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**Forage demand and adoption by smallholder livestock keepers  
workshop held at the International Livestock Research Institute,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
June 18–20, 2001**

Livestock are important assets of the rural poor and play a critical role in the intensification of agriculture in most farming systems of developing countries. They make vital contributions to the production of food and essential nutrients and income generation, provide opportunities for employment, help maintain soil fertility through nutrient recycling, serve as a source of farm draught power and transport of goods to and from markets, and provide the means to reduce risk and vulnerability to climatic and financial shocks.

The inability of producers to feed their livestock adequately throughout the year remains the most widespread technical constraint to increased livestock productivity in developing countries. Livestock are mostly fed on crop residues and natural pastures in tropical areas. Planted forages provide a stable year-round fodder supply to supplement these low-quality feeds and would also provide ground cover, stabilise the soil and act as wind-breaks to prevent soil erosion for natural resource management. Leguminous forages increase soil fertility through microbial nitrogen fixation and decomposition of leaf litter. However, despite the recognised value of forages, availability of germplasm and seeds, sown forages have not been widely adopted in developing countries.

In order to understand the needs of poor livestock keepers, assess current levels of forage adoption and understand the constraints to wider adoption of forages, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) sponsored an international workshop on 'Forage Demand and Adoption by Smallholder Livestock Keepers' under the auspices of the Consultative Group on International Agriculture (CGIAR) Systemwide

Livestock Programme (SLP) at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Ethiopia from June 18–20, 2001. The workshop was organised by ILRI in collaboration with the Animal Production Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT) and the SLP. The workshop included papers from forage research and development staff, who work closely and in a participatory mode with smallholder farmers, and provided an opportunity to share information on the extent of forage adoption by rural poor livestock keepers, identify constraints to increased use of forages and assess future demand for sown forages.

The workshop was attended by 48 participants, representing ILRI, CIAT, FAO, the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and national partners from Australia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand and Zimbabwe. Presentations and working groups covered the themes of:

- Farmer demand for forages
- Case studies on uptake of forage innovations in livestock production systems
- National strategies to promote forage dissemination and uptake
- Constraints to adoption

These papers cover a wide range of potential fodder technologies used by smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa, south-east Asia and central America. They provide information on the current extent of sown forages, the future demand and potential adoption of forage innovations and point

to opportunities to target future development and research on forage-related innovations that can enhance the livelihoods of poor smallholder farmers. The collection of papers is a substantial contribution to the current state of knowledge on forage adoption and use for livestock feed in developing countries.

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expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DFID, nor of the institutions who organised the workshop.

*Jean Hanson*

Project Leader, Forage Genetic Resources,  
International Livestock Research Institute,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

