



Report

Country consultation on their AH&W priorities and challenges

SCAR Animal Health & Welfare WG

July 2026

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Summary

This report summarises the responses to the online survey conducted by the Animal Health & Welfare (AH&W) WG of SCAR in 2025. The aim of the survey was to collect and share the members' research priorities and challenges in the field of animal health and welfare, thus contributing to research and innovation policy-making, research coordination and a common strategic research agenda. The questionnaire focused on the period from 2025 to 2026 and was open from 4 March to 8 October 2025.

Unsurprisingly, respondents articulated their priorities within the established framework of preparedness, emphasizing the interrelated domains of prevention, detection, and response; many referred to One health as the most appropriate approach:


- ✦ Surveillance and monitoring of animal health and welfare of animals, both terrestrial and aquatic.
- ✦ Diagnostics of infections and diseases, and detection of welfare issues (indicators, precision livestock farming), including the development of new tools.
- ✦ Characterization of pathogens, including the development of new tools, and AMR.
- ✦ Data, data collection and sharing; use of artificial intelligence.
- ✦ Epidemiology and risk assessment for both health and welfare, including the development of new tools/methodologies.
- ✦ Prevention measures including biosecurity and vaccines (also immunological tools and platforms).
- ✦ Treatments and control, recovery.

The respondents identified the following diseases and related issues as their highest priorities and challenges, reflecting areas of greatest perceived need for research activities:

- ✦ Antimicrobial resistance and alternatives to antimicrobials, resistance to parasites, prudent use.
- ✦ Vector Borne Diseases in general, with emphasis on Bluetongue.
- ✦ African Swine Fever.
- ✦ Avian / Animal Influenza.
- ✦ Foot and Mouth Disease and preparedness against emerging diseases as particular challenges.
- ✦ Parasitic infections (nematodes, trematodes).
- ✦ Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome, PRRS.
- ✦ Zoonoses: Salmonella, Bovine tuberculosis.
- ✦ Mastitis pathogens.
- ✦ Aquaculture.

With respect to animal welfare, respondents expressed the greatest interest in the following issues, reflecting areas considered most critical for upcoming research:

- ✦ Housing systems and manipulation of animals.
- ✦ Indicators and animal-based measures, precision livestock farming.
- ✦ Welfare during transport and at end of life.
- ✦ Positive welfare, human-animal interaction and welfare.

 Welfare in aquaculture.

Worthwhile domains of research include the effects of climate change on animal health and welfare, the trade-offs between health, welfare and the economic sustainability of farming systems, and advances in breeding and genomics aimed at improving animal resilience, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and enhancing pathogen resistance.

Expertise of respondents

Question in the survey: In order to have a better interpretation of the answers, it is useful to have an idea of your main expertise. Please specify.

Twenty-three organisations, including the industry association AnimalhealthEurope and EFSA, from sixteen countries replied to the online survey (two separate files from BMLEH, DE). They cited their main expertise as being in animal health (seven respondents), animal welfare (one respondent) or both animal and public health (fifteen respondents). Most countries (twelve) shared information regarding both animal health and welfare, whereas three countries (Austria, Greece and Poland) contributed to animal health only, and, one country Lithuania replied only regarding animal welfare.

In this report, the organisation's main expertise is mentioned in the 'AH&W Priorities' paragraph.

AH&W Priorities

Question in the survey: What are the animal health and welfare (AH&W) research priorities for your organisation in 2025-2026?

You can refer to specific diseases, welfare issues or more detailed research questions. Please rank the priorities, with 1 being the highest priority, 2 being the second highest, etc. You can indicate the topics that your organisation (authority, funding agency, research centre) is funding or plans to fund in the near future. University representatives can indicate the AH&W research topics they are interested in.

This question is similar to the general roundtable discussions that used to be organised during the WG plenary meetings.

European organisations

AnimalhealthEurope

Main expertise: Animal Health

1. Disease preparedness, prevention and control.
2. Surveillance and early detection.
3. Encouraging uptake of research outcomes.
4. Impact of livestock diseases on mental health and wellbeing.
5. Supporting sustainable food production through animal health.

The European Food Safety Authority, EFSA

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

Animal health

Priority topics are vector borne diseases, HPAI, ASF, One Health and TSE. Contribution to the Partnership AH&W (Rapid risk assessment, biosecurity and burden of zoonoses).

