

Minutes Dairy Asia meeting

10-11 June 2018

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Background:

In 2016 the multi-stakeholder platform “Dairy Asia” was formed with the objective to collectively build a more sustainable Asian dairy sector. The common platform provides space for dialogue and the exchange of knowledge and experiences and encourages more coordination and collaboration amongst and within member countries. But while members agreed in the last multi-stakeholder meeting in Myanmar in November 2017 that Dairy Asia has a large potential and can add value to its members, the platform faces a number of challenges that threaten its continuation. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss these, reflect on the way the platform operates and develop a short-term strategy to secure the future of the platform.

The meeting was held on 10-11 June 2018 in Ulaanbaataar, Mongolia. It was jointly organized by FAO, the Mongolian Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry, the Dairy Board of Mongolia, the Mongolian Dairy Association, Global Communities, Food Industry Association and the Dairy Farming Promotion Organization of Thailand.

General structure of the meeting:

The National Focal Points and the Steering Committee need to decide if and how to continue Dairy Asia. Before taking this decision together the meeting participants reflected on the early ambitions for Dairy Asia and how the platform has evolved, identified persisting challenges to sustain the platform and create impact, and brainstormed how these could be addressed. Taking these challenges and potential fixes in consideration the group discussed the future of Dairy Asia (go/ no go) and developed an actionable workplan.

Since this meeting took place in Mongolia this gathering was also used as an opportunity to involve more Mongolian stakeholders and gain insights into the national dairy sector. Throughout the meeting two presentations provided more insights into the sector and on the second day the Mongolian farmers association organized a fieldtrip to visit dairy farmers and processors.

Reflection on Dairy Asia:

The participants reflected together on the functions of the platform and outputs with respect to what the network set out to do and what it has achieved so far.

The early ambitions and evolved functions are:

- Bringing sustainability to the forefront
- Knowledge and information sharing
- Collaboration
- Aligning actions (working more systematically with other stakeholders)
- Policy and strategy support
- investment partnerships support
- Facilitating collaborative R&D
- Support institutional development

Together participants selected a number of the most highly valued outputs, amongst them the genetics working group, the collaboration between the Thai DPO and Myanmar Dairy Association, and the annual report.

Participants also identified a number of different outputs that they would like to see in the future and asked for a more action oriented workplan for Dairy Asia.

Challenges:

In a next step the group identified together key challenges in sustaining the Dairy Asia platform and creating more impact. These are:

- Heavy reliance on the Dairy Asia secretariat. This is especially an issue as Vinod and Melina are both leaving the FAO Bangkok office and FAO cannot continue providing the same support.
- Need for support to facilitate and encourage communication between network members
- Need for champions to lead initiatives
- So far very limited activities to operationalize Dairy Asia
- National Focal Points and other member institutions are not active enough (lacking commitment)
- Narrow base of stakeholders (some stakeholders groups are not sufficiently integrated into the network)
- Lacking finances for maintaining secretariat and funding activities
- Inconsistency of policies at the national level disrupt systematic work and commitment to Dairy Asia

The group recognized that many of the challenges are interrelated and could be addressed at the same time. Only addressing only a single challenge would not be sufficient to continue Dairy Asia.

Responses:

The participants then brainstormed in smaller groups around their tables about short-term or long-term fixes to these challenges.

Ideas for the secretariat:

- To reduce the workload of the secretariat the working groups should function more autonomous. Group leaders or their respective institutes could take on the coordinating role.
- Also, countries could alternatively host meetings and take on the local logistical arrangements. Thailand, Myanmar and Mongolia have already hosted such meetings. Members should try to find sponsors for individual meetings.
- FAO needs to keep providing guidance. But different institutes in the countries could alternatively host the secretariat and take on administrative, communication and coordinating work.

Ideas for communication:

- It was proposed to have national digital platforms to share information and discuss Dairy Asia activities, such a websites or Facebook pages.
- More frequent national multi-stakeholder meetings can encourage more dialogue and collaboration in the countries. These could be hosted by the NFPs and would require only limited funds.

Ideas to gain more champions:

- Institutions should provide support and incentive to individuals to take on lead coordinating roles. This could simply be allowing individuals to commit some of their working hours to Dairy Asia and providing recognition to the important work they are doing.

Ideas how national institutions can become more active:

- As mentioned earlier these should be more national multi-stakeholder meetings to encourage DA activities in the countries
- The national focal points and other institutions could create a Dairy Asia support group that works on Dairy Asia throughout the year when senior staff that come to the meetings are too pre-occupied with other work. They could allocate office space and staff time to Dairy Asia. And the institutes could also assign a contact person that channels the communication instead that all emails land on the table of the senior staff.
- National dairy sectors could also assign alternate focal points or rotate the position to generate more ownership for Dairy Asia amongst different institutes.
- Institutes could provide an annual workplan and show progress.
- Dairy Asia should discuss topics with high stakes and ledge onto any on-going efforts.

Ideas on financing the secretariat and DA activities:

- Private sector could finance some social corporate responsibility activities linked to Dairy Asia.
- Dairy Asia could also ask for annual membership fees.
- Institutes could set aside national currency funds to implement Dairy Asia activities in their own countries. Maybe they could also embed some activities in existing dairy programmes.
- National Focal Points should be actively involved in mobilizing funds.
- Meetings could be held on the sideline of larger conferences/workshops where members are going anyway

Decision on how to continue from here (Go/ No go):

Amongst participants there was a general sentiment to continue the platform but also recognition that this decisions must be coupled with a commitment to action from the membership and everyone present in the meeting. Thus in a next step the group developed together an actionable workplan.

Actionable workplan:

The objective was to collect different commitments from the members present in the room. Who would do what and when to help sustain the platform or generate action? The commitments we captured in a large table.

What	When	Who
Find a solution for the secretariat	By 1 st Jan 2019	FAO, APHCA
Annual Dairy Asia meeting	2019	To be determined
Dairy Asia Awards	2019	Award committee, to be determined

Setting up online tools for communication/ information sharing	2018	National Dairy Authority of the Philippines
Creating expertise rosters	2019	National Dairy Authority of the Philippines
Printing and free of charge distribution of translated feeding manuals (another batch)	2019	Vietnam Dairy Association
Finalize genetic breeding guidelines	Dec 2018	Technical Working Group on Dairy Genetics
Genetics information library (in google docs folder, freely accessible)	On-going	Technical Working Group on Dairy Genetics
Training on operationalizing genetic improvement programmes (managers, one per member country, need to pay for own travel)	2019	Technical Working Group on Dairy Genetics/ NDDDB of India
Meeting on national stakeholders in Mongolia to have a dialogue around Dairy Asia	2018	Mongolian Dairy Board
Training on total mixed ration - animal nutrition (could be launch of a new working group)	2018	APHCA and DLD
Workshop on climate smart dairy	2019	APHCA/ sponsors
Sharing of XXX (on dairy)	2018	
Regional workshop on dairy genetic improvement (Genome) in Thailand	Last week of Jan 2019	Katsetsart University in Thailand and DPO, open for other members to join
Training for Myanmar dairy farmers and dairy food processors in Yangon, Myanmar	Last week of June 2018	DPO, DLD, MDA, LBVD, Betagro Thailand