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***SMALL SCALE LIVESTOCK FARMING AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY***

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# **SMALL SCALE LIVESTOCK FARMING AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY**

**A position paper by VSF Europa**

**February 2012**

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières

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## ACRONYMS

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| FS      | Food Sovereignty  |
| SSF     | Small Scale Farming   |
| SSLF    | Small Scale Livestock Farming   |
| VSF     | Vétérinaires Sans Frontières  |
| VSFE    | Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Europa                                   |
| FAO CFS | UN Food and Agriculture Organization Committee on World Food Security |
| ICARRD  | International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development     |
| GMO     | Genetically Modified Organisms  |
| IFAD    | International Fund for Agricultural Development                       |
| NGOs    | Non-Governmental Organizations  |
| CSOs    | Civil Society Organizations   |

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## ABSTRACT

VSF Europa recognizes Food Sovereignty (FS) as a guiding principle for its actions. FS is a complex concept that goes beyond food security and encompasses not only a guaranteed access to food, but also democratic control over the food system—from production and processing, to distribution, marketing, and consumption. The FS concept was improved and modified many times over the last 15 years, leading to the current definition, adopted through the "*Declaration of Nyéléni*", stating that "Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems." At the same time VSFE, through its long experience, strongly supports Small Scale Farming systems to enhance Food Sovereignty. The past half-century of highly intensive agricultural expansion has stricken the world's peasantry, dispossessing them of land, water, and genetic resources through processes of enclosures and displacement. These processes threaten not only equitable income distribution but also the natural equilibrium of the environment and biodiversity. There are many highly productive, equitable, and sustainable alternatives to the present industrial practices and corporate monopolies holding the world's food hostage, and one of them is Small Scale Livestock Farming, a production method bearing the imprint of the structural link between economic activity and family structure. There is a wide variety of SSLF systems, with huge differences between examples, and dependent on the context. Even if there is a huge variety between SSF systems, they all withhold a common pattern because they are all based on a strong relationship between individuals involved in ownership, management and farm work. Also, the strong relationship between generations concerning the knowledge transmission about the local environment, with its peculiar plants, land and livestock management practices, shaped after centuries of exchanges and trial/error experience, is essential in SSF practices. This production method needs to be put on the agenda of international agricultural policies for many reasons. First of all because it provides jobs and decreases rural exodus, it implies a larger amount of production units to enhance a more equitably distributed income. Furthermore, it is more effective in improving livelihoods and better quality of life for poor rural households. An increase in direct income at a local level would eventually encourage investments, therefore contributing to vitalize the economies of rural areas. Small scale livestock farming is also very important because of its positive and sustainable effects on the environment and its relationship with social aspects. Summarizing its main characteristics clarifies the link between small scale livestock farming and food sovereignty. Globally, 75% of the people suffering from hunger are small farmers and inhabitants of rural areas. A huge amount of them depend on a few courtyard heads for daily food provision. Therefore, no successful program against hunger can ignore the urgent need to support the smallest household farming activities, as well as SSLF systems.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

First proposed in 1996 by *La Via Campesina*, Food Sovereignty (FS) is now a cornerstone paradigm for an increasing number of NGOs and Social Movements committed to rural development, as well as for many questions related to Food and Agriculture. It encompasses a wide range of claims and a vision on Food production, Food governance and Food Justice that recognises the crucial role of small food producers, including indigenous peoples, pastoral and mobile livestock keepers, farmers, fisher folks, rural youths and women. VSF Europa also recognised Food Sovereignty as a guiding principle. However, the many discussions that were held during and after the VSF Europa gathering in Teramo (Italy) in 2009 prove that there is a relevant distinction between what could be defined as Food Sovereignty, and as to what extent NGOs and Social Movements assess the '*Food Sovereignty compliance*' of their actions. Therefore, a position paper on this subject has the double purpose to define a common position for orienting our actions, and to provide the background for a fundamental reference for anyone outside the network. In particular we want to demonstrate the strong relationship between Food Sovereignty and Small Scale Livestock Farming (SSLF) since our long experience showed how important this is for so many people. We will describe these two concepts and subsequently we will explain why we are convinced that supporting Small Scale Livestock Farming can contribute to Food Sovereignty. Through our projects concerning animal and public health, we had the opportunity to understand what SSLF means for peoples and how it contributes to their livelihood and access to food.

