

Chhattisgarh Livestock Policy Development Process

As a newly formed state, Chhattisgarh is uniquely poised to define its own destiny and is taking many innovative steps to keep its promises to the people of the state. The development of a vision document, the current process of developing a pro poor livestock policy, using the committed and talented human resources of the state, are brave new initiatives of the government.

CALPI a programme of IC in India, funded by SDC, has since 2004, been collaborating with the State Government of Chhattisgarh to develop a pro- poor livestock policy. In order to achieve this CALPI along with local coordinating agency CARD, mounted a well planned strategy for policy formulation.

A sensing mission that was fielded at the onset found that in order for the policy to be workable, the administrative capacity of the veterinary professionals needed much improvement. A draft roadmap was developed that entailed support to the AHD for (i) capacity development plan focusing on sensitization of stakeholders through trainings and exposures as a prelude to policy making and (ii) livestock sector review that would form the basis of policy draft. In November 2004 MOU was signed between GoCG and CALPI regarding livestock policy formulation.

The institutional framework for policy formulation was later developed in 2005 by bringing together various stakeholders namely NGOs, private companies and cooperatives, Veterinary College and the Animal Husbandry Department (AHD) staff into a heterogeneous Resource Group (RG). This was followed by formation of a facilitation group, and sub-sector study groups. The sub-sector study groups jointly researched various livestock sub-sectors and drew out recommendations that fed into the policy. They also identified local priorities through PRA and captured farmer's preferences for animal's species and service delivery options. Various group participatory meetings with policy makers and consultations with animal husbandry professionals in public and private sectors, civil society organizations and farmers were organized that further strengthened the process.

This document is an attempt to capture the experiences of the participants through the period of policy formulation. According to the participants the entire exercise conducted in order to develop the policy has been effective in generating a critical mass of stakeholders acting in developing and implementing a forward looking policy that is both need based and implementable. Other than equipping the participants with knowledge it has impacted their mindsets and developed confidence in them to proactively contribute to the sector.

The biggest challenges laid with the executors in order generate cohesiveness and manage the multi-stakeholder endeavor involving the Sponsors (SDC-IC-CALPI); the Executors (AHD, CALPI, and CARD); Key Players (AHD including BILDP and CSLDA, AVC, Dairy Federation, University, NDDB, NGOs). Each agency/ player had to be tackled and dealt with in order to yield appropriate results in the given time frame. The challenges were taken in zeal in order to ensure the success of the program.

The policy draft is has been approved by the state cabinet, the first state to do so. Among others, it speaks of a strategic shift towards decentralizing service delivery, market diversification through producer group formation, establishing cross linkages with line departments and private sector and mounting an extension system in collaboration with village institutions. More specifically, the policy addresses overriding pro-poor concerns and places poverty reduction as its primary goal. It recognizes that the livestock sector has a significant potential for improving the livelihood of the landless people and small and marginalized farmers.

The mandate of CARD and CALPI was an empowered group of veterinarians and local farmers prepare their own policy, and it was achieved with the cabinet approval of the policy draft prepared in a participatory mode. The institutional mechanisms that were needed to take the policy forward are however absent. Concerted efforts are required to gain political will and persuade implementation of the policy.