

## **Animal health in development**

Conveners:

*Johanna Lindahl*, International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya, Uppsala University, Sweden, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden, [J.Lindahl@cgiar.org](mailto:J.Lindahl@cgiar.org)

*Jonas Johansson Wensman*, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden, [jonas.wensman@slu.se](mailto:jonas.wensman@slu.se)

Animal health is crucial for any livestock production to be sustainable, but for smallholders in low- and middle-income countries, healthy animals are even more important due to their vulnerability. Healthy animals lead to higher productivity and production efficiency, for example by increased growth rate and decreased feed intake. The need for treatments with antibiotics is also decreased when improving animal health. Thus, improving animal health in livestock production is a key factor for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals addressing hunger and poverty.

For resource-constrained smallholder farmers, death of a single animal could be devastating for the family livelihoods. Investments in animal health are therefore important for farmers, but such investments are most likely limited due to poor resources. There is also a lack of proper animal health service infrastructure, and smallholder production is not always prioritized. Gender aspects might also be important in this regard, due to the fact that it is common for women to keep and/or be care-takers of small livestock in smallholder settings. Thus, several factors are limiting the demand, use and infrastructure of animal health services.

Most investments in research and disease control strategies related to animal health target diseases listed by the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) causing severe outbreaks, especially in naïve populations, or are diseases with zoonotic potential. Such diseases are of great importance, but the more “silent” chronic and endemic diseases should not be forgotten. Endemic diseases have a considerable impact on animal health and livestock production, and strategies for tackling those diseases to improve animal health for food and nutrition security have to be put in place.

In this panel, we will address the questions how we can improve animal health, develop animal health services to reach marginalized groups and engage communities to invest more in animal health. Baseline research on animal disease prevalence and occurrence is important fundamental knowledge to answer these questions.