

Our food is not your business

Alternatives to unsustainable livestock and feedstock
farming and the current corporate free trade model



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A small farmer in Paraguay looks out over a field of genetically modified soy. Vicki Hird/GFC





This briefing paper aims to contribute to the many ongoing efforts, actions, and discussions on alternatives to industrial livestock production, whether local, specific or systemic. It considers how we can strengthen, link and build on existing genuine alternatives, as well as creating new ones, together with social movements, small farmers, small producers, environmentalists, consumer campaigners and many others. It includes examples of many different projects and programmes underway around the world that are implemented by members of the International Alliance against Unsustainable Livestock Farming and other allies, and aims to inspire others to join the discussion, to take action and to help build socially and environmentally just alternatives.

The vast scale of industrial livestock and feedstock production, backed by the current corporate free trade model that 'locks in livestock' by perpetuating this system of support for large agribusinesses, can make it feel too big to take on. But, as this paper shows, there are many feasible alternatives capable of producing more and better quality food, and there is no reason to hold back. We need to fight for our right to food, and this includes taking on the challenge of

changing the system. We also need to reject agribusiness's false 'solutions', such as Climate-Smart Livestock, which seek to maintain the industrial agriculture model at all costs.

Genuine alternatives get right to the heart of the matter. Agroecology includes many different ways of producing healthy food for local consumption, in harmony with the environment, in ways that benefit peasants, local communities,

consumers, and the animals themselves. These alternatives must also include policies designed to drive down demand for industrially-produced meat, which could have significant health and climate change benefits. With respect to climate change, switching to healthier diets with less meat, combined with a reduction in food waste, could result in emissions from livestock production almost halving by 2050. [1]



The context

We live in a world where about 793 million people are undernourished globally. [2] The issue of hunger and undernourishment is used by large agribusinesses to argue that food production should be made more efficient, and that they are the ones who are in the best position to deliver that, with access to large-scale capital and other resources.

The growth of industrial livestock and feedstock production is vividly apparent, as these vast businesses deforest and push out small farmers to clear massive areas of land for feedstock crops such as soy, or for pastures for livestock. The 2016 State of the World's Forests cites pasture for livestock as a leading driver of deforestation in a number of South American countries, with industrial agriculture responsible for 70% of deforestation in Latin America. [3]

In our companion report on industrial livestock production, "What's at Steak: The Real Cost of Meat" [4], country case studies and international data show the devastating impacts the industry has on communities, Indigenous Peoples, small farmers, forests, climate, biodiversity, water, animals and health. Nevertheless, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) predicts that global demand for livestock products will increase by 70% by 2050. [5] This is a very worrying direction to be heading in, given how destructive

and damaging this industry is for people, animals and the planet even at current levels of production.

Happily, however, there are numerous inspiring and feasible alternatives to unsustainable livestock farming around the world. Many of them should probably not be called 'alternative' because they have been around for longer than the current corporate free trade model of commodifying food and agriculture, treating them as mere products to be grown and sold. However, these alternatives are all



Confined pigs. Animal People Forum/Flickr

fundamentally different because they are based on the deep connection that small farmers and rural communities have with the land. They see agriculture and the natural resources around them as part of life, a way of sustaining themselves in perpetuity, rather than resources to be traded and rapidly eroded.

Today, even with just a quarter of the world's farmland, small farmers are still able to produce most of the world's food. [6] Imagine then, if they had more land, better access to resources, and real and effective support from governments and intergovernmental bodies and policy-

makers. How much more food could be grown? This truth undermines the arguments of transnational corporations, showing that their large-scale, industrial, destructive ways are not more efficient in producing food. Importantly, small farmers also produce healthier food [7], and, through their use of agroecological techniques, they are able to cool the planet, ameliorating climate change. [8]

To find out more about the way free trade locks in industrial livestock and feedstock production please see our other companion briefing paper, "WTO and Livestock: Starving small

farmers, feeding large agribusinesses". [9] Here we delve into the role that the free trade model, in particular through the rules imposed by the World Trade Organization (WTO), has played in imposing an industrial agricultural model that is skewed to favour large agribusinesses, while pushing out small farmers and their sustainable and agroecological practices. It shows how the system re-orientes developing country markets to produce food for export, feeding the market rather than people, and how trade rules and the economic model perpetuate this export-oriented focus.

From the small to the systemic: alternatives to the system

There is a multitude of alternatives: a diversity of approaches, strategies and ways of relating to animals and nature in general, and numerous different ways of organising communities and using, sharing and distributing resources. There are many similarities as well as differences, such as respect and care for the land and natural heritage, but it is the diversity of all these practices that is our strength.

In order to create a strong challenge to industrial livestock and feedstock production, without losing this diversity, we need to address the interlinkages between issues, and link, develop and strengthen relationships across issues and struggles. For example, the lessons learned from our livestock case studies in countries like India, and the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative [10] in countries like Paraguay, Chile and Ethiopia, show that in the long run, sustainable alternatives to industrial livestock production will not be able to co-exist with unsustainable livestock and feedstock production or large-scale monocultures as the former will be undermined or even destroyed by land grabbing, water depletion, climate change, the excessive use of agrottoxics and other social and environmental impacts of the industrial model.

To break free from the grip of corporate agribusiness 'value chains' and promote alternatives to unsustainable livestock and feedstock production we need to join hands with those developing and practising alternatives such as agroecology and community conservation, and those fighting against deforestation, dirty industries, and patriarchy. We need to change hearts and minds, convincing people that they will benefit from moving away from the wasteful and unsatisfying overconsumption promoted by the neoliberal system, towards societies based on ideals such as the commons (common land available to all), and sharing economies founded in complementarity rather than competition, which reconnect people with nature. In the end, no alternative, whether small or systemic, will survive for long unless we all work in parallel to change the system.

