

Expert Consultation Meeting, Cairo, 9–11 March 2008

The Expert Consultation on "Developing a Small Ruminant Research and Development Strategy for Rural Poverty Reduction in Non-Tropical Dry Areas of the Near East and North Africa" was held from 9–11 March 2008 Organized by Icarda and hosted by the Agricultural Research Centre (ARC), Cairo, Egypt.

Dr. Salah Galal, AARINENA member of the priority setting task force participated in the meeting along with 60 participants including senior representatives of IFAD, ILRI, FAO, University of Florida/GL-CRSP, World Bank, CIRAD, INRA, ACSAD, AAAID, and Swiss College of Agriculture, ICARDA, NARS and Universities from Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, and Turkey, as well as NGOs from Egypt and Sudan.

Participants were grouped into three key areas (pastoral system, mixed crop-livestock system, and intensive system) for detailed discussions. Research questions, available results, dissemination pathways and partners for various Research and Development (R & D) issues and future priority research areas were identified as follows:

- Feed resources production/productivity
- Access to water and improving water use efficiency
- Community organizations/partnerships – enhancing the scale effects
- Policies to empower communities, enhance competitiveness, and promote food quality and standards
- Value addition and diversification of products
- Product labeling/branding and traceability as

strategies for market expansion

- Analysis of commodity value chains of SR products from smallholder systems
- Strategies to better utilize local and regional genetic resources for food security and poverty alleviation
- Risk management, drought mitigation and climate change
- Stratification strategies in and across systems
- A regional (multi-country) strategy for the management of trans-boundary diseases

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis questionnaire was distributed to participants, collected and analyzed. The top three identified in each category were:

- Strengths: Suitability to environmental conditions (adaptable to the ecology); Diversity of breeds and products; Asset of the poor, play major role in food security and poverty alleviation.
- Weakness: Animal diseases (health problems); Shortage of feed resources; Lack of veterinary services.
- Opportunities: Demand for special products; Possibility of institutional coordination for technical support; Good income for poor and women.
- Threats: Climatic change; Diseases and health related issues; Increasing feed cost.

ICARDA will utilize the outputs of this meeting and a follow up electronic consultation "challenge dialogue with experts from institutions and countries in the NENA region that could not participate" to develop a small ruminant research and development strategy in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region.