## 2. FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

### 2.1. DEFINITION AND PILLARS

In accordance to its very nature, the definition Food Sovereignty was improved and modified many times over the last 15 years, especially at the time of large international gatherings of food producers and their widest platforms. Some of these gatherings were independently organised (such as Nyeleni 2007, Nyeleni Europe 2011) while others were specifically held in parallel to particularly relevant meetings and conferences of International Organisations dealing with hunger, food policies and the global governance of food trade (such as the FAO CFS, since 1996, or the ICARRD Conference of 2006). The main point is that small scale farmers, rural women, youth, and indigenous peoples were the most prominent figures at these gatherings. A few definitions are now largely accepted by producers' organisations and social movements, with slight differences (M. Windfuhr and J. Jonsén, 2005). At the Forum for Food Sovereignty in

Sélingué, Mali, 27 February 2007, about 500 delegates from over 80 countries adopted the "*Declaration of Nyéléni*", which says:

**"Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations."**

Food sovereignty (literally, people's self-government of the food system) is a complex concept, of which definitions and implications are inherently dynamic. It builds on the analysis and integration of several factors, which are relevant in order to establish a fair system of food production and management. These factors enable it to respect the sovereignty of its main actors: small farmers, associations of producers, indigenous communities, artisanal fishers, and also the whole community of food consumers, i.e. the world population at large (A. Dessi, et al., 2009).

The main concepts underlying Food Sovereignty are built on the following fundamental elements:

- the right to food, that means the right of consumers to decide what to eat, and to know how and by whom their food is produced;
- local agricultural production and consumption;
- access of small farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers and landless people to land, water, seeds, livestock and credit;
- the right of small farmers to produce food; agro-ecology for example is a method to produce food, obtain sustainable means of subsistence, preserve the landscape and environmental integrity.

- the right of people to take part in decision-making processes on agricultural policies at all levels (local, regional and international trade) and to be included in policies on sustainable use of resources;
- the recognition of women rights as farmers/peasants who play a major role in agriculture in general, and food production in particular;
- the right of countries to protect themselves from massive food and agricultural imports;
- the need for food and agricultural prices to be linked to production costs and the abolishment of dumping practices;

These priorities have been further developed in February 2007, during the World Forum held in Mali.

## 2.2 PRESENT SITUATION AND FUTURE GLOBAL SCENARIOS

Presently, global protein demand is increasing as a consequence of increasing world population and changes in eating habits. Particularly, increasing consumption of animal products – mostly meat – in developing countries is highly relevant (Marta G. Rivera Ferre, *A Viable Food Future*, 2010). This implies that demand for land dedicated to animal production will increase. Moreover, arable land will be increasingly used to produce ‘feed’ for machines (so called “feed engines”) through the production of agro-fuels and grains as fodder for livestock. Land grabbing operations worldwide subtract valuable land from local communities and from local government control. This process does not only involve arable land: government plans to exploit extensive surfaces of drylands for the large-scale cultivation of bio-fuel crops, such as *Jatropha* spp. (e.g. *Jatropha curcas*), exist in India and Ethiopia and threaten the livelihoods of local pastoralists. Promoters of *Jatropha* support the hypothesis that the culture of this crop does not compete with food crops. *Jatropha* only grows in areas not suitable for the cultivation of food crops. Such statements totally ignore that these very “wastelands” are the main resource base for mobile livestock keepers whose herds convert the natural and drought-adapted vegetation of drylands into food, energy and manure.

These recent threats worsen the situation of local farmers, who in most developing countries don’t receive support for many years already. In many cases wrong policies were adopted, assuming that industrial development and scale economies applied to agriculture would have put an end to hunger in the world.

Over the previous centuries, countless agro-ecological techniques have been developed by local communities, that combine a sound knowledge of plant varieties and animal breeds adapted to local conditions, to the inter-annual and seasonal variability of ecosystems and to the characteristics of many ‘marginal and low productive’ areas. Due to their natural features, agro-ecological production and breeding systems are very

important because of the use of local species that are able to cope with sudden natural disasters and extreme events (such as droughts, pests and so forth). They are very effective in the adaptation to climate seasonal and inter-annual variability, holding therefore a high capacity to cope with climate change and to contribute to the mitigation of it, through the wise use of grasslands in particular (A Viable Food Future, 2010).