Three different but linked strategies are needed to drive this transformation forward. We need to:

- Resist, stop and push back against the corporate free trade model and industrial livestock and feedstock production, which is based on excessive demand and overconsumption.
- Support already existing alternatives, of which there are so many around the world, by giving them more visibility, supporting them politically, and defending the strides they have made.
- Support, join, and contribute to budding new system-challenging alternatives many of which are being created as we speak.

Building and strengthening alliances across cultures, genders, sectors, and struggles is an equally important cross-cutting element.

Pushing back against the corporate free trade model and industrial livestock and feedstock production

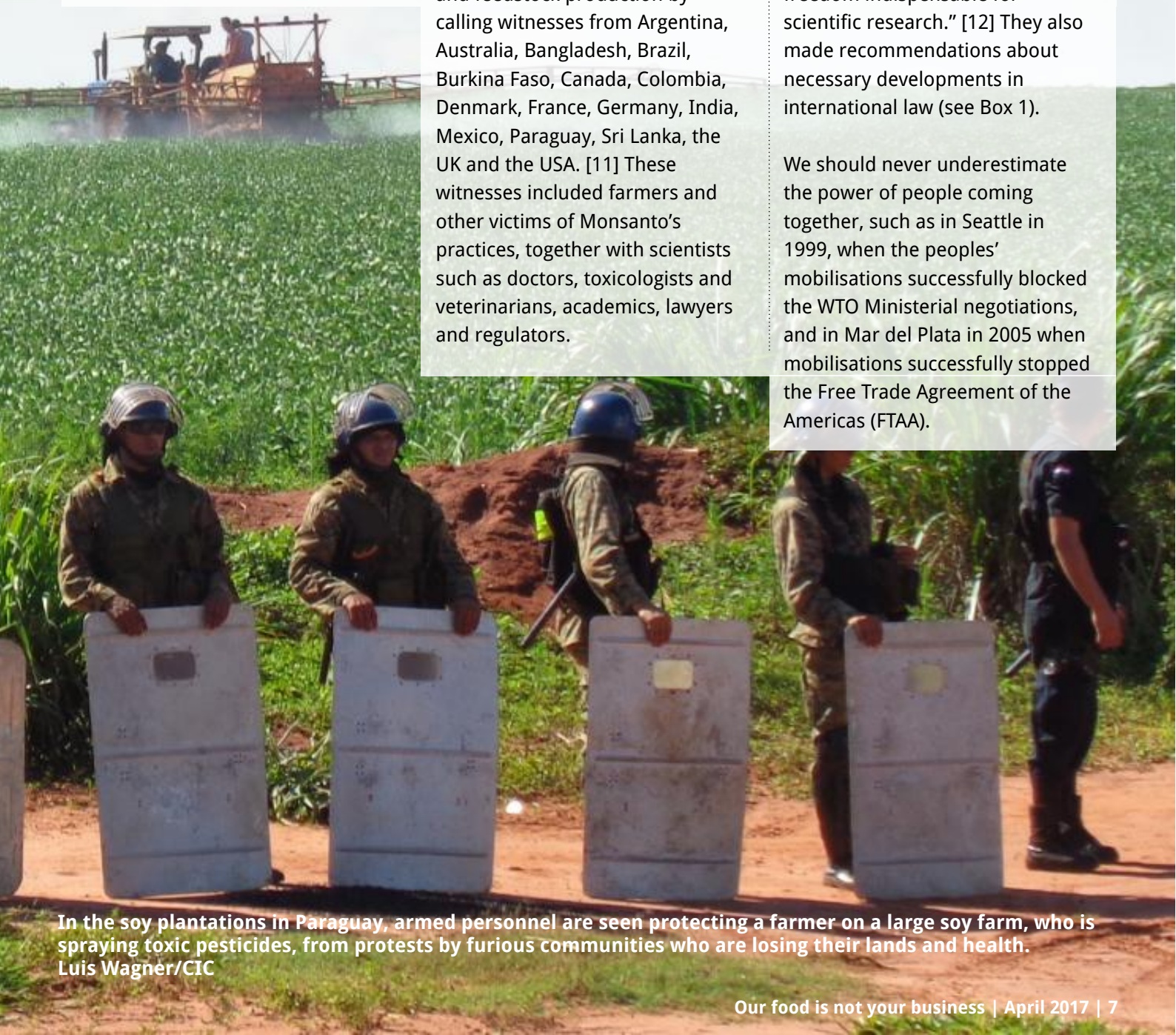
The scale of the impacts of industrial livestock and feedstock production on people, forests and biodiversity, and on our climate, needs more attention from civil society, especially since there are many ways we can resist, stop and push back against both it and the corporate free trade model that perpetuates it.

One notable example that has just concluded was the **International Monsanto Tribunal**, which used

Monsanto, the inventor of genetically modified soy, one of the main feedstocks for industrial livestock farming, as a prominent example of how the agro-industrial model is driven forward by giant transnational companies. The tribunal created a global public space for a wide range of testimonies about Monsanto's actions to be made and deliberated, including from a legal perspective. It highlighted the struggle against industrial livestock and feedstock production by calling witnesses from Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Mexico, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, the UK and the USA. [11] These witnesses included farmers and other victims of Monsanto's practices, together with scientists such as doctors, toxicologists and veterinarians, academics, lawyers and regulators.

The tribunal showed what happens in these commodity chains: in many cases the communities at the lower value end of the chains suffer from health problems, loss of territories, homes, livelihoods, and access to food. The tribunal's judges found that "Monsanto has engaged in practices which have negatively impacted the right to a healthy environment, the right to food and the right to health. On top of that Monsanto's conduct is negatively affecting the right to freedom indispensable for scientific research." [12] They also made recommendations about necessary developments in international law (see Box 1).