Animal welfare






Identification and implementation of animal welfare indicators for main species in the EU enabling monitoring of the welfare (entails data collection and platforms to do so; determine cut off values of Animal Based Measures); indicators should cover the whole food chain (e.g. on-farm welfare: space, enrichment & effects of group; transport: real-time recording and validated methods for journey time, temperature, space allowance; welfare at slaughter: monitoring hazards and indicators for (in) efficient slaughtering according to methods listed in Reg. No. 1099/2009.

Contribution to EUP AH&W initiative and animal welfare platform (SOA9 & follow up).

Austria

Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health Care and Consumer Protection, represented by the Veterinary University of Vienna

Main expertise: Animal Health




-  Antimicrobial usage and resistance.
-  Improving monitoring and surveillance systems.
-  Animal health economics.
-  Knowledge transfer.
-  Special focus 2025: HPAI, emerging crises.

Belgium

Federal Public Service Health, food chain safety and environment

Main expertise: Animal Health

Projects currently funded:

-  FLUCART - New mapping of sensitive natural areas in Belgium and dynamics of exposure of industrial and hobby poultry farms to low and highly pathogenic influenza viruses.
-  INFLUE-AIR - Airborne transmission of highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses.
-  INVAZIV - Development of methods for the in vitro assessment of the zoonotic potential of avian influenza viruses.

- ✿ MULTIMMUBTV - Determination of optimal combinations of serotypes to be considered for multivalent vaccination against bluetongue virus and identification of major antigenic variations during the genetic evolution of the virus.
- ✿ EHDV-PREP - Preparedness for a possible introduction of Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease virus in Belgian ruminants: implementation of diagnostics and monitoring and study of pathogenesis, immune response and potential vectors.
- ✿ FLUZOVA: Swine influenza surveillance with emphasis on vaccine strain selection and zoonotic risk.
- ✿ AMR-DRIVE - The impact of drivers, other than antimicrobial consumption, on the presence of antimicrobial resistance (genes) on livestock production farms.
- ✿ AQU-AMR - Antimicrobial resistance in aquatic animals.
- ✿ MILK-IBR: Validation of gE tank milk testing for maintaining IBR-free status.
- ✿ ASF-CONNECT - Study of the functions and mechanisms of intercellular communication induced by African Swine Fever virus for potential prophylactic or therapeutic applications.
- ✿ ANTHELMOGRAM - The Next Generation Decision Making Tool for Anthelmintic Resistance Management in Europe.
- ✿ MAP-TCBZR - Mapping resistance loci and interrogating mechanisms of triclabendazole resistance in European isolates of *Fasciola hepatica*.
- ✿ ATYTUB - Consolidation of the IFNg test in the context of surveillance of bovine tuberculosis and involvement of environmental Mycobacteria in the problem of atypical reactions.
- ✿ PIGRESIST - Opportunities for genetic selection for resistance to PRRS infection in pigs in Belgium.
- ✿ RECOMVAX - Deciphering the role of recombination between PRRSV vaccine and wild-type strains in the field.

Ghent University - PROVAXS

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

1. New platform technologies for vaccines to increase flexibility in adaptation of vaccines to circulating/emerging strains in the field.
2. Development of alternatives to antibiotics.
3. Improved biosecurity.
4. Better insights in the pathogenesis of top priority diseases (PRRSV, Mycoplasma, helminth infections) with regard to a better development of vaccines and diagnostics.
5. Better insights in the protective immunity against priority diseases (PRRSV, ASFV).
6. Animal welfare during clinical treatments.
7. Breeding strategies to prevent diseases.
8. Healthy and sustainable food production methods.
9. Better insights in the epidemiology and pathogenesis of emerging small DNA viruses (circo- and parvoviruses) for a better control.
10. Environment-microbiome-pathogen-genetics interactions and how to remediate.

Sciensano, the Belgian Institute for Health

Main expertise: Animal Health

- ✦ Developing new methodologies and (diagnostic) tools to analyse animal health: omics, alternative sampling methods, data visualization tools, ...
- ✦ Improving monitoring & (genetic) surveillance systems (modelling disease spread, cost-benefit analysis, defining genetic determinants for viral pathogens), risk assessment for animal health.
- ✦ Increasing insights on immunology and vaccines: (vector-)host-pathogen interactions, (adaptive cellular and mucosal) immune response and infection/in vitro/ex vivo models.
- ✦ Specific topics: Research on AMR (AMR surveillance in farm-animals, role of environment, AMR in aquatic bacteria, transmission between companion animals and humans), zoonoses (sentinel networks, pen-side tests, tropism of zoonotic pathogens) and vector-borne diseases (vector competence studies).