The past half-century of highly intensive agricultural expansion has stricken the world's peasantry, dispossessing them of land, water, and genetic resources through processes of enclosures and displacement. The difficulty of confronting the extensive attacks on small holders has been a challenge for agrarian movements in the South. This has also been a problem for organisations in the North seeking to protect family farms and to counter the expansion of large-scale industrial agriculture with more sustainable forms of production (Eric Holt-Giménez, 2009). Food sovereignty is a much deeper concept than food security because it is not just the guarantee of access to food, but more importantly democratic control over the food system – from production and processing, to distribution, marketing, and consumption. Whether applied to countries in the global South working to re-establish national food production, to farmers protecting their seed biodiversity from GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms), or to rural-urban communities, setting up their own direct marketing systems. Food sovereignty aims to democratize and transform our food systems. For decades, family farmers, rural women and communities around the world have resisted the destruction of their native seeds and have worked hard to diversify their crops, protect their soil, conserve their water resources and forests, and establish local gardens, markets, businesses, and community-based food systems. There are many highly productive, equitable, and sustainable alternatives to the present industrial practices and corporate monopolies holding the world's food hostage. Millions of people are working to advance these alternatives (J. Pretty, et al., 2006).

Small scale livestock farming systems are among them, especially if we consider that two third of the world's poor are strongly dependent on livestock.

### 3. SMALL SCALE FARMING

#### 3.1. DEFINITION

The term “family farming” or small scale farming describes a type of production system that bears the imprint of the structural link between economic activity and family structure. This relationship influences the decision making process, the type of farming, work organisation, production management and the handing down of the farm as an inheritance. Small Scale Farming (SSF) is a type of production system where the farm unit (a single farmer or a couple or a family or a cooperative...) is at the same time the owner, the worker and the person who makes the decisions. This means that he enters



the decision process and he plays a central role in a number of choices encompassing breeding and transformation for example the plant and type of grain to sow, the number of animals and their breed, the seasonal pastures and related pastoral mobility, the selling of livestock and the marketing of the final products. SSF gives farmers an active role and recognises their responsibility, linking consumers' demand and environment. It goes beyond the financial balance of the farm (as difference between income and outcome) entailing a strong need for a sustainable use of the environment, as a key-skill necessary for survival.

According to FAO, 43% of the world's active population is working in agriculture, and 53% of them live in developing countries, so the majority of this population lives from farming. There are large differences between countries, with an average of 18% of the active population working on farms in Latin America compared to over 60% in Africa and Asia. The vast majority of this farming population works on family farms that practice small scale farming. According to IFAD (2010), approximately 450 million small-scale farmers worldwide provide livelihoods for around 2 billion people.

But these farms are very diverse, ranging from groups of hunter-gatherers practising agro-forestry to totally mechanised farms where one person cultivates several hundred hectares of cereals. This wide variety gives rise to huge differences between Small Scale Farming examples which share common patterns but are very different in terms of mechanisation, productivity and created wealth. One of the consequences of this huge diversity is the diverging of interests, particularly in regulating world trade. This is why we will use the term "family farms" in the plural and "Small Scale Farming" as a practice.

So, there are different types of small scale farming depending on the context but with a common pattern: the strong relationship between individuals who are involved in ownership, management and farm work, and the strong relationship between generations concerning the knowledge transmission related to the local environment, with its peculiar plants, land and livestock management practices, shaped after centuries of exchanges and trial/error experience. Almost every country in the world has communities centred on mixed farms with a diverse portfolio of activities that includes crops, livestock, other farm enterprises and non-agricultural work.

According to FAO a practical definition of a mixed farm is one where more than 10 percent of the dry matter fed to livestock comes from crop by-products and stubble or one where more than 10 percent of the value of farm production comes from non-livestock related activities (Seré and Steinfeld, 1996). Even among smallholder mixed farmers, there is still considerable variation in assets, income and social habits. However, a common characteristic to all of them is that livestock are managed as part of an integrated and tightly-woven system, in a way that fits the needs of the farm family, the available labour and the demands of other enterprises. Animals provide food,

income, traction, manure, social capital, financial assets and a means of recycling crop wastes (FAO-World Livestock 2011).