We should never underestimate the power of people coming together, such as in Seattle in 1999, when the peoples' mobilisations successfully blocked the WTO Ministerial negotiations, and in Mar del Plata in 2005 when mobilisations successfully stopped the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA).



In the soy plantations in Paraguay, armed personnel are seen protecting a farmer on a large soy farm, who is spraying toxic pesticides, from protests by furious communities who are losing their lands and health. Luis Wagner/CIC



Peoples' Forum at the Monsanto Tribunal opening day. Monsanto Tribunal/Flickr

Box 1

Moving to stop the impunity of transnational companies: The International Monsanto Tribunal, UN negotiations in Geneva, and the Peoples Treaty process

A key decision from the Monsanto Tribunal points to the urgent need to assert the primacy of international human and environmental rights law, especially in view of the fact that this area of law is currently contradicted by a whole set of legal rules put in place and enforced to protect investors' rights, under the framework of the World Trade Organization and other free trade agreements. [13]

This in effect supports and calls on others to support the work being done in the United Nations in Geneva to hold transnational corporations to account. The 'Intergovernmental Working Group Mandated to develop a UN Treaty on Transnational

Corporations & Human Rights and other Business Enterprises' will hold its third session this coming October 2017. This is an effort that we, as individuals and organisations and movements around the world can support and influence, with a view to finally being able to hold transnational corporations to account. They have, in many instances around the world, acted with absolute impunity, violently displacing communities from territories.

There is also a process of building a Peoples Treaty that is open for all who want to join the struggle: "The International Peoples Treaty is above all a political document that emerges

from the need to fight against the regime of extraordinary privileges and impunity of transnational corporations. The existence of this regime justifies the need for binding legal norms in order to stop corporate abuses and impunity. Even though "Treaty," according to its strict legal definition, is a term that refers to a document signed by States, our vision is that we, besides states can make law: we defend the notion of an international law "from below." Therefore, we use the word "Treaty" in a way that is radically different from the current legal norm." [14]

Resistance in Paraguay

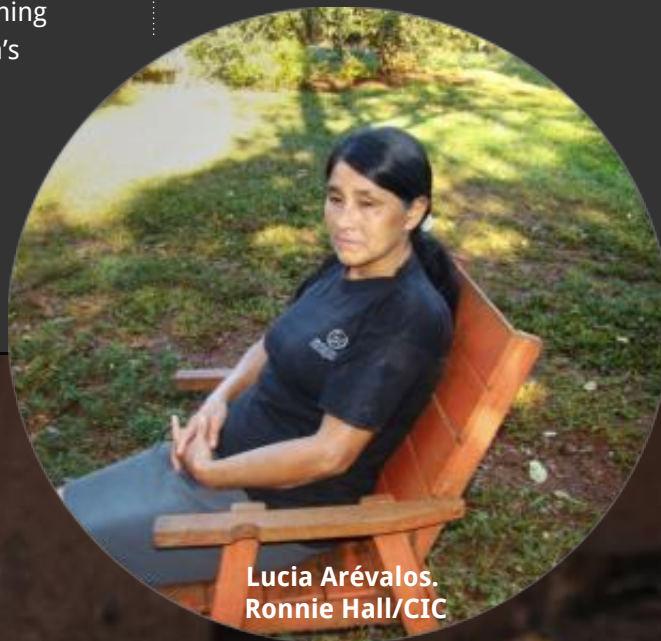
Lucia Arévalos: "I understand that as a Paraguayan citizen I have a right to health, education and resources, but I can't access these rights, because our ability to produce food and other things is disappearing. We can't even visit our mother who lives far away because we can't afford it now. I want everybody to come and see what's happening here. Soy is being planted everywhere, even right next to the creek, which is being poisoned. And where does the water go? It runs

through our land, and is the root cause of all our diseases. On the lower part of our land there's a stream we all used to bathe in, but we can't do that any more, it makes us itch and gives us hives. People are being driven away and the schools are empty. And it's not just us, this is happening everywhere." However Lucia's family's strategy is one of resistance. They are staying where they are, and continuing to run their

small-holding in the traditional way, which produces multiple crops, and livestock including pigs, chickens and ducks. They are taking their fight to the wider world, engaging with others and telling their story to encourage and inspire others.

Source: <http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Paraguay-Final-Report-merged.pdf>

Ducks at Lucia Arévalos's farm. Ronnie Hall/CIC



Lucia Arévalos.
Ronnie Hall/CIC





**CAMPESINOS Y
CAMPESINAS
ENFRIAMOS
EL PLANETA**

Supporting already existing alternatives, of which there are so many around the world, by giving them visibility, supporting them politically, and defending the strides they have made

La Via Campesina, the world's largest peasants' movement, with over 200 million members, spearheaded the development of

the principles of Food Sovereignty, as a conceptual alternative to the corporate-controlled food and agriculture system. These

principles continuously evolve and grow.

La Via Campesina's Seven Principles to Achieve Food Sovereignty

Box 3

1. Food: A Basic Human Right—

Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity. Each nation should declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realisation of this fundamental right.

2. Agrarian Reform—A genuine agrarian reform is necessary which gives landless and farming people—especially women—ownership and control of the land they work and returns territories to indigenous peoples. The right to land must be free of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, social class or ideology; the land belongs to those who work it.

3. Protecting Natural Resources—Food Sovereignty entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, and seeds and livestock breeds. The people who work the land must have the right to practice sustainable management of natural resources and to conserve biodiversity free of restrictive intellectual property

rights. This can only be done from a sound economic basis with security of tenure, healthy soils and reduced use of agro-chemicals.