Finland

Natural Resources Institute, Luke

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

There is no ranking provided.

- ✦ Dairy cattle: Grazing and other alternatives for outdoor access, bedding materials that replace peat, cow-calf contact, and health and welfare of calves and heifers.
- ✦ Beef cattle: Space allocation of finishing bulls, grazing.
- ✦ Pigs: Alternatives to surgical castration of pigs.
- ✦ Poultry: Welfare problems of fast-growing broilers, breastbone problems of laying hens, developing early in ovo sexing of chickens, the causes for the intestinal health issues especially gizzard erosion reported in broilers.
- ✦ Fish: Effective control/prevention of water mould in aquaculture, development of fish welfare measures and indicators, enrichment of the rearing environment (esp. fish that will be stocked for conservation purposes).
- ✦ Across the species: Development of stunning practices in farm animals, ensuring positive animal welfare.

France

French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety, ANSES

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

- ✦ Diseases: HPAI, FMD, ASF, Tuberculosis, Vector-borne diseases: priority 1; other diseases and parasites are priority 2.
- ✦ Cross-cutting topics: One health approach, exposome, data, climate change, AMR: priority 1; animal welfare and EU regulation are priority 2.





National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, INRAE

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

Animal health

1. Deal with increasingly frequent emerging viral diseases, the causes of which are multifactorial: increased transport (animals, plants, people), global warming (vector-borne diseases: new vectors, new locations), destruction of natural habitats (interaction between wild and domestic animals) and intensive livestock farming in particular; preparedness, anticipation and response.
2. Limit the crossing of the species barrier, including to humans in the case of zoonoses, and host(s)-vector transmission (vector-borne diseases).
3. Contain or even eradicate pathogens that cause epizootics and zoonoses through rapidly mobilizable control or prophylactic measures.
This includes the development of:
 - Rapid diagnostics for better monitoring and epidemiology, open data bases and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for maximal use of diagnostics and databases in policy and control of (re)emerging diseases.
 - Vaccines adapted to new pathogens and/or /serotypes that can be rapidly produced (e.g. mRNA) and easily deployed, multi-serotype vaccines, innovative vaccinal platforms (including for mucosal, and notably oral, delivery).
 - Mass vaccination technologies targeting mucosal immunity (oral, aerosol) for optimal AH&W, along with approaches that unambiguously distinguish infected from vaccinated animals (DIVA).
 - Development of antimicrobials, ideally with broad-spectrum activity.
 - Better insight into pathobiology of animal diseases, in particular for top priority pathogens (PRRSV, ASFV, Influenza viruses...), to instruct development of innovative vaccines or therapeutic approaches.
 - Use of microbiota to modulate and optimize immune response or vaccine/therapeutic efficacy.
4. Anticipate the consequences of climate warming and global changes on the response of animals to different types of infection, and to prophylactic or therapeutic measures.
5. Limit antimicrobial resistance (antibiotics, antiparasitics) in livestock farming and insecticide resistance:
 - Personalized veterinary medicine
 - Rational use and alternatives to antimicrobials
 - Biological vector control
 - Anticipate the consequences of changing animal husbandry practices on new infectious risks (e.g., outdoor rearing and parasitism).
6. Study the pathophysiology of infections in a more detailed and comprehensive way (multiparametric studies), by developing a pipeline enabling the integrated analysis of




numerous physiological and microbial parameters: from the reasoned storage of data to the analysis of these complex multimodal data, using AI in particular.

7. Develop relevant and credible alternatives to animal experimentation
 -  Alternatives to ex vivo models (New Alternative Methodologies, NAMs)
 -  Experimental refinement
 -  Fine phenotyping
 -  Non-invasive imaging for longitudinal studies...
8. Develop innovative solutions to mitigate the impact of production diseases in farm animals, such as, but not limited to, the use of probiotics and immunomodulators, as underpinned by basic research.

Animal Physiology and livestock systems - Animal Welfare

1. Animal cognitive skills and positive emotions for promoting animal welfare. This includes the definition of indicators of emotional state and AI support to behaviour and emotion detection.
2. Effects of climate change on behaviour and emotional state.
3. Individual variability.
4. Social interactions and Animal-Human relationships.
5. Synergies and trade-offs between animal health and welfare and other dimensions of sustainability.

Breeding

1. Genetics addressed to more robust and resilient animals, and to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (ruminants).
2. Breeding livestock for improved health and welfare at the animal and population level: Therefore, identify:
 -  resilience indicators and their relation (trade-offs) with health, welfare and production traits, and
 -  genetic factors influencing the dynamic of infectious diseases through genetic epidemiological models, in order to
 -  integrate these novel traits in selective breeding and develop true integrated health and welfare management strategies in synergy with current prevention methods like vaccination.
3. Host response (immunocompetence/immunotolerance studies, genomic selection in animals, microbiome) and preventive tools (vaccines).
4. Personalized veterinary medicine.

Germany

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity, BMLEH

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

Animal Health

1. Vector borne diseases.
2. HPAI.
3. ASF.
4. Prevention of bacterial infections needing antibiotic treatment.
5. Prevention, spread and containment of infectious diseases.

Animal welfare





Still to be decided, as political focuses are not clear yet in this regard (new government).

From the technical point of view: Focus on welfare issues of farm animals as well as pet animals (keeping, transport and slaughter / killing), but also animals used for scientific purposes. Special focus should be put on better prevention of relevant shortcomings, as well as knowledge gaps (but budget for research is limited anyhow; no separate budget for animal welfare aspects).

Greece

Hellenic Agricultural Organisation DIMITRA

Main expertise: Animal Health

-  Maedi Visna/CAEV.
-  Brucellosis.
-  On field diagnostics for emerging issues.
-  AMR.

Ireland

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Labs

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

A strong emphasis is placed on sustainability, biosecurity, and disease-resilience. To ensure food security, public health, farm sustainability and biodiversity conservation,

Funded AHW research emphasises early disease detection, advanced diagnostics, biosecurity and disease prevention and management. Other aspects of the research focus on enhancing livestock well-being, reducing antimicrobial resistance and stress, improving housing systems, and developing welfare-friendly sustainable livestock systems.

Italy

Ministry of Health

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

Listed in order of importance:

- ✦ Animal Influenza.
- ✦ Biosecurity/vector borne.
- ✦ Vaccine development (ASF and others).
- ✦ AMR / Classy Farm system, which is a method of risk analysis in the main production chains based on the evaluation of welfare parameters, use of antimicrobials (AMU) and including a measure of the biosecurity at farm level; the data are collected on farmers voluntary basis by veterinarians.
- ✦ Early detection of outbreak / diagnosis / genomics.
- ✦ Data management and harmonization.

Lithuania

Veterinary Academy at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences

Main expertise: Animal Welfare

1. African swine fever.
2. Bird flu / Influenza.
3. Fur farming.
4. Poultry farming.
5. AMR.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, NVWA

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

Working on risk assessments relating to animal welfare e.g. horses, cats and dogs, dairy supply chain and a project on anthelmintic resistance).

Interested in & in preparation:




1. Monitoring of animal welfare indicators (animal and resource based) on farm, but also during transport and slaughter. We funded the formulation of a project proposal in this regard with a focus on dairy animals, but the follow up is yet to be determined. Including Artificial Intelligence and Precision Livestock Farming.
2. Need for System-Based Supervision; effective safeguarding of animal welfare and health requires a shift toward system-based supervision using an integrated approach, focusing on structural risk factors, data-driven insights, and the behaviour of actors within the system.

3. Need for norm development; There is a growing need for dynamic and participatory norm development processes that reflect evolving scientific insights, societal values, and ethical considerations related to animal welfare and health.
4. Vector borne diseases (e.g. Blue tongue) and pathways of introduction in the Netherlands including monitoring and surveillance.
5. Disease-complexes related to animal health and welfare on farm (e.g. mastitis, lameness).

Currently funding: development of the current risk assessment methodology used through funding of two PhD positions at Utrecht University, focused on risk accumulation during the life of the animal and the smart/effective monitoring of factors related to the hazards and welfare consequences with the aim of quantifying the assessment of risks.

Wageningen University and Research







Main expertise: Animal Health

-  Endemic animal infectious diseases.
-  Zoonoses.
-  Emerging infectious diseases in animals.

Poland

National Veterinary Research Institute, PIWeT

Main expertise: Animal Health

-  Control and eradication of emerging diseases due to climate change and vector spread like Lumpy Skin Disease, Rift Valley Fever, Bluetongue, West Nile Fever.
-  Current threats like Avian Flu, Newcastle Disease, ASF in wild boars and pigs, rabies in wildlife.
-  Antimicrobial resistance.
-  Foodborne pathogens.
-  Bee poisoning.
-  High throughput sequencing in vaccine quality control.

