

ILRI Ref: DG/Let/324/2019

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Secretariat of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) of the
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: fao-hq@fao.org

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Ref: Support to the request from the Government of the Mongolia for an
International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists**

The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) presents its sincere greetings to you and your esteemed office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. ILRI has the honour of writing in support of the request of the Government of Mongolia for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

We believe that the designation of an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists would provide an opportunity to raise the profile and support for rangelands and pastoral issues globally and nationally, improve understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by rangelands and pastoralists, and direct increased attention and resources to them.

An estimated one billion smallholder farmers in developing countries depend on livestock for food and income, with up to 500 million pastoralists. Frequently generating up to 40 percent of agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP), livestock is important for both national and local economies. The contribution of the pastoral sector to the agricultural GDP ranges between 15 and 40% in dryland countries and is as high as 60% in countries that consist primarily of rangelands. These livestock provide food (meat and milk) for families and generate additional income through sale and/or livestock products. Livestock also supply manure for crops, leather, and draught power for tilling, and transport.

*Patron: Professor Peter C Doherty AC, FAA, FRS
Animal scientist, Nobel Prize Laureate for Physiology or Medicine–1996*

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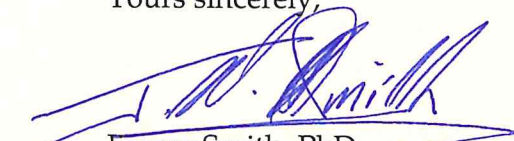
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Extensive systems are well adapted to drought and other crises given the right support including enabling policies and legislation. Demand for livestock products in low- and middle-income countries is expected to more than double during the next 20 years.

This offers an immense opportunity for a profitable and sustainable increase in livestock production – in particular in Africa – by smallholders and pastoralists who already produce the majority of the continent's milk, meat and eggs. Further development of the pastoral and rangeland systems could spur employment and economic growth in rural areas where there are few other economic options and where millions of young people are currently unemployed.

With this in mind, please accept our support for the request of the Government of Mongolia for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Yours sincerely,



Jimmy Smith, PhD
Director General