4. Reorganising Food Trade—

Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade. National agricultural policies must prioritise production for domestic consumption and food self-sufficiency. Food imports must not displace local production nor depress prices.

5. Ending the Globalisation of Hunger—Food Sovereignty is undermined by multilateral institutions and by speculative capital. The growing control of multinational corporations over agricultural policies has been facilitated by the economic policies of multilateral organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Regulation and taxation of speculative capital and a strictly enforced code of conduct for transnational companies is therefore needed to begin to provide a counterbalance.

6. Social Peace—Everyone has the right to be free from violence. Food must not be used as a weapon. Increasing levels of poverty and marginalisation in the countryside, along with the growing oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, aggravate situations of injustice and hopelessness. The ongoing displacement, forced urbanisation and repression, along with increasing incidences of racism, all of which impact smallholder farmers, cannot be tolerated.

7. Democratic control—

Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels. The United Nations and related organisations will have to undergo a process of democratisation to enable this to become a reality. Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination. Rural women, in particular, must be granted direct and active decision-making on food and rural issues.

Source: Food Sovereignty: Towards democracy in localized food systems. Michael Windfuhr and Jennie Jonsén. FIAN-International. 2005. <http://www.nfu.ca/sites/www.nfu.ca/files/Principles%20of%20Food%20Sovereignty.pdf>

Time-tested traditional practices

Traditional practices are a fertile area for exploration, offering many time-tested alternatives to the current industrial agricultural model, as the following examples from India show.

For example, Indian farmers have traditionally integrated livestock into their low input farming systems, with crop residues feeding animals, and the animals in turn providing manure, milk and meat. Dairy farming is particularly important in India and is still dominated by marginal, small-scale, landless producers, typically owning less than five cows or buffaloes, although industrial production is now threatening to undermine this system. The current organised dairy sector has its roots in farmer cooperatives, and a development programme started in the 1970's called 'Operation Flood' succeeded in increasing milk supplies by connecting over 9 million small milk producers to the market. Operation Flood, although not perfect, did manage to establish 55,000 dairy cooperatives, including 6,000 women's cooperatives, and fair pricing policies benefiting both consumers and producers. This model is a great example of a local food system. It is based on a three-tier system of 133,000 village unions, 346 district unions and state level federations, prioritising local consumption and selling excess milk to state federations for marketing. However this 'White Revolution' is now threatened by an influx of many private players and a price

war between the great Indian dairy cooperatives and private companies. The Indian dairy sector has gone from a cooperative model protecting small farmers to a trade liberalisation model based on hyper competitiveness. [15]

As in many other countries, there are also traditional pastoralist communities in India, who move between different grazing grounds. This offers another example of sustainable traditional livestock management, but the pastoralists have been blocked rather than supported, often being forced to settle, or refused access to grazing lands near forests (which are then planted with tree monocultures). [16]

India offers a good example when it comes to local livestock breeds. Local Indian breeds are very low maintenance, and are weather and disease resistant. For example, the Vechur breed, the world's smallest cow from Kerala state, is called the 'zero maintenance cow' because it needs no special feed, can eat kitchen waste, needs no special sheds or care, can tolerate heat and rain, and yields milk with a higher fat content than most European breeds, making its milk very prized among consumers. Local breeds have been fast disappearing with the onslaught of industrial dairy farming but some of these breeds have now been brought back from near extinction due to the efforts of dedicated activists. [17]

Pastoralist claims to the Banni grassland

Pastoralists in the 2,500 sq km Banni grassland of Kutch, in Gujarat, India, are intending to lay claim to the Banni as a Community Forest Reserve, under India's Forest Rights Act. This act permits communities to stake claim to areas that they can demonstrate a cultural or economic connection to (although it is notoriously difficult to make a successful claim in practice).

The Banni is home to great biological diversity, with woodlands, extensive grasslands, seasonal wetlands that attract large migratory bird populations, and a combination of mangroves and salt pans on its outskirts. It is intensively grazed by 22 distinct 'maldhari' pastoralist communities, with a population of close to 40,000 people and around 80,000 animals, mostly Banni buffalo and Kankrej cattle. Some 100,000 litres of milk are produced in the Banni every day, and the region also serves as a breeding ground for both buffalo and cattle, which are sold in many others parts of India.

However, the Banni grasslands and the pastoralist way of life are increasingly under threat. Over the past 50 years introduced

Prosopis juliflora trees, planted by the Gujarat Forest Department to minimise desertification and salinity ingress, have spread across nearly 1,500 sq km of the Banni, arguably at the expense of palatable and perennial grass species. *Prosopis* is illegally converted to charcoal, a major household revenue earner, and is also being eyed by the Gujarat government as a potential fuel to sustain power plants being set up on the edge of the Banni. In addition dams that were built across the rivers flowing into the Banni in the 1960's have dramatically reduced 'flushing' of the Banni, and the resulting saline ingress from the neighbouring Arabian Sea means that about 50% of the Banni is now highly saline. There is also continuing ambiguity with regard to tenure with respect to access to and use of the Banni, with the Forest Department, the Revenue Department and the Pastoralist Association claiming rights to and control over the Banni.

With support from Sahjeevan, an NGO working on environmental conservation and the revival of traditional livelihoods, the pastoral communities of the Banni formed the Banni Pashu Uchherak

Maldhari Sangathan (BPUMS—Banni Breeders' Association) in 2008. By strategically partnering with a range of institutions, including the State Animal Husbandry Department, National Dairy Development Board, the regional Agricultural University and the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, they have so far had considerable success in improving animal productivity and returns from animal husbandry, and have been formally recognised as livestock breeders.

