

Response by PATRICK MOORE Chairman of IMS Sustainability Committee

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Introductory Remarks

Why is it important to actively engage in discussion about the sustainability of the meat sector?
As you have pointed out, doing nothing is not an option.

Sustainability is now centre stage and it will remain so. The cold truth is that the world is using up resources at one and a half times the rate than the planet can sustain.

You have heard the forecasts. Over the next 30-40 years as the world seeks to expand food production by up to 70 percent to meet growing demand it needs at same time to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a similar order. In its broadest sense what this comes down to is the capability of this generation to meet its needs without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet theirs.

For our industry, it is the challenge to produce more from less; to produce more high quality animal protein and to do so in a sustainable fashion because it is also forecast that meat consumption will continue on an upward trend, particularly due to the rise of the developing countries and their aspirations to enjoy the lifestyles of developed countries

But how do we reconcile all the competing demands being made on our industry? Concerns about climate change, limits on land, water and other natural resources? There is now only half the arable land per head of population than there was when IMS/OPIC was founded some 40 or so years ago.

Role of IMS

Let me first give you the global view as the Chairman of the IMS Sustainable Meat Committee. IMS is a non-profit making organization that brings together meat and livestock organisations from around the world:

- We represent many viewpoints, many different supply situations for reasons of climate, soil composition and tradition. We have more than 90 members representing most regions of the world: Europe, Americas, Oceania, Asia, and also in Africa (S. Africa, Namibia)
- The unique strength of IMS lies in its ability to reach across national frontiers, bringing meat industry professionals together to deal with the issues that are common to the industry. We do this by networking: meetings, workshops, newsletters, sharing of ideas, best practices, common goals
- We are also continuing to strengthen relationships and to have a voice with those world organisations such as the FAO, the OECD and OIE whose work and influence impinges on our industry right around the world.
- Our objective on sustainability is to foster an open, balanced view of the impacts that the red meat and livestock industry has and is likely to have on the environment
- Our international perspective is to focus on practical actions and economically viable

responses by industry to grow while at the same time being in harmony with the environment.

- We are not about making comparisons about which production system is better, or about which region is better - this a destructive debate to which there is no right answer. And if we engage in it, we will only fall into the hands of our critics.
- Our goal is to foster inclusive action in which producers in many different systems, in all regions of the world, can participate
- The aim is for a culture of continuous improvement –sustainability is a JOURNEY, not a DESTINATION. Therefore, we are competing with ourselves, to do better tomorrow than today.

Opportunities and challenges for Uruguay

In Uruguay, I know first-hand from my visits to your farms and meat plants that you have many strengths, notably a tremendous potential on pasture. In the comparison you have just given (pasture versus feedlot), you list the criticisms of each system. I believe we must also celebrate the strengths. And by the way, even feedlots need feeder cattle, which come from pasture systems, so actually all beef production has a basis in pasture.

- We should note that in many cases the land is not productive in other uses –so we are converting human inedible grass into high quality protein.
- We should also count the positive economic contributions: employment opportunities, higher standard of living, the contribution to long-term food security, etc all helped by the livestock industry.
- Moreover, at IMS we are also exploring how to present the other positive contributions from the industry in the areas of carbon sequestration in soils, reduced erosion, water quality, and biodiversity.
- Also don't forget the potential to turn a problem into a solution –to turn manure into a source of fertilizer, bio-energy.
- Nor should we forget to inform the consumer of the many benefits of a well-balanced diet in which red meat provides a high quality protein AND essential micronutrients (iron, zinc, B vitamins)
- Finally, livestock and meat industries nationally and collectively can do more to promote this more balanced discussion and in the process lead debate towards what for us are the three pillars of sustainable production; economically, socially and environmentally sustainable,

IMS Initiatives

What is IMS doing to promote a more balanced discussion?

We are engaging with other international organisations and are committed to building a multi-stakeholder dialogue with them to further our aims

Let me tell you about two specific initiatives undertaken by IMS, together with the FAO and other stakeholders in the meat industry, to gain a better understanding of sustainability.

The first is a three-year partnership with the FAO in which a global framework (guidelines) for life-cycle analysis (LCA) in the meat sector will be formulated. IMS has now the mandate to represent the global beef, lamb, and pork associations. Other international associations will represent the poultry, dairy, and feed sectors.

Currently, many different methods are being used to measure and assess the environmental impacts of animal rearing. This causes confusion and makes it difficult to compare results and set priorities for the continuous improvement of environmental performance along supply chains. The partnership will work on a number of fronts to strengthen the science of environmental benchmarking of livestock supply chains.

Activities planned for the initial phase of the three-year project (let's call it the LCA Partnership) include:

- Establishing science-based methods and agreed guidelines on how to quantify livestock's carbon footprint, covering various types of livestock operations and rearing systems;
- Creating a database of greenhouse gas emission factors generated for the production of different kinds of animal feed - feed production and use offer significant opportunities for reducing livestock emissions.
- Developing a methodology for measuring other important environmental criteria, such as water consumption and nutrient losses, and biodiversity.
- Initiating a communications campaign to promote use of the partnership's methodologies and findings and from a well-informed position we have also to be prepared to engage with our critics. Just taking a defensive line is not good enough any more.

Our second initiative is at policy level and more long-term in nature where IMS is part of a separate FAO led multi-stakeholder undertaking entitled, the Global Agenda of Action in Support of Sustainable Livestock Sector Development and is the logical follow-up to the more technical LCA Partnership just mentioned.

The Global Agenda of Action will focus on the improvement of resource-use efficiency in the livestock sector to support livelihoods, long-term food security and economic growth while safeguarding other environmental and public health outcomes. It is being built around the notion that demand growth for livestock products will likely continue for decades to come, as incomes and human populations continue to grow. Such growth will need to be accommodated within the context of a finite and sometimes dwindling natural resource base, and will be faced with the need to respond to climate change, both adapting and mitigating.

Demand growth also presents opportunities for social and economic development that many developing countries would not want to miss. In addition, the livestock sector provides numerous opportunities for enhanced food security and livelihood support.

Stakeholders have agreed that the Agenda should initially focus on three areas:

- Closing the efficiency gap: Application of existing technology and institutional frameworks to generate significant resource use efficiency, economic and social gains;
- Restoring value to grasslands: Harnessing grass/rangeland's potential to contribute more

to the environment and to sustainable livelihoods; and

- Towards zero discharge: Reducing nutrient overload and greenhouse gas emissions through cost effective recycling and recovery of nutrients and energy contained in animal manure.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, I would like to end as I began by endeavouring to put all this into the larger perspective. Generally, human activity in all sectors (housing, energy, transportation) is having a very negative impact on the environment.

The need to change is by no means confined to our industry.

IMS involvement with the FAO and other influential bodies is based on the view that it is in our own best interests to understand how future policies might impact on our sector. We believe that it is better that we anticipate and act rather than being told what to do and, let's be very clear, the challenges ahead are not just about possible new regulatory frameworks.

As this audience well knows from your position as significant participants in the International meat trade, environmental responsibility and carbon foot-printing are also live issues in the marketplace. Consumer awareness is becoming the principal driver of decision making among powerful retailers and food service companies. Other issues, such as animal welfare, also concern modern society in general and deserve our continuing attention.

Overall we are looking to a future that promises great opportunities but presents huge challenges. Successfully achieving our goals requires a clear vision of the journey we need to travel backed up by concerted actions to get there. Put another way, if you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.

IMS will play its part and will act as a catalyst to champion a more balanced discussion in which all pillars of sustainability – social, environmental and economics – are considered. Let's face it if we don't get the economics right then we are out of business.

We are also ready to play a central role in communicating what our members are doing and planning by the sharing of knowledge and experiences to work together for our future.

Finally, let me say that IMS strongly supports, advocates and wishes to encourage meat industry leaders, not just in Uruguay, but around the world to progress inventive strategies to achieve our common goal to supply more high quality product to an expanding world population with the assurance that it is ethically produced, safe, wholesome and in harmony with the environment.

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