestock value chain, where one of our member countries, Ethiopia, leads in having the largest livestock population in Africa, contributing 37 percent to the agricultural GDP. There are over 350 million livestock keepers in Africa including the pastoral community. We also have Livestock specific membership organisations for example, Kenya Livestock Producers Association - KLPA, Djibouti Agro pastoral farmers' Association – DAPA and for others are a mix of both crop, livestock, fisheries and forests.

livestock is an important sector to Africa where, in addition to significantly contributing to its GDP, it provides food security and livelihoods for at least 30 percent of the African population. That said, Africa only has about a third of the world's global livestock population.

Livestock play a role in food supply, employment, income, capital accumulation, supply of inputs and services to crop production, school feeding/nutrition programmes and social integration among communities. There are many opportunities, especially in value addition, that have not yet been fully exploited. We need to embrace new technologies, innovation, research and have targeted interventions for youth and women.

The Africa Union has a Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA) 2015-2035 which looks at among others, investments, animal health and productivity, innovations/technology/capacity and entrepreneurship, markets and value addition. This strategy is aligned with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as well as strategies by the regional economic communities. In my region, the East African Community has a livestock policy that was developed in 2016, while the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) has a protocol on transhumance aimed at enhancing free movement of pastoralists living in border areas of IGAD member countries in search for pastures as guided by the African Union Commission Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa.

Where are we?

In essence, it is very clear that we have the necessary legal frameworks in the continent, we have the institutions also in place and we have organizations in research, the private sector and ourselves as farmers organizations also aligned to these strategies. However, the growth and development in the sector is not very encouraging:

- **Funding:** The livestock sector has always faced the brunt of low funding compared with the crop sector. Availability of funds, whether from government allocations, development funding, private funds or credit products, has been difficult and this has increased the risks associated with venturing in this sector, especially in a number of livestock subsectors.

- **Climate change:** Due to low investments over time, we have not established mitigating investments to manage the advent of climate change shocks. Recently, the Horn of Africa lost more than 6 million herds of cattle and goats to drought resulting in the worst catastrophe at the farmer level in recent years. There is an urgent need to look at other interventions beyond, or in addition to, early warning systems. Some of these interventions may include selection of value chains that have lower risks associated with these changes, such as the camel and goat value chains, among others.
- **Conflicts:** Despite there being the IGAD protocol on transhumance, we still have conflicts between crop and livestock farmers. We also have cattle rustling affecting the development of the sector. It is not clear how this Protocol has been domesticated at the national level and what degree of awareness there is about it between the livestock keepers and government officials at the local level to facilitate avoidance of such conflicts.
- **Value addition:** Apart from selected opportunities in dairy, pork, poultry and leather value chains, most of the other subsectors have significantly lower investments in value addition. Currently, due to other production and market related factors, the dairy and pork value chains are struggling, with many farmers shutting their farms due to high costs of production. Most value chains suffer from lack of sufficient and consistent supply of raw material which is a production factor.
- **Feed and fodder:** The quality and quantity of animal feed has faced a myriad of challenges. The feed industry looks for support from the crop sector for its raw material. The region does not have sufficient maize germ, soya and cotton seed cake, among others. The prices for these commodities are beyond the reach of many farmers. We are worried about the future of the sector if this continues.
- **Animal diseases (in-country and cross-border):** Transboundary infections have had a history of wiping out herds in their thousands. With the forthcoming El Niño rains which have become a norm in the region, , we are now aware of measures in place to prevent the aftermath of the rains on matters of diseases. We are aware of the ongoing consultations at the East African Community on cross-border veterinary protocols to manage sharing of information and management of such risks. We need further engagements with other stakeholders.

Our request

- The African farmers still hold the largest **population of indigenous breeds**. For a variety of livestock breeds, these breeds play an important role in the genetic improvement of current breeds but also in climate change adaptation. We call for support to assist our members in managing this important resource.
- **Financial inclusion:** There is a need to continuously invest in financing the sector. There are many opportunities, even for the youth in cottage industries. We still have not exploited the current value addition opportunities and there is need to develop more credit and risk mitigation products and tools. We call for more development funding to help develop some of these products but also build the capacity of farmers and practitioners to make the various subsectors attractive for private financing. We also call on governments to make more public investments contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- **Animal health:** Health is a component of quality of feed, nutrition and management. Investments for the continuous supply of quality food at an affordable cost are needed urgently. We need to also invest in a circular agronomy where we integrate nature-based solutions to our agriculture systems by integrating crop and livestock ventures. The capacity of our veterinary services is wanting especially in the rural areas. There is insufficient support as well as inadequate quality of animal medicine and, in some countries, proliferation of adulterated products. There is an opportunity of engaging and empowering cooperative societies as potential service providers in veterinary services both in providing the service as well as drugs. We are ready for such an engagement.
- **Policy awareness:** There has been a recurrent challenge regarding awareness of various policies by farmers. At the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation and World Farmers' Organisation we have engaged our members in creating forums where we invite policymakers at all levels to increase this awareness. Sometimes we have realized that even the border officials are unaware of such policies and at other times there has been no domestication of policies adopted at the regional or continental level.
- **Protection of the African livestock sector:** We have noted with concern global discussions about plant protein as an alternative to animal protein as well as the contributions of the livestock sector to global warming. We call on ILRI, the African Union

Commission and other African-based institutions to protect our livestock sector. The contribution of Africa to global warming is insignificant and, as such, should not be misconstrued as a reason to reduce funding. The role of livestock in nutrition and livelihoods of our people goes back many generations. The discussion about developing artificial protein to replace animal protein should also not affect our sector. We need African solutions to African problems. We need to support the African Continental Free Trade Area process and open up our borders to enhance livestock trade among ourselves and provide opportunities for more investments.

In conclusion, the livestock sector has over the years suffered from extremely low investments. This has made the entire sector and its actors extremely vulnerable to many shocks that the sector has faced. The advent of climate change has been the most significant of them all. The sector is important to Africa not just from a cultural and heritage perspective but also as a source of livelihood for a third of the population, a source of nutrition to millions of school-going children and a form of food security to over 800 million people in Africa. We have ignored this sector for far too long and we need affirmative action going forward in terms of protection, investments, capacity and partnerships at scale.

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