Pastoralism (which is a type of SSLF) can be defined as the mobile breeding of domestic livestock in extensive grazing systems, over large areas dominated by natural vegetation. Mobility is the crucial management practice, which allows obtaining brilliant benefits from marginal environments, characterised by climatic variability, and low and variable biomass and water availability. Pastoralism is practised on 25% of the global land (United Nations, 2010) and by an estimated 200 million people worldwide.

### 3.2. REASONS FOR SUPPORTING SMALL SCALE LIVESTOCK FARMING (SSLF)

According to the World Bank 2008 report, 1.5 billion people make their living on small farms. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 80% of farms are family ones, and over 60% of the active population works in agriculture. However, in 2004, only 4% of public investment was attributed to agriculture.

There is very little public funding directed to agriculture in developing countries, and unfortunately it mainly goes to agribusinesses.

This disparity between heavy funding of agribusiness and smallholders left without funds occurs in many countries and regions, including Europe and the USA.

Small scale livestock farming has to be put on the agenda of international agricultural policies for many reasons. It provides jobs and decreases rural exodus. Intensive production systems imply big farms and investments, operated by a reduced number of operators. SSLF on the other hand, implies a larger amount of production units enhancing a more equitably income distribution. Therefore, SSLF is more effective to improve livelihoods and quality of life of poor rural households. An increase in direct income at a local level eventually encourages investments, and therefore contributes to vitalise the economies of rural areas. SSLF can also be sustained by strengthening local markets SSLF can also be sustained by strengthening local markets. Furthermore, their productions systems are fully compatible with the fair trade principles

SSLF is also very important because of its positive and sustainable effects on the environment. Countless adaptation strategies have been refined by livestock keepers. all over the world. They guarantee conservation of biodiversity and its constant increase, preserving and cross-breeding local breeds for the best adaptation to any sort of local condition (including climate, diseases, parasites...). Unlike intensive production systems, small-scale farms are able to cope with environmental constraints while at the same time they are capable of using and protecting the natural resources. Mixed farming for example, uses manure as a fertiliser to grow fodder to feed the livestock, and faces the

substantial challenge of recycling waste in ways that do not add to water pollution (Steinfeld et al., 2006).

A final major reason to support SSLF is because of its social aspects. High Intensive livestock Farming is based on technological solutions and chemical supplies (drugs, feed integrations, etc.) which have little or no relation to the local context and create a reliance of the farmers on the input suppliers. In this type of production system, livestock keepers are simply considered to be workers, and are accounted for as operational cost that can be replaced by mechanisation. SSLF relies on farmers' knowledge, and requires peasants to be included in planning and decisional processes. In most cases, SSLF delivers good quality products on a low scale, rather than cheap, low quality products for massive distribution. In SSLF systems, the farmer is directly responsible for quality control giving him an important role in consumers' health.

## 4. SMALL SCALE LIVESTOCK FARMING AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

### 4.1. LINKS

Why SSLF and food sovereignty are so strongly related? There are many reasons why SSLF is fundamental for FS, especially if coupled with appropriate measures, production systems and coherent policies.

75% of the people suffering from hunger are small farmers and inhabitants of rural areas and a big proportion of these people depend on a few courtyard heads for daily food provision. Therefore, no successful programme against hunger can ignore the urgent need to support the smallest household farming activities. For hundreds of millions of rural poor, these few heads ensure many vital functions:

- Savings: chicken, small ruminants, pigs and similar backyard animals represent a way to save capital, and to convert it into cash if needed. Moreover, large size livestock can be the only means to invest and save capitals in areas where bank services are weak or totally lacking.
- Adaptation strategy: selling animals in the dry season is at the same time a frequent adaptation strategy to the lack of pasture, and it helps the household to gain some cash for buying food and to face the cost of agricultural inputs.
- Food: eggs and meat represent an essential provider of animal proteins, contributing to enriched diets in remote areas where other sources are unavailable, with invaluable benefits especially for the most exposed categories, such as children and pregnant women.

- Revenue and Animal Force: livestock can be the only means to invest and save capital in areas where bank services are weak or totally lacking. In the arid areas of the Sahel camels and donkeys are the only means to carry loads and make it possible for mobile peoples to continue their lifestyle. They are often the only ones capable to exploit very remote and dry pasturelands. In these conditions, livestock-derived products are often the only goods to be exchanged with other communities, and particularly with agriculture based groups practising mixed-farming on a non-mobile basis. These exchanges allow pastoral peoples to integrate their diets with cereals and other crop foods. Often times, livestock and its meat products are the only possible source of monetary income, allowing the access to any kind of economic exchange.