They have also initiated a long-term effort to use the Forest Rights Act to secure pastoralist control over, access to and management of the Banni. They argue that there are specific institutional and cultural practices that pastoralists use to regulate the intensity of grazing in different parts of the Banni, which prevent over-grazing and encourage biodiversity. The Banni grassland is not an unregulated, open access regime, nor is it unused. The pastoralists' sustainable animal husbandry has the capacity to support some 40,000 people without damaging the Banni ecosystem.

Source: Swati Shresth, Global Forest Coalition, based on initial results CCRI assessment in Gujarat, India

Cranes at sunset, Banni Grasslands. Balaji Venkatesh Sivaramakrishnan/Flickr

Agroecology and livestock

True peasant agroecology is the antithesis of industrial agriculture. La Via Campesina (LVC) describes it as “an alternative to industrial farming, a way of life, an option for transforming food production into something more beneficial to humans and to Mother Earth.” LVC defends it as an alternative that is intentionally political, challenging power and emancipating local communities by placing them at the centre of food production, in harmony with Mother Earth. [18]

LVC describes agroecology as being a combination of the recovery and

reevaluation of traditional peasant farming methods and new and innovative ecological practices. It is centred on the control of farming systems by peasants themselves, using their local knowledge, ingenuity and ability to innovate on small, diversified farms with integrated crop, tree and livestock production, with no need for external inputs. [19] To this end, LVC also facilitates the documenting and sharing of knowledge about peasant agroecology, via local processes and community groups, through formal and informal agroecology

schools, and by person-to-person exchanges, as well as more traditional communications channels. [20]

Examples of peasant agroecology promoted by La Via Campesina include Zero Budget Natural Farming in India, migrant farmers building a people’s agroecology in North America, and the Goddesses Cooperatives in Nicaragua, which are focused on developing a new model of agroecology and gender equality. Agroecology is rapidly spreading across countries and continents. [21]

Woman cattle farmer in El Salvador. Jason Taylor for Friends of the Earth International/CIC





Supporting, joining, and contributing to budding new system-challenging alternatives that are being created

As with the numerous alternatives that are already being practiced, there are also many practical and political efforts underway to build

new alternatives that challenge the dominant system of industrial agriculture and livestock production. Here, we present

several examples of this ongoing work.

Supporting community conservation

Conservation by communities for communities is a ground up alternative that aims to support a sustainable quality of life for communities together with ecosystems, forests and nature. In collaboration with many other groups, communities and Indigenous Peoples, Global Forest Coalition is working to create a global assessment of the resilience of **communities' conservation and restoration initiatives** in order to identify what forms of support—legal, political, socio-economic, financial, technical—communities need to strengthen them in this respect. This multi-year project includes analysing and promoting respect for the specific rights, roles and needs of women. We are currently half way through our programme of at least 60 assessments, which are being conducted by the communities themselves, in more than 20 countries.

The Paraguayan Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI) assessment is particularly relevant to this briefing since it directly identifies industrial livestock and feedstock farming as a threat to the conservation of forests and the communities running the assessment. They are now actively engaged in restoring habitats and planting native trees and other local species to facilitate the restoration of the ecosystems. [22]

Similar initiatives to conserve and restore forests and other ecosystems in harmony with small-scale livestock production were described in the CCRI assessments from Chile and Ethiopia. For example, various communities in Chile spoke of wanting the freedom to practice diverse peasant agriculture and traditional practices, and the importance they attached to agroecology and

agricultural schools. [23] In Ethiopia, the main livelihood is agropastoralism, with farmers cultivating a variety of grains and legumes as well as rearing cattle and sheep. The CCRI assessment identified the critical importance that rapidly disappearing hilltop patches of forest, Sacred Natural Sites, have in terms of providing water for themselves, their livestock and their agriculture. [24]

The preliminary results from the CCRIIs currently being conducted by communities in India, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Kenya show the potential for win-win harmony between sustainable livestock production and livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation.

Parsley growing at a small farm in Paraguay. Ronnie Hall/CIC

Testimony of pastoralists adapting to climate change

Ahmad Salehi explains the Abolhassani Tribal Confederacy's 'Coping with the Drought Cycle' initiative. Photo extracted from video by Ramin Rouhani

"The climate used to be quite different in the past. Summers were warmer and winters quite colder. I even remember when I was a school kid, some years it snowed up to forty times. It used to rain all the time. However, the environmental conditions have changed. In the last 15 years, we have rarely had thriving springs... We soon realised that the traditional form of livestock

rearing doesn't work any more. Those who kept too many sheep, lost them due to droughts. So, we decided to reduce the number of sheep and invest the money partly in agriculture. We started growing barley to be used by lambs in the reproductive season. This way, we could increase each lamb and sheep weight up to 30 kilos by May and generate quite an extra income. We

realised that this initiative works much better than just increasing the numbers of sheep and goats when a simple drought could destroy most of them.



Ahmad Salehi. CENESTA/CIC

Source: <http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/iran.pdf>

Abolhassani tribal confederacy, participating in a CCRI project in Iran. CENESTA/GFC



Food forests

A relatively new initiative in the Netherlands aims to establish what are literally called 'food forests' (voedselbossen). [25] This involves forest restoration initiatives that focus specifically on the introduction and use of trees and other forest species with a high nutritional value, like fruit and nut trees, berries, and trees associated with edible mushrooms. This builds on similar forest restoration initiatives focusing on species with a high nutritional value and/or socio-economic value that have been

promoted for many years by networks like the International Analog Forestry Network (IAFN). [26]

Integrating livestock rearing into the food forest system is an obvious step, since there is generally plenty of room for a limited amount of animals. Various livestock species—including cows, goats, pigs, chickens and ducks—can also benefit food forests and reduce the time needed to manage them, by variously grazing, clearing brush,

eating unwanted insects, and tilling and enriching the soil. [27]

Many members of Global Forest Coalition are involved in IAFN or similar networks that try to combine community forest restoration with food production and other socio-economically beneficial activities. These all demonstrate that food production can take place in perfect harmony with the conservation and even restoration of forests.

