

Joint Communique, 19 July 2024

## ILRI - UQ Strategic alliance signed to improve sustainability of livestock-based food systems

**Alliance Launch: Innovative collaboration to deliver climate-resilient livestock and mixed-farming systems in tropical Australia and developing countries in the Indo-Pacific and Africa**

The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and The University of Queensland (UQ) have a long history of collaboration on livestock-based food system research and development. For example, in recent years, we have developed sustainable intensification pathways for East African mixed farming systems that enhance community resilience. We also currently collaborate on animal health, livestock vaccine development, and genetics.

UQ is Australia's top ranked university for agriculture and a world-leader in tropical and sub-tropical agricultural livestock science research and training. UQ has decades of experience working in Africa and Indo-Pacific and is ideally positioned to be a strategic alliance partner to support ILRI achieve its mission of improving people's lives in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) through livestock science that contributes to equitable and resilient livestock systems that deliver food system transformation with climate and environmental benefits.

Outcomes of this strategic alliance will also contribute to UQ's global engagement goals and benefit Australia's domestic livestock industries through the development of improved technologies and practices, as well as enhanced biosecurity.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, ILRI is a CGIAR research centre working across Africa and Asia. For five decades ILRI has undertaken livestock research for development, contributing to solving the challenges facing millions of people engaged in raising animals, processing, selling, and consuming milk, meat, and eggs throughout Africa and Asia. ILRI is co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Ethiopia and has 13 additional country offices across Asia and Africa.

UQ and ILRI have complementary science strengths in several critical areas essential to underpin the transformation of livestock and mixed farming systems to a climate resilient, profitable and sustainable future. These include genetics, breeding, mixed farming systems, animal nutrition, health and welfare. Initially, the ILRI-UQ alliance will focus on building the capacity and skills necessary to enable transformation of livestock systems in five low- and mid-income countries in South East Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos PDR) and East Africa (Ethiopia and Tanzania) in partnership with local universities and National Agricultural Research and Extension Systems (NARES). In partnership with other Australian agencies and national partners, UQ will further leverage the alliance for the benefit of Pacific nations.

The alliance will specifically focus on:

1. Establishment of a fellowship and graduate certificate program between UQ, local universities and NARES; facilitated in partnership with ILRI to provide graduate certificate level training for national program staff on course curriculum development and delivery, as well as the latest livestock and mixed farming system mitigation and adaptation research methodologies, technologies and best practices.
2. Launch of a large-scale PhD program with co-supervision between UQ, ILRI and local university faculties to nurture the next generation of livestock agriculture research scientists from LMICs in Africa and Asia.
3. Alignment of relevant existing research initiatives and co-design of new research projects in partnership with NARES and local universities to accelerate the transition to climate resilient livestock and mixed farming food systems in Asia and Africa.

The ILRI-UQ alliance will have global impact with a strong focus on building in partnership with national partners to meet the research and implementation needs of programs prioritised by countries in South East Asia and East Africa. The alliance will further partner with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, the Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade, the broader CGIAR system, and other relevant development partners and investors.

## Quotes

### **Brett Lovegrove, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global Partnerships), The University of Queensland**

“Global engagement and support for developing countries is central to UQ’s mission and our vision of ‘knowledge leadership for a better world’. UQ has a unique comparative advantage in tropical agricultural research and education due to both our subtropical location in Queensland and number 4 global ranking in agriculture (NTU 2023). Through our co-investment in this strategic alliance, we look forward to undertaking new education and research initiatives that will have enormous international impact and improve the climate resilience of our critical livestock food systems that underpin the livelihoods of 1.7 billion people worldwide.”

### **Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Chair, CGIAR System Board**

“We proudly commit to partnering with UQ to work together to deliver on the CGIAR strategy of transforming food, land and water systems in a climate crisis.”

### **Appolinaire Djikeng, Director General, ILRI**

“We are excited to establish this research alliance between ILRI and UQ as it aligns to major new programs being established including investments by several donors to deliver climate solutions for livestock systems of the global south and the new CGIAR research program on sustainable animal and aquatic food systems, which will start in 2025.”

### **Martyn Jeggo, Chair, ILRI Board**

“As a scientist from Australia and Chair of the ILRI Board, I am thrilled to see the establishment of this alliance. ILRI works at the interface between advanced scientific research and on-the-ground reality in LMICs. This strategic position will allow ILRI and UQ to translate cutting-edge research findings into tangible solutions that promote sustainable development within planetary boundaries.”

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