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2 March 2022 - Months after the end of the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP26), Brazilian meat producers are looking for ways to reduce emissions and comply with agreements signed during the United Nations Conference.

Last week, the Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil (CNA) promoted a joint meeting to discuss the Global Commitment for Methane, which calls for the reduction of global methane emissions by 30% by 2030. The entity is discussing ways it can help the federal government in the elaboration of Brazilian proposals.

“We see it as an opportunity to increase efficiency in Brazilian livestock, but we are aware of the challenges that exist,” the president of the CNA National Environment Commission, Muni Lourenço stated at the meeting.

According to CNA executives, the Confederation has been following the debates on the subject and took an active part in the COP26.

Whether or not the accords signed during the Conference increase pressure on producers to reduce emissions, has divided the beef sector in Brazil.

For Nelson Ananias, coordinator of Sustainability at CAN, meat producers already felt responsible and had already established goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions before last year’s Climate Change Conference.

“The rancher was already working to reduce his emissions; this did not start only after COP26,” Ananias told Feedinfo.

But the reduction up to now, he says, has mostly been done by compensation. Today, with this new global agreement to reduce methane, producers will have to go beyond compensation.

“We will have to focus on actions that are directly associated with the production of these emissions,” he said.

This, according to Ananias, includes a more efficient production, reduction of slaughter time, and investments in animal diets which could and reduce emissions already in the animals’ rumens.

Ananias says there are already entities, like Embrapa (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation), working on reducing methane via nutritional solutions. The executive says nutritional solutions are viable options 'as long as they are affordable, recognised and monitorable technologies'.

Sergio Raposo de Medeiros, Researcher in Animal Nutrition at Embrapa, says the entity has in its research portfolio a very large number of works aimed at production with lower emission of methane and other greenhouse gases (GHGs), including some solutions via nutritional supplements.

“There are works that investigate specific options, such as the use of additives in cattle nutrition and their effect on emissions,” he said.

According to Medeiros, all forms of emission reduction are of interest to producers.

“However, products whose only benefit is the reduction of methane, without an increase in performance, are only justified if there is a premium for the reduction of methane they cause,” he said.

As for the Methane Zero programme, announced by the Brazilian government at the beginning of February, Ananias believes it to be ‘very complicated’ to achieve.

“The vocation of the livestock sector in Brazil is to seek an increasingly efficient production, but zero methane is very difficult,” he commented.

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