Urban agriculture and urban livestock production

Urban agriculture, including **urban livestock production**, is also a growing phenomenon. In spite of health concerns it has long been a vital resource for many poor city dwellers in developing countries, with cattle, sheep, goats and chickens being kept in backyards, and evidence that the numbers of urban animals being kept increases when times are particularly hard. [28] Although evidence suggests that the advance of industrial agriculture is impacting even this, with reduced backyard poultry farming in India,

for example, as a result of industrial egg production. This change is impacting women in particular, as they would have sold eggs for extra income as well as using them to feed their family. [29]

Urban agriculture in developed countries is a rather newer development, enabling people to return to growing their own fresh and nutritious food, reconnecting with nature. For example, in the Netherlands and Germany a small group of urban gardeners are

supporting urban agriculture through their cooperative Cityplot. They are promoting urban agriculture by training other keen potential farmers, and have expertise in organic gardening, permaculture, seed saving and swapping, pickling and preserving, and other useful skills. With respect to livestock they have expertise in keeping chickens in the city, urban bee-keeping and composting with worms. [30]

Organic fruit and vegetables being produced on a small farm in an urban area, Canary Islands. Ronnie Hall/CIC



Linking food consumers and food producers

There are also numerous **consumer campaigns** around the world that have been making giant strides in terms of raising awareness about industrial agriculture, and linking urban consumers and rural producers. This is particularly important in countries with a high 'livestock footprint' that are importing much of their food, using up land that could be used for farming by others.

These campaigns look at different aspects of livestock production and propose a number of ways for ordinary individuals to do their bit, by either becoming vegan or vegetarian or simply just reducing the amount of meat and dairy they eat. For example, in the US, the budding '**Locavore**' movement, is encouraging people to only eat locally grown produce, meat and eggs. [31]

Animal welfare is also an important motivating factor. For instance, in the UK **Farms not Factories** runs consumer campaigns to persuade the public to reject meat from cruelly treated factory-bred pigs, encouraging the purchase of high welfare pork only. [32]

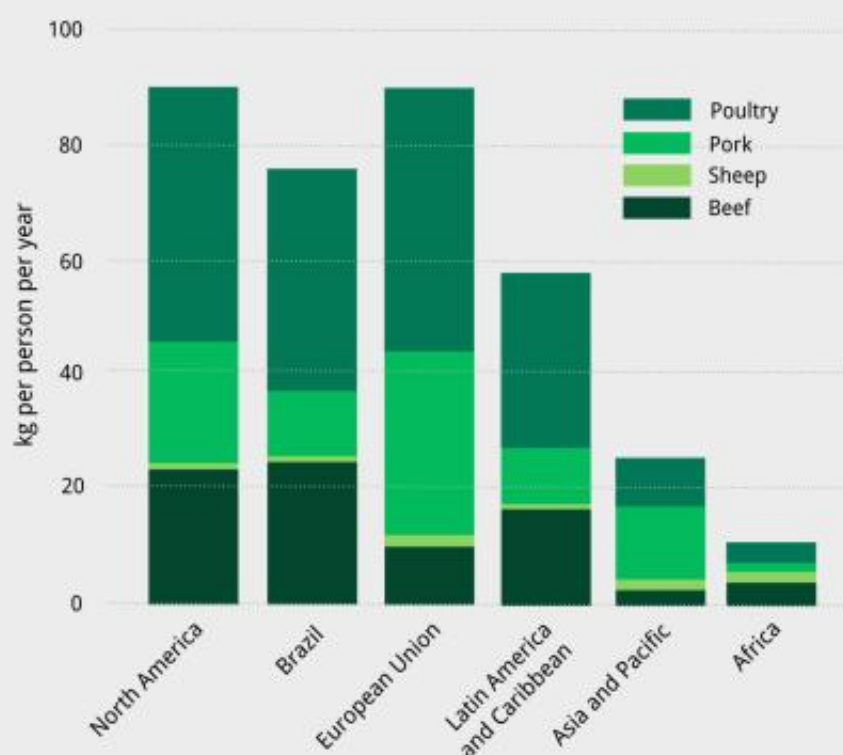
Information about similar consumer-oriented livestock campaigns was shared at an International Strategy Meeting on Unsustainable Livestock Production that was organised by Global Forest Coalition in November 2014 in Paraguay. [33]

Here many members of the new international alliance on unsustainable livestock farming presented examples of often very successful campaigns to raise consumers' awareness about the negative impacts of industrial meat and dairy production, and the need for more balanced diets in this respect.

For example, consumer campaigns by Friends of the Earth members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Netherlands (Milieudefensie) and Austria (Global 2000) are feeding into a gradual decline in the consumption of meat and dairy in

many EU countries [34], such as the UK [35], which will be critical in view of the significant increase in demand for meat that is currently predicted at the global level. [36] In Russia, Friends of the Siberian Forests has been spreading information about the negative impacts of imported beef from Paraguay amongst members of the Russian Socio-Ecological Union, the largest network of environmental NGOs in the country. And New York-based Brighter Green has been actively raising the awareness of both US consumers and consumers in other countries like China about the need to reduce meat and dairy consumption.

