

PROJECT REPORT

ENGAGING ACADEMICS IN EFFORTS TO COUNTER THE GROWTH OF FACTORY FARMING IN AFRICA



Brighter Green

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Scope Disclaimer

This report is limited in scope and is non-exhaustive of the issues arising in relation to the subject matter thereof. It is published for further consideration in the context of a multi-phased project envisioned by Brighter Green.

Legal Disclaimer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A GROWING GLOBAL CONSENSUS is emerging that industrial agriculture must be curbed in order to protect animals, ecosystems, and Earth's climate. However, few comprehensive efforts are underway in sub-Saharan Africa to challenge a factory farm-centric model of agricultural development and to promote sustainable food systems. While industrial livestock production in Africa has not reached the scale of the United States, in other Western nations, and Asia and Latin America, it is growing. This puts advocates, researchers, and policymakers in a critical position to reverse the trend before the industry reaches or even approaches the levels seen in other regions.

Through a Fueling Advocates Initiative (FAI) through the Tiny Beam Fund, Brighter Green on a 10-month long project to engage academics researchers in sub-Saharan Africa in discourse policy debates in order to challenge the factory farm-centric model of agricultural development.

While limited published research exists specifically about the detrimental impacts of factory farming in Africa, there is significant interest among academics and advocates about topics, such as the effectiveness of methods that may be considered alternatives to factory farming. These include organic agriculture, agroecology, traditional or pastoral farming, and the use of livestock for household poverty reduction and wealth creation. Academics we engaged with concur that centering African culture, traditional methods, landscapes, and climate realities in order to combat factory farming and create solutions and alternatives is essential.

The research also showed that connecting with the global movement for animal welfare and establishing an intersectoral approach are necessary to prevent the exportation of an unjust, unsustainable model of livestock production to the African continent.

Note: Supplementary materials for the project discussed in this report (e.g., bibliographies and the video and notes from the concluding webinar) are available on the Brighter Green website at <https://brightergreen.org.africaff>

Academics we engaged with concur that centering African culture, traditional methods, landscapes, and climate realities in order to combat factory farming and create solutions and alternatives is

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Right: A battery-cage operation on a small-scale farm near

INTRODUCTION

OVER THE LAST several years, the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), among other global institutions, have identified the need to transition to mainly plant-based diets in order to support health as well as the climate and biodiversity. The global consensus is that food systems must shift in a more sustainable, equitable, and climate-compatible direction, rapidly. Yet, few comprehensive efforts are underway in sub-Saharan Africa to challenge a factory farm–centric model of agricultural development; to promote sustainable food systems; and to address both excessive consumption of animal-based foods and the under-consumption of sustainable and nutritious foods.

At the same time, in many African countries, factory farming is expanding, and meat and dairy consumption are rising. Most African governments see large-scale animal agriculture as a net good for their economies and food supply, and as a potential avenue for export-led trade. This view is supported by industrialized-country foreign policies, aid and capacity-development programs, and multinational and domestic agribusinesses, as well as economic elites.

To address this pressing issue, Brighter Green applied for and received a Fueling Advocates Initiative (FAI) grant from the Tiny Beam Fund to engage academics and researchers in challenging the factory farm–centric model of agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa. The objective of the project was to learn from and authenticate the voices of African academics, including Ph.D. candidates, in the effort to build an intellectual and data-driven case that seeks to counter the growth of industrial agriculture across the continent and throughout the African Union.

Beginning in September 2020, Brighter Green:

- 1) compiled existing, relevant research through an in-depth literature review and expert interviews;
- 2) identified research gaps; and
- 3) hosted a virtual webinar to review existing research, identify a forward-looking research agenda, and strategize about ways for academics to become more engaged in policy debates and deliberations on factory farming.