There are strong links between FS and SSLF which are worth a deeper analysis in order to support this and show clearly in what way SSLF contributes to Food Sovereignty and how both concepts are intertwined in communal challenges.

- FS for instance, highlights the strong link between food and its producers as part of a harmonic cultural, social and biological frame, opposed to the view of food as a commodity in the global market. In SSLF systems, social, cultural and ecological components are essential as they work in synergy. Furthermore, SSLF entails a true food culture and the direct relation between producers and consumers, which is an essential element of the FS approach as well. FS promotes the valorisation and best use of local knowledge, skills and tools, even through the adoption of innovative research approaches. Research should enable to save this legacy and to pass it to young generations. It promotes the inclusion of new technologies (like genetic engineering among others) if they don't disrupt the equilibrium of natural ecosystems, and if they are not in conflict with local identities and knowledge. Similarly, the relationship between generations is a cornerstones of SSLF, as well as the transmission of traditional knowledge, properly integrated with modern know-how.
- SSLF and FS also recognise the important role of food producers. SSLF, in every context, supports and recognises the value of the work of men and women, farmers, pastoralists and fishermen, regardless if they are owners or workers. Their role should be recognised and should be decisive in decision processes concerning food and agricultural policies and market rules. SSLF requires a full set of policies to fight against unsustainable international markets and other governmental policies which give power to big, uncontrollable corporations, and therefore matches exactly the principles of FS. According to the principle of FS, trade systems and local food production are considered to be key elements to ensure access to food for everybody. SSLF also does this through the shaping of production to suit the needs of local populations and territories. Additionally, the

FS approach sets a framework for poor countries and their small scale producers to re-negotiate international regulations, especially those of the WTO-system that are shaped for the benefit of richer countries and private corporations.

- Local food production and marketing systems are furthermore pivotal because they guarantee food quality in terms of taste (local organoleptic characteristics) and safety (for example avoiding long trips, so to reduce the risk of microbial growth and degradation). Local production is also important to contrast inconvenient food aid and it also avoids the introduction of unhealthy compounds, such as preservatives and dangerous species. This happens, for example by the indiscriminate and not contextualised use of GMOs, with a consequent loss of biodiversity, and increasing dependence of farmers on big foreign companies. Agro-ecology is one of the most important means of FS in order to decrease negative inputs on the environment, and to be prepared to cope with sudden or inexorable changes (like climate change); from this point of view, SSLF is certainly more efficient and sustainable than intensive livestock systems.
- FS foresees mechanisms at the local level to assign control over resources (land, pasture, water, seeds, livestock, fishing resources) to local producers, and in so doing it affirms and respects their rights. There are no political borders in the sustainable and ecological managing of natural resources. FS recognises local communities' right to live on their lands and use them, and encourages the interaction among producers from different regions as a tool to solve internal or national conflicts. In this context some SSLF systems like pastoralism are strongly related to FS. It is recognised that SSLF and FS alone do not represent a guarantee for the end of local conflicts and fights for resources between rural communities. Nevertheless, putting the local communities at the centre of planning, as required by both FS and SSLF, would enormously reduce the causes of most rural conflicts that are originated by the shrinkage of resources due to bad governance, corruption and countless measures in favour of intensive productions and foreign enterprises.

#### 4.2. CHALLENGES OF SSLF SYSTEMS TO CONTRIBUTE TO FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

In this context, we must understand what are the challenges of SSLF system that prevent its contribution to reach food sovereignty, in order to better understand what governments should concentrate on to really support these systems.

- Livestock factors: animal health, access to and management of pastures feed and water resources, as well as right to mobility. Public and private veterinary

services, also responsible for animal and vector borne diseases that affect humans.

- Governance and policy factors: including national and international agreements, policies of the financial institutions and food related UN agencies, trade and market regulations, land reform policies, aid for development programmes.
- Value chain factors: management of the whole food value chain, ensuring to watch over the respect of FS principles (including the strong role of SSLF and the importance of producers) across the whole process from production, transformation distribution of products, to the final consumer.
- Financial factors: namely access to credit for local farmers, including promotion of microcredit and other forms of collaborative and community investment and financial management, respectful for traditional social structures, authorities and decision making systems.
- Climate change factors: preparedness to extreme climatic events, valorisation of adaptation strategies, and additional support at times of exceptional droughts, floods and other events; recognition of the importance of SSLF systems in the mitigation of GHG emissions through sustainable land management of large grassland areas.

### 5.3. SUCCESSES WHEN AGRICULTURAL POLICY SUPPORTS FAMILY FARMS

Countries that have set up ambitious agricultural policies in partnership with smallholders (especially where Farmers Organisations and/or trade unions are well organised and powerful) have seen very positive effects, extending well beyond the agricultural sector. They encourage a balanced development model that benefits a large number of people.

Successful agricultural policies have taken small farms into account of their particular contexts, and have not been implemented from models defined by international institutions. For example, Deininger et al. (2011) reporting on the Democratic Republic of Congo, found an out-grower based sugar cane plantation was expected to generate 0.351 jobs/ha and a 10,000 ha maize plantation less than 0.01 jobs/ha. In Ethiopia, the average was 0.005 jobs/ha. The same land would support many more smallholders working as independent farmers. Andrianirina-Ratsialonana and Teyssier (2010) report that a large project in Madagascar was going to create just 0.006 jobs/ha, in contrast to the pre-project pattern of land use on which each hectare supports approximately 1.25 farmer household. So, effective support of small farms needs to be based on an understanding of the advantages of family farming worldwide, adapted to the specific conditions of each rural area and its local food producers.

It costs less to support smallholders than agribusiness, and not just financially. Family farms also cost much less in terms of negative externalities (unemployment and damage to the environment), and they create strong rural communities with job opportunities. Recent and authoritative studies provide facts proving that these cannot be labelled as simple-minded, idealistic positions. Data from Brazil show that there are 4.4 million small scale farms in the country, (84% of total registered farms). These occupy only 24% of total land, yet employ 74% of the total people employed in agriculture. They feed the country, supplying, in addition to the greatest percentage of the most consumed vegetables (cassava, beans, corn, rice), as much as 58% of milk, 59% of swine and 50% of poultry consumed in Brazil (Maluf, 2010). Family farms raise 30% of the cattle of Brazil; they harvest 21% of the wheat, and 16% of the national production of soy, which is among the top largest scale crops worldwide, mostly grown to feed industrial livestock.

## 5. CONCLUSION: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF VSF EUROPA IN LIVESTOCK AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY?

Concluding all the given arguments, VSFE will enhance coherence between its partners and its projects in order to make sure that Food Sovereignty holds a key-role in inspiring the design and guiding the implementation. This means:

- giving priority to small scale livestock keepers, those pastoralists, farmers, or communities who work mostly under the conditions above described as features of small scale livestock farming systems;
- encouraging of and participating in research projects addressing specific problems of the marginalized livestock keepers and breeders;
- facilitating access to markets for smallholders by many kinds of actions (including processing of livestock-derived products, safety controls among others);
- making sure that local markets and producers are well taken care of in the setting up of priorities for capacity building actions, as well as for training and technology transfer;
- making sure that minorities are adequately taken into account for their work, with fair prices, reduction of intermediaries and giving value to their work, with special regards to livestock workers, rural communities, women and youth;
- raising awareness about SSLF rights and role in the agricultural policies, addressing in particular European stakeholders at all levels, from consumers to

students of livestock-related careers, NGO operators, and decision makers, among others;

- encourage decision makers, from international organisations, from governments in developed countries and developing countries, to consider the role of SSLK in FS in policies and debates;
- making a clear effort to address, by own initiatives or by supporting those promoted by other NGOs and CSOs, any kind of action that may result in a worse condition of the small scale livestock producers. Being a European organisation, VSF Europa will especially be watching over the EC policies, such as the Economic Partnership Agreements. However, this engagement applies to policies, trade agreements and regulations, bi/multilateral agreements, aid programmes, put in place by all sorts of actors worldwide.

All these engagements shall focus in particular the VSF Europa specific domain, that is, the veterinary and livestock sector, food production and safety, as well as in any awareness raising, training and capacity building initiative, in European countries, at the EU level, and in all the countries where our members operate.



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