Meat consumption per person globally



Source: OECD

Event as part of the Brighter Green China Programme. Brighter Green

Brighter Green China Programme 2017—raising consumer awareness in China

New York-based public policy action tank Brighter Green's China programme provides detailed research and policy analysis about the climate, environmental, health, food security, and animal welfare consequences of industrial animal agriculture in China. It also presents alternative pathways. With colleagues in China, they are organising screenings and discussions on factory farming and sustainable, 'good food' and agriculture, based on two documentary films about rising meat consumption in China, 'What's For Dinner?' (WFD) and the sequel, 'Six Years On' (SYO), directed by Beijing-based independent filmmaker Jian Yi.

Brighter Green also runs a lively interactive 'What's For Dinner?' online WeChat platform. They connect individuals and civil society groups in China with one another and with experts and advocates internationally; and they liaise with researchers, journalists, filmmakers, academics, and students in China and other countries interested in China's changing food system and the growth of industrial animal agriculture and consumption of animal-based foods. In 2017, they are focusing on two main projects.

First is the Good Food Academy, through which, together with their Chinese partners, they are aiming

to build the most reliable and respectable food-related Chinese-language knowledge hub on the Internet, designed for use by researchers, policy-makers, journalists, activists/advocates, students, and young people. This is informed and inspired by those who are interested in 'the true costs of food, with a dual emphasis on the impacts of industrial animal production and consumption, and (re)discovering 'good food'. Nothing like this currently exists in China.

Second is the Good Food Road

Show, which will see a small core team of Chinese activists, joined by an international activist, embarking on two road trips across up to 20 of China's provinces conducting 'good food' workshops during 2017. Through the workshops, the Good Food Road Show will bring a range of

critical food-related issues, including social, environmental, and ethical impacts, to the general public, including school children, students, and parents with young children, and in various locations including schools and colleges, restaurants and cafes, temples, corporations, and community and lifestyle centres. The road show project links to the Good Food Academy, with the road show serving as the Academy's 'mobile classroom'.

Event as part of the Brighter Green China Programme. Brighter Green



Source: Brighter Green

Community supported agriculture

Increased awareness is not only leading to shifts in consumption of livestock products, it is prompting some people to make significant changes to the way in which consumers relate to food producers.

For example, **'community-supported agriculture'** is a model that creates direct links between consumers and farmers, with a group of people agreeing to buy all the farmers' seasonally available products, including meat and dairy products, and sharing the burden of associated risks related to agricultural

production. Their advance payments help to finance production and create stability for the food producers, as well as producing fresh, nutritious food for the consumers. For example, in Japan, JA-Zenchu, the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, creates rural-urban links by coordinating more than 2,000 farmers markets, connecting local farmers to food buying cooperatives, and hiring and training new farmers from urban areas. [37] In Europe, there are arrangements like this in at least Germany, France and Italy, all with the potential to be scaled up. [38]



Community-supported agriculture brings benefits in Mozambique

Box 7

Through the National Peasant Union of Mozambique, a member of La Via Campesina, peasants have developed several Community-Supported Agriculture projects across the country. One such project is in the Namaacha district, in southern Maputo Province, bordering Swaziland. The introduction of agroecology has diversified production, so that in addition to strawberries, crops now include onion, tomato, cabbage, lettuce and carrots, all of which are produced 100% agroecologically, using organic fertilisers, composts and techniques. Livestock is integral to this—the main fertiliser is manure from cows, and the mulch is hay, which is spread to avoid weeds and maintain soil moisture. The Associação dos Produtores de Morango de Namaacha (APMONA) is involved in the project. APMONA is a local strawberry producers'

organisation, which consists mostly of widows and their families, which divides income between individual and community shares. The new community-supported system lets peasants grow their crops for self-consumption and for the local market, as well as produce and sell strawberries as a sideline. The area has become known for its strawberries and the farmers sell directly to the restaurants and hotels in Maputo. Rosa Jorge Obete, co-founder of APMONA, asserts that since she has switched to agroecology, she has saved money on production, especially since she avoids the costs of chemicals. "It has allowed me to put my children in school and helped me with daily costs. We are now able to manage our expenses. We live well, not like before," says Obete.

Source: <https://viacampesina.org/en/images/stories/pdf/CUADERNO%207%20LA%20VIA%20CAMPESINA%20INGLES.compressed.pdf> p17

Community supported agriculture in Mozambique. La Via Campesina

Supporting a new UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants

Support for new initiatives can include policy initiatives as well, such as the proposal for a **UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People working in Rural Areas**.

As the members of the Serikat Petani Indonesia (Indonesian Peasants' Union (SPI)) refer to it, it was an idea from a peasant in a village who was not daunted by the challenges of taking such an idea all the way to the United Nations Human Rights Council. Henry Saragih, Chairperson of SPI, and former General Secretary of La Via Campesina, has been tirelessly campaigning for this idea since 2004, enjoining others to

have their own discussions about it in their own communities. The idea spread and is, at last, being negotiated in the United Nations. [39] This year, a global civil society congress was also held involving all the other organisations and movements who have come on board. The seed of an idea from Medan, Sumatera, has gone a long way since 2004.

"Not only exclusive to peasants, or small food producers related to land, but this initiative has been developed to include all people working in rural areas. In the latest UN draft declaration, we can find that the declaration also applies to any person engaged in artisanal or

small-scale livestock, pastoralism, fishing, forestry, hunting or gathering and handicrafts. Crowds in the Global Peasants Rights Congress also proves this provision: representatives from fisher folk, indigenous, beekeepers, pastoralists, nomads, women, rural workers and even trade unions were present voicing their concerns." [40]

Supporting this struggle by peasants, whether they produce crops or have mixed farms or rear livestock on a small-scale, is a definitive way of contributing visibility and solidarity to help finalise this UN declaration.



