TINY BEAM FUND

Burning Questions for 2023

Following are the Tiny Beam Fund's Burning Questions for 2023. This updated list includes a total of 27 Burning Questions in eight categories. They are written and compiled by Tiny Beam Fund based on a combination of questions that were newly submitted in 2023 and questions from 2020 (see the last page for terms and definitions). For more information about the Burning Questions and to request the original question text and contexts for the questions, according to their contributors, please visit the Tiny Beam Fund website.

CATEGORY	2023 BURNING QUESTION
PRODUCTION & SUPPLY (PROD)	
PROD1	What is the impact of industrial animal agriculture (including animal feed) on achieving a just and sustainable food system, and on each of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals?
PROD2	What do we know about the current status and growth of industrial animal agriculture in LMICs, including the prevalence of industrial practices (versus other systems), the number of animals involved (by species), global supply chains, and government regulations?
PROD3	How can non-industrial farm animal producers in LMICs make animal welfare and environmental improvements while also being profitable enough to resist the trend toward industrialization? What examples are there where this has occurred and what factors have enabled their success?
PROD4	How will the increasing production and availability of alternative proteins (e.g., plant-based and cultivated meat) affect industrial animal agriculture in LMICs, including meat consumption, producers' incomes, and greenhouse gas emissions from farmed animals?
CONSUMPTION & DEMAND (CON)	
CON1	What plant-centric diets are nutritionally, culturally, and regionally appropriate for different LMICs? What are the most effective ways to promote those diets to different stakeholders?
CON2	What are the drivers of increased meat consumption in LMICs? What are the most effective interventions and communication strategies to stop or slow the trend?
CON3	What kinds of strategies and messaging would convince decision makers at public institutions in LMICs to reduce the proportion of animal-based food products served at their facilities and events?

CATEGORY	2023 BURNING QUESTION
GOVERNMENTS & POLICIES (GOV)	
GOV1	What specific policies of the World Bank, World Trade Organization, and similar entities lead to the development and expansion of industrial animal agriculture in LMICs? What is the role of LMIC governments in this expansion?
GOV2	What are the key supply-side drivers of the introduction and growth of industrial animal agriculture in LMICs? Are government policies and value chain activities significant and influential drivers (e.g., government subsidies to industry, free trade agreements, corporate marketing and partnerships with governments)?
GOV3	What is the status of domestic regulatory oversight of industrial animal farming operations in LMICs and what actions are currently being taken by those governments to prevent, monitor, and mitigate public health and environmental impacts?
AGRIBUSINESS & VALUE CHAINS (AGB)	
AGB1	What policies are needed to stop or slow the convergence of agribusiness and the oil/gas industry (e.g., using methane from anaerobic digesters on industrial animal farms to acquire carbon offset credits)?
AGB2	What efforts or interventions are both effective and regionally/culturally appropriate to bring greater scrutiny to slow or stop the exportation of industrial animal farming practices to LMICs? What role do LMIC governments play in supporting such expansion?
AGB3	What impact do food industry standards and voluntary corporate commitments have on meat consumption and animal welfare in LMICs? How can commitments made by companies in higher-income countries be expanded to other markets?
AGB4	How can large supermarket chains in LMICs help decrease the price of cage-free eggs and normalize their consumption among all types of consumers?
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ASPECTS (ECON)	
ECON1	How does industrial animal agriculture impact the economic growth and development of LMICs when "true cost" accounting is used (i.e., including ecological devastation, pollution, GHG emissions, negative public health outcomes, etc.)? How can these external costs be communicated effectively to decision makers and those who influence them in LMICs?
ECON2	How do animal welfare improvements and "higher welfare" products affect the economics for producers in LMICs? How can welfare improvements that reduce costs or increase sales be communicated to producers and other stakeholders in LMICs?
ECON3	How much funding is coming from international donors and intergovernmental organizations to further intensify industrial animal agriculture in LMICs? Are there documented environmental and social impacts resulting from these investments that can be used to stop or slow future investments?
ECON4	In LMICs that export large quantities of animal-based food products, what are the most likely and effective economic scenarios that would reduce farmed animal production, for both export and for domestic consumption?

CATEGORY	2023 BURNING QUESTION
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS & NGOs (SOC)	
SOC1	How can different social movements (e.g., climate change, gender equality, hunger) and farmers' groups in LMICs be persuaded and supported to work in a coordinated manner to address industrial animal agriculture? Are there any past successes that can serve as useful examples?
SOC2	How can efforts to challenge industrial animal agriculture be globalized in meaningful ways, and more deeply connect those in LMICs with advocates and funding sources in higher-income countries?
SOC3	What people, leaders, organizations, and resources in LMICs are currently working to slow or stop industrial animal agriculture? Have their efforts made a difference to the spread of industrial animal production in LMICs? How can future efforts be supported and scaled?
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES (ENV)	
ENV1	How do industrial animal agriculture and alternative farmed animal production systems impact air, land, water quality, and resource consumption in LMICs? How has the shift towards industrial animal production affected the production of human food crops?
ENV2	What policies are needed to stop or slow the practice of "carbon leakage" (e.g., when companies shift industrial animal farming to LMICs to avoid regulations in higher-income countries)?
ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES (AW)	
AW1	How might advances in genetic editing and genetic modification of animals improve or worsen the welfare of farmed animals in LMICs?
AW2	How informed about animal welfare practices are extension agents and veterinarians working in LMICs? How to help them learn about and apply best practices?
AW3	Do farm animal welfare regulations (e.g., banning cages) tend to favor large-scale farmed animal production over non-industrial systems? What effects do these regulations have on consumption of animal-based products, especially in food insecure households in LMICs?
AW4	What are the biggest welfare issues for farmed fish in semi-intensive farming systems in LMICs? What are the best improvements one can make to address these issues?

Terms & Definitions

➔ "LMICs" are Low- and Middle-Income Countries (according to the latest World Bank classification), though in some cases the original language referred instead to the "Global South" or similar language.

➔ "Farms" include those on land and in water. "Food animals" include terrestrial and aquatic animals.

➔ Tiny Beam Fund is focused on tackling industrial and large-scale production.

- "Industrial" production is understood by Tiny Beam Fund as a distinctive method and system of production and type of value chain characterized by features such as hired labor, confined housing, controlled feed and diet, high throughput, products geared for commercial purposes, and vertical integration. As such, it is quite different from other forms of animal agriculture such as pastoralism.

- "Industrial" may be interchangeable with "intensive" in some cases, but not always. Production can be intensive without being industrial.

- The number of animals kept in "large-scale" farms varies from country to country. One has to look at government categories or widely accepted figures on sizes and scales of farms in a particular country to determine whether certain farms in that country are considered to be large-scale.

➔ "Factory farming" generally is not a term Tiny Beam Fund favors because it is vague and imprecise.

Questions?

For more about the Burning Questions Initiative, please visit tinybeamfund.org. If you have questions that are not answered by the website, please contact min@tinybeamfund.org.

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