This report summarizes the findings of the project and provides recommendations for further research and engagement. We hope readers will gain an understanding of the impacts of factory farming on animal welfare, the environment, and food security. We also anticipate that academics and researchers will use this report to help guide their research, and that advocates will use it to identify challenges and gaps in order to direct new campaigns and advocacy efforts. Ultimately, we hope that policymakers and decision-makers across Africa access this report to better understand the harms of the industrial livestock model and to inform their priorities on health, environment, animal welfare, and livelihoods as they create future legislation.

Note: Throughout this report, we use the terms “industrial agriculture” and “factory farming” interchangeably.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

LARGE-SCALE, INDUSTRIALIZED ANIMAL agriculture—often referred to as “factory farming”—applies a mindset that permits injustice, subjugation, exploitation, and violence, aided by mechanization and commodification. It allows routine animal cruelty to remain hidden and to thrive. Farmed animals become the direct victims of the profit-driven, industrialized food production system, posing a great economic, ecological, health, and social risk to humans.

Industry allows routine animal cruelty to remain hidden and to thrive.

What is more, the industry ensures that consumers become disconnected from the truth of the cruelty and the origins of the meat or dairy products they are eating through the clever use of language. For example, slaughterhouses become meat processing plants; pig tails are “docked”, not amputated; and chickens have their beaks “trimmed”, not debeaked, among other euphemisms.

Industry ensures that consumers become disconnected from the truth of the cruelty and the origins of the meat or dairy products they are eating through the clever use of language.

As the human population grows in Africa and as its countries begin to enjoy more prosperity, which is leading to rising consumption and production of meat and dairy, advocates, researchers, and policymakers are in a unique position to challenge a factory farm-centric model of agricultural development and to promote sustainable, equitable food systems that nourish people and don’t degrade natural resources and exploit non-human animals, both domesticated and wild.

METHODOLOGY



THIS PROJECT WAS led by Judy Bankman, Project Manager with Brighter Green, based in the United States; Judy Muriithi, Project Consultant, based in Kenya; and Franklin Lagat, Legal Researcher, based in Kenya.

Our first step was the creation of a 17-page annotated bibliography based on an in-depth literature review using

academic databases. We then identified and reached out to more than 40 academics, researchers, and advocates via email whom we hoped might support this project. We identified them through existing relationships, recommendations from other researchers and advocates, and the initial bibliography, as well as through two additional bibliographies provided by the Tiny Beam Fund (these are available on the [Brighter Green website](#)).

From the individuals we contacted, we interviewed eleven academics and advocates via phone, Zoom, or in-person. Our interview subjects were based in Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, and Uganda. We chose individuals to interview based on the relevance of their work in the agricultural sector and food systems and the positions they held in their institutions. They all offered their expertise on the subject and provided insight on research gaps and possible next steps. In addition to the interviews, we corresponded with several academics and advocates extensively through email who provided insights, shared publications, and recommended further contacts.



The interviewees were:

	<p>Amos Omore, Principal Scientist and Representative in Eastern & Southern Africa, International Livestock Research Institute, Tanzania</p> <p>Mupenzi Mutimura, Senior Research Fellow in Forage and Ruminant Nutrition, Rwanda Agriculture Board, Rwanda</p> <p>Amy P. Wilson, Founder, Animal Law Reform South Africa</p>
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Charles Ssekyewa, Professor of Agroecology, Centre for Ecosystems Research & Development, Uganda

Geoffrey Alengo, Lecturer at Dept. of General Management, Uganda Management Institute, Kampala

Professor Raymond Auerbach, University of Western Cape

Dr. Victor Yamo, Humane & Sustainable Agriculture Campaign Manager at World Animal Protection, Africa

Professor Sharyn Spicer, Dept. of Sociology, University of Western Cape, South Africa

Josiah Ojwang, Program Director, Africa Network for Animal Welfare, Kenya

Michael Kibue, Maasai tribesman & Secretary of Kenya Livestock Working Group and Facilitator of the FAO-SARD Livestock Farmer-Field-Schools

Professor Charles Kimwele, Associate Professor, Dept. of Veterinary Anatomy & Physiology, University of Nairobi

On May 20, 2021, Brighter Green collaborated with the University of Western Cape (UWC) in South Africa to host a two-panel virtual webinar titled “The Impacts of Industrial Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa: Next Steps for Research and Engagement.” The webinar gathered eight expert speakers and moderators. The webinar had over 250 registered participants from countries throughout Africa, as well as the US and the UK, and received significant positive feedback. The recording of the webinar is available on the Brighter Green website.



The webinar was officiated by Professor Monwabisi Knowledge Ralarala, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at University of Western Cape, South Africa.

Panel 1: Explored the links between industrial farming, food security, and livelihoods

The panel was moderated by Amy P. Wilson, co-founder of Animal Law Reform South Africa

Speakers included:

- Ornella Kasongo, Master's student at UWC
- Professor Charles Ssekyewa, Director of the Center for Ecosystems Research and Development in Uganda

Panel 2: Illuminated the impacts of factory farming/industrial agriculture on animal welfare

The panel was moderated by Tozie Zokufa of CAAWO and director of South Africa for a Greener World.

Speakers included:

- Dr. Victor Yamo, Humane & Sustainable Agriculture Campaign Manager at World Animal Protection Africa Office of Nairobi, Kenya
- Lynné Vigeland, Master's student at UWC
- Tony Gerrans, Executive Director of African Operations at Humane Society International
- Professor Werner Scholtz, formerly with UWC and currently Head of School and Professor of Global Environmental Law at Southampton Law School, University of Southampton in the UK

The next section details the themes that emerged from our research, interviews, and expert discussions during the webinar and a summary of our findings.

FINDINGS AND EMERGING THEMES

Through our initial research, we found very few publications focusing specifically on the impacts of factory farming on animal welfare, the environment, or public health in sub-Saharan Africa.

Many publications and researchers focus on adjacent topics, such as the effectiveness of methods that may be considered alternatives to factory farming, such as organic agriculture and traditional or pastoral farming, and the use of livestock for household poverty reduction and wealth creation.

Moreover, many researchers we interviewed are interested in the topic of industrial agriculture and acknowledge the gaps in the current literature.

Through our interviews, we found that several institutions, such as the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), work on livestock as a means to support smallholder farmers, counter malnutrition, and curb the effects of climate change, though they do not actively counter factory farms. We have also found that the master's students we engaged with through UWC brought a critical, intersectional approach to this topic, examining the linkages between food security, animal welfare and animal rights, women's rights, and colonialism.

This project brought together veterinarians, lawyers, academics, and advocates, some of whom were already connected, but many of whom engaged with each other for the first time on a topic of shared interest and importance.

Our research also confirmed that demand for animal products is increasing in many countries, as incomes rise and as fast-food companies make inroads in the food ecosystem. Additionally, we discovered that animal welfare standards could use improvement in all African countries. We also found that there are varying ideas of what characterizes a “factory farm”, and that the terms “commercial agriculture” or “industrial agriculture” are also used for similar models.

Another outcome of this project has been the connections we facilitated across disciplines. This project brought together veterinarians, lawyers, academics, and advocates, some of whom were already connected, but many of whom engaged with each other for the first time on a topic of shared interest and importance.

The literature review, interviews, and webinar panel discussions detailed the manifold detrimental impacts of factory farming. While industrial livestock production in Africa has not reached the scale of the United States and other Western nations, it is growing (e.g., battery cages are becoming more widespread in several African countries). This puts advocates, researchers, and policymakers in a critical position to reverse the trend before the industry reaches the levels of other regions.

“Industrialized agriculture contributes highly to global warming, climate change, and drought.”

—Ornella Kasongo

The May 20 webinar illuminated a number of the issues the project sought to investigate, with speakers offering varied perspectives and entry points, while coalescing around key themes. Panelist Ornella Kasongo, Master’s student at UWC, discussed the negative impacts of factory farming on food security in Africa: “Industrialized agriculture contributes highly to global warming, climate

change, and drought, which affect agriculture and in the long run will affect food security as a whole.”

Panelist Charles Ssekyewa, Professor of Agroecology at the Center for Ecosystems Research & Development, echoed this viewpoint and added that while industrial agriculture can produce large quantities of food, the quality is lessened. He also asserted that animal feed in industrial systems is value-added and could instead be used for human consumption.

“[Commodification] changes the animal from a biological entity that experiences a given environment to an economic entity that can be [economically] exchanged.”

—Lynné Vigeland

Professor Ssekyewa argued that biodiversity is negatively impacted by factory farms, while through “smallholder agriculture, traditional agriculture, and a blend with agroecology, there is encouragement for a biodiverse system to be resilient to adverse conditions, pests and diseases, and other challenges.”

“Animals are removed from rangelands and are kept in sheds, [manipulated] genetically ... and then transported en masse to slaughter either by road or sea. At the slaughterhouse, the animals are processed entirely as commodities, measured only in mass.... [A] whole range of welfare compromises or harms flow from that process.”

—Tony Gerrans

Lynné Vigeland, a Master’s student at UWC, explained that commodification of animals allows for their exploitation on factory farms: “[Commodification] changes the animal from a biological entity that experiences a given environment to an economic entity that can be [economically] exchanged.” Tony Gerrans of Humane Society International expounded on this concept, as he explained: “Animals are removed from rangelands and are kept in sheds, [manipulated] genetically ... and then transported en masse to slaughter either by road or sea. At the slaughterhouse, the animals are processed entirely as commodities, measured only in

mass.... [A] whole range of welfare compromises or harms flow from that process.”

Dr. Victor Yamo, Humane & Sustainable Agriculture Campaign Manager at World Animal Protection Africa, argued for a recognition of animals’ fundamental freedoms, and connects them to human wellbeing: “The freedoms are critical for the animal’s wellbeing and if they secure those freedoms, humans will have better products and productivity, which contributes to good nutrition, good health, and better livelihoods.”

“Recognition of animals’ fundamental freedoms is critical for the animal’s wellbeing and will contribute to good nutrition, good health, and better livelihoods.”

—Dr. Victor Yamo

that pastoralism and traditional models of farming can help provide existing models for sustainable agriculture.

Interviewee Michael Kibue, Maasai tribesman and Secretary of Kenya Livestock Working Group and Facilitator of the FAO-SARD Livestock Farmer-Field-Schools, provided an example through his work that uses local, best practices to link traditional methods of livestock production with rangeland conservation.

Professor Werner Scholtz, Head of School and Professor of Global Environmental Law at Southampton Law School, reinforced the fact that a global perspective is needed in conjunction with an African-centric approach: “[Industrial livestock production] has a global impact; it is a global trade with global linkages.” This means it is necessary to connect Africa’s NGOs, policymakers, and academics with the global movements for animal welfare and the environment. According to Dr. Yamo, it is also critical to understand the ways multinational companies’ market to the African continent, and what attitudes are promoted by meat, dairy, and fast food companies.

“It is necessary to connect Africa’s NGOs, policymakers, and academics with the global movements for animal welfare and the environment.”

—Prof. Werner Scholtz

“The disregard of the rich knowledge of the African people has enabled the replication in Africa of the industrial agricultural model.”

—Prof. Charles Ssekyewa



Left: Inside a South African broiler factory farm (Photo by Free Range Chicken Farming South Africa).

RECOMMENDATIONS

THIS SECTION PROVIDES recommendations to key stakeholders, including advocates, researchers, and policymakers in Africa and the African Union in order to limit the growth of industrial animal agriculture and create sustainable alternatives.

- 1. Continue efforts to engage** African students, researchers, and professors to advance a forward-looking research agenda on the impacts of industrial agriculture on animal welfare, livelihoods, and the environment.

This research agenda should include the development of an African-centric definition of factory farming to help assess the scope and scale of factory farms in the region, and to enable local leaders to make stronger connections between the growth of factory farms and their externalities (e.g. biodiversity loss, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and environmental health concerns).

- 2. Adopt a global, intersectoral approach** to counter industrial livestock production. It is important to link African advocacy efforts with the global movement to counter the suffering of livestock animals and wild animals, which are also impacted as habitats are razed to accommodate factory farms and the required feed crops.

We also recommend direct engagement between academics and legislators in order to ensure an evidence base for future legislation regarding the impacts of industrial livestock production.

To this end, it will be essential for advocates and researchers to work together to lobby African leaders, nationally and at the African Union level, to undertake comprehensive efforts to challenge the factory farm–centric model of agricultural development and to promote sustainable food systems. Advocates could build on the work already underway through the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), which in the last two years has developed an Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa and an Animal Health Strategy for Africa.

- 3. Acknowledge and learn from indigenous forms** of agriculture that are adapted to climate and culture.

Leaders and policymakers must understand the different roles played by livestock in Africa and the impact of livestock on livelihoods, economic development, and the environment. It is also important for policymakers and agricultural producers to acknowledge that the existing ecological system and agricultural practices have, for centuries, sustained communities. For example, certain native species may be tolerant to drought and therefore more resilient than foreign species, or those promoted by agribusinesses.

National governments ought to institute policies that will restore ecosystems by adopting agroecological solutions, and by limiting the growth of large-scale, confined farm

operations. Alternative agricultural models would afford special attention to traditional approaches, incentives, and protections for native species.

4. Advocate for the importance of an African-centric approach to animal agriculture to avoid imposing immoral, unjust practices from the global North.

This would entail researchers and advocates collaborating to:

1. Develop campaigns targeting African leaders that spread awareness of the documented detrimental impacts of factory farming in the global North and, increasingly in Africa; and
2. Communicate research and examples documenting viable alternatives to this model, which can be drawn from traditional practices and recent learning.

5. Educate farmers on animal welfare standards and practices.

International and African NGOs should establish educational programs that empower and educate livestock producers on the current global agricultural sustainability trends and practices that seek to enhance animal welfare standards, e.g., how to invest in animal wellbeing and health. This has the potential to also improve African livelihoods and contribute to food security.

6. Encourage national governments to develop animal welfare laws and policies and incorporate animal welfare into new and existing livestock policies.

One approach could be court-centered, which challenges the efficacy and quality of animal products from industrial farms from the angle of consumer protection. This could lead to precedents that provide minimum requirements or standards for animal agriculture.

Although animal welfare is increasingly the subject of regulation around the world (some of it comprehensive), it remains a work in progress in many African countries. Efforts to advance animal welfare in food systems from other regions of the world could provide examples for African policymakers and opportunities for collaboration with African researchers and advocates.

Private sector policies to advance animal welfare, like a fast food corporation, hotel, or airline committing to not purchase from factory farm operations, may inform and perhaps accelerate adoption of government laws or policy measures.

Finally, governments should introduce and enhance national policies, legislation, and regulation to recognize animals as sentient beings, protect their welfare, and develop and implement better practices for improved animal welfare. The AU could also do the same at a continent-wide level.

CONCLUSION

BRIGHTER GREEN RECOMMENDS a multisectoral, global approach to counter the growth of industrial livestock production in sub-Saharan Africa and to build sustainable and just alternatives. It is our hope that individuals, organizations, and governments in this field will use the recommendations from this project to advance research, collaborations, and forward-looking policy. Brighter Green plans to further our work on this topic through engagement with partners and additional research, advocacy, and documentation.



Above: *Free-range chickens, Wakiso District, Uganda.
Photo: Charles Ssekyewa*

APPENDIX

Webinar Speakers and Moderators

Professor Monwabisi Knowledge Ralarala joined the University of the Western Cape (UWC) as Dean of the Faculty of Arts in January 2020. He has worked as Director of the Fundani Centre for Higher Education Development at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, the Language Centre at the University of Fort Hare; and the Research and Policy Development Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. He has also lectured in the African Languages Department at Stellenbosch University (SU). He holds two PhDs: from Stellenbosch University and the University of the Free State.

Amy P. Wilson is the co-founder and director of Animal Law Reform South Africa, the first animal law non-profit organisation in the country. Amy has over ten years of legal experience and is the first South African attorney to graduate with a Master's degree in Animal Law. Amy has leadership positions at the Coalition of African Animal Welfare Organisations, Lawyers for Animal Protection in Africa, and the Humane Education Trust.

Ornella Chrisciane Kasongo is a passionate, kind researcher who has a passion for gender inequality, food insecurity, and animal welfare. She has a background in commerce with an Honours degree in management. However, her passion for the themes inspired her to pursue a Master's degree in her areas of interest. Her thesis aims to investigate the role of women in small-scale livestock farming, with a special focus on the implications for food security and animal welfare. She expects her research to contribute to the animal rights and welfare debate—notwithstanding the contribution to the policy spheres.

Charles Ssekyewa is a Professor of Agroecology with a focus on Systems Philosophy and Applications, as well as Organic Agriculture. He is a graduate of Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda and was trained by the University of London, Wye College, UK in the Horticulture and Crop Sciences Master Programme. His PhD focused on Molecular Characterization of the Tomato Yellow Leaf Curl virus and its vector, the Whitefly (*Bemisia tabaci*) at Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium. He completed his postdoctorate at University of Bangor, Wales, UK. Prof. Ssekyewa has been involved in many research and community engagement activities on agronomic, crop protection, and environment programmes, and has published across disciplines, and was the Director of Research for Uganda Martyrs University (2007–2011). He is the pioneer dean of Agriculture (2000–2005), and currently facilitates on the Masters in Agroecology and PhD Agroecology Programmes of Uganda Martyrs University. His current passion is to understand ecosystems and how they work as a basis for innovation, and managing sustainable agroecosystems. He is Director of the Center for Ecosystems Research and Development (CERD, Uganda).

Tozie Zokufa leads the Animal Welfare Portfolio for the South African Veterinary Council. He serves on the International Policy forum of World Animal Net and is a member of the International Coalition for Animal Welfare, which is the collaborating partner to the World Organisation for Animal Health. He is currently the Executive Director in South Africa of A Greener World (www.agreenerworld.org) working with farmers in the field of farm audits and certification.

Dr. Victor Yamo is World Animal Protection–Africa Office as the Farming Campaign Manager. He is a qualified Veterinary Surgeon and Poultry expert trained at the University of Nairobi and the Dutch Animal Health Service, Deventer. He has over 25 years working experience in Veterinary services, Livestock Production Systems and Agribusiness. Victor has also done consultancy work for Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European Union (EU), and is currently a part-time lecturer for Animal Welfare, Ethics & Law at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology (JKUAT).

Lynné Vigeland is a Master's student at UWC studying the impacts of factory farming on livelihoods of the poor. She focused her Honours thesis on human–livestock interactions.

Tony Gerrans served as a trustee of the Humane Education Trust, the South African affiliate of Compassion in World Farming, and currently serves as legal advisor on the Cape Animal Welfare Forum Executive. In this role he has chaired the sub-committee tasked with driving the revision of the Cape Town City Animal By-law. In July 2019 he completed a Masters in Animal Law at the Northwestern School of Law at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. Tony is now working with Humane Society International as the Executive Director of African operations.

Professor Werner Scholtz is Head of School and Professor of Global Environmental Law at Southampton Law School, University of Southampton, UK. Werner specialises in international environmental law and his current research focuses on the consequences of the increasing importance of animal welfare for international wildlife law and has resulted in publications in *inter alia* Transnational Environmental Law, the Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy, RECIEL, as well as a book publication (W. Scholtz (ed.) *Animal Welfare and International Environmental Law*, Edward Elgar, 2019).



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