A fisherman and his family. Jason Taylor/CIC

Some relevant articles in the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People working in Rural Areas

Article 16. Right to a decent income and livelihood and the means of production

Para 1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to a decent income and livelihood for themselves and their families, and to the means of production necessary to achieve them, including production tools, technical assistance, credit, insurance and other financial services. They also have the right to use individually and collectively traditional ways of farming, fishing and livestock rearing, and to develop community-based commercialization systems.

Article 20. Right to biological diversity

Para 1. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right, individually or collectively, to conserve, maintain and sustainably use and develop biological diversity and associated knowledge, including in agriculture, fishing and livestock. They also have the right to maintain their traditional agrarian, pastoral and agroecological systems upon which their subsistence and the renewal of agricultural biodiversity depend.

Article 21. Rights to water and sanitation

Para 2. Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to water for farming, fishing and livestock keeping and to securing other water-related livelihoods. They have the right to equitable access to water and water management systems, and to be free from arbitrary disconnections or the contamination of water supplies.

Source: UNHRC (2017). Draft Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas presented by the Chair-Rapporteur of the working group, 6 March 2017, A/HRC/WG.15/4/2 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/051/60/PDF/G1705160.pdf?OpenElement>

Building principles of food sovereignty specifically on livestock

Following the example of La Via Campesina's seven principles of Food Sovereignty, we are in discussions with our members and allies about the possibility of a

broad discussion defining a similar set of food sovereignty principles specifically pertaining to small-scale and sustainable livestock producers. The intention is that these would aim to integrate holistic proposals that include the bigger picture of ensuring food sovereignty, supporting community conservation, fighting for zero deforestation and pushing for real solutions to climate change. We also aim to include the continuation of resistance against the WTO and current free trade agreements and support for alternatives.

Campesinos. Simone/Flickr

Warning! Beware false solutions being promoted by agribusiness

Agroecology is becoming popular across the world, and is already posing a threat to the current industrial agricultural model. As a result industry has moved to co-opt the language of agroecology, aiming to integrate it into the current model, seemingly with a view to keeping and hijacking agroecology's techniques and knowledge, whilst robbing it of its political power, and any benefits it might have for peasants and local communities. [41]

Similarly, seductive language about the 'sustainable intensification' of commodity production, 'sustainable commodity supply chains' and 'Climate Smart Agriculture' are approaches that are being pushed by a sector [42] that seems to be resolutely determined not to mention reducing demand for agricultural products such as meat and feedstocks, even though eating less and better meat is clearly good for our health and our environment. These so-called solutions are also

premised on maintaining environmentally damaging global 'value chains', rather than promoting the local production of fresh, healthy food for local consumption.

These solutions include a call for 'Climate-Smart Livestock' from the Global Harvest Initiative, a private sector organisation that includes Monsanto and Du Pont and is focused on increasing productivity growth in agricultural value chains. [43] Whilst better animal health and nutrition are mentioned their vision seems to be of an extraordinarily high tech farming future, where farmers increase productivity by using GPS, drones, in-field monitors and even individual livestock monitors and underwater sensors for aquaculture. [44] Quite how any but the richest of farmers will be able to acquire such technologies does not seem to be addressed.

Another examples is the World Economic Forum's 'New Vision for

Agriculture'. [45] This blithely states that "almost 5 billion people have enough to eat today, up from only 2 billion half a century ago" implying that modern agriculture is responsible, and that more of the same is needed. However, one can conversely use the same figures combined with world population data [46] to argue that this means that about half a billion people were lacking enough to eat in 1950, but today that figure stands at more than 2 billion (even using FAO's figure of 793 million undernourished people there is a significant increase [47]). Modern agriculture is clearly not providing a solution that meets people's needs, and a radically different alternative, that gets food to people that need it, is long overdue. In fact the 'New Vision' appears to focus primarily on linking small farmers into the industrial model more effectively, rather than reducing demand for meat or promoting local and organic agriculture and livestock production. [48]

A broiler chicken facility near New Delhi. Sangamithra Iyer/Brighter Green

Conclusion: let us not only reclaim our right to food but **change the system**

The biased and oppressive free trade system that agribusiness transnational corporations use can appear vast and inevitable. But it is not. Our hope, resistance, solidarity and courage are all that we need to come together to mobilise for change to the current corporate free trade regime and control of food. We can and will reclaim our right to food, our culture, our health, our bodies and our territories.

Practically speaking, our livestock case study partners also identify the need for more respect for food and food producers, and more state support for small-scale food producers, including to protect and promote cooperatives and other alternative approaches, especially in the current phase of hyper-competitiveness. This would help to even out the risks they face in terms of fluctuating markets and increasingly erratic weather patterns because of climate

change, and help to attract and train new farmers.

Furthermore, it is quite possible to imagine a world without the WTO and other corporate free trade agreements, with their unfair rules on food and agriculture—especially since these have only been in place for a few decades. It is possible to break free from commodity chains, supporting local community agriculture and small-scale livestock production

instead. We can localise and rebuild our economies, creating economies for life that are focused on feeding communities and restoring the health of Mother Nature. We can reclaim lands, territories, seeds, livestock and cultures.

As stated in the “Economy for Life” [49] declaration of social movements at the Economic Justice Assembly parallel to the 2013 WTO Ministerial:

“As our Vision states, the Economy for Life is an economy where the fundamental needs of every being and Mother Earth are guaranteed to promote the creativity, humanity and happiness of life. Where solidarity, complementarity, diversity, peace and the well-being of the Earth community as a whole have replaced the greed, ambition, competition, individualism, discrimination, violence and destruction of our Mother Earth generated by the logic of capital.

We will achieve this vision by supporting each other's struggles at local, national, regional, and international levels, across sectors, across issues, across borders. The solutions are in our hands, the hope is in our hearts, and the power is in our solidarity. We will change the balance of forces, reclaim our future, change the system and realize an Economy for Life for Our Earth Community.”

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