Slovakia

NPPC-Research Institute for Animal Production

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

1. Somatic cell counts, mastitis pathogens and milk yield and its quality in dairy animals, mastitis preventive programs.
2. Milking routine and biological needs of dairy animals and technology: milk flow kinetics as indicator of welfare.
3. The possible epigenetic effect (heat stress and milk nutrition) of female calves breeding before weaning on their milk performances and health during adult period.

Spain

National Research Council, CSIC - National Institute of Agricultural and Food Research and Technology, INIA

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

1. Vaccinology.
2. African Swine Fever.
3. Vector borne diseases, flavivirus, vector control.
4. Avian Influenza.
5. AMR.
6. Diagnostic tools, in field diagnosis.
7. Genetics, omics tools and resilience.
8. Thermal stress and adaptation.

Sweden

Research Council for Sustainable Development, Formas

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

1. Swine fever, Avian flu in cattle (H5N1).
2. Animal welfare and profitability.
3. Animal welfare and preparedness.

Türkiye

Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye, TÜBİTAK

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

1. One Health Perspective and Genetic Diversity
 - Assessing the impacts of artificial insemination and fertilization methods on human, animal, plant, and environmental health from a One Health perspective.
 - Investigating potential adverse effects of these practices on gene pools and safeguarding biodiversity.
2. Breeding for Climate Resilience
 - Developing animal breeds tolerant or resistant to biotic and abiotic stress factors resulting from climate change, using classical and biotechnological methods.
3. Utilization of Non-Traditional Agricultural Areas
 - Identifying animal species and breeds suitable for regions such as deserts and marine environments that were previously unsuitable for agriculture.
 - Developing technological solutions to facilitate adaptation to these challenging conditions.

4. Mitigation of Methane Emissions in Livestock

- ✿ In addition to genetic improvement efforts, identifying alternative feed sources and developing feed additives that suppress methane production.
- ✿ Designing breeding and selection models for native and culture breeds with high feed efficiency and low greenhouse gas emissions.

5. Precision Livestock Farming

- ✿ Enabling individualized nutrition, care, and health monitoring for each animal to increase productivity per animal.
- ✿ Developing innovative vaccines to reduce the use of pharmaceuticals in livestock.

6. Methane Monitoring Technologies

- ✿ Developing methane measurement sensors to monitor methane emissions from farm animals in real time.

7. Animal Health and Food Safety Technologies

- ✿ Utilizing bioinformatics, early warning systems, modelling, monitoring, and big data analytics for the control and prevention of animal diseases affecting food safety and reliability.

8. Artificial Intelligence Applications in Agriculture and Livestock

- ✿ Promoting good practices and innovative Artificial Intelligence solutions alongside traditional methods to enhance quality and productivity in agriculture and livestock.
- ✿ Developing AI-based software and systems for real-time monitoring of animal health and productivity parameters, and decision support systems.

United Kingdom

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, BBSRC

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

Combating infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a key priority for BBSRC.

As outlined in the [BBSRC Bioscience for an Integrated Understanding of Health Strategic Framework](#), the aim is to foster a coordinated, transdisciplinary approach to better understand, predict, prevent, and mitigate animal infectious diseases, zoonotic infections, and AMR. This effort is central to enhancing preparedness and promoting the health and wellbeing of both animals and humans within their shared environments.

The following areas represent our current focus









1. Vaccine technologies.
2. Avian influenza.
3. Diagnostic technologies.

4. Vector-borne diseases.
5. Animal Health and Welfare in relation to climate.
6. Epidemic preparedness.
7. Tackling AMR.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA

Expertise: Animal Health and Animal Welfare

All research DEFRA support is a priority for the department and there is no official ranking list for diseases/programmes etc ... The list below highlights some priorities.

-  Cattle vaccination for bovine Tuberculosis (bTB).
-  Research to support understanding and control of exotic transboundary diseases, such as FMD, ASF and HPAI, VBD (including zoonotic potential).
-  Research to support development of vaccine platform technologies.
-  Research to support utilisation of genomic technologies and bio-informatics (for animal health).
-  Animal welfare research in support of various policy requirements.
-  Research in support of epidemic/pandemic preparedness, including in a One-health capacity
-  Research on AMR and on foodborne zoonoses.
-  Research on aquatic animal health.

STAR-IDAZ priorities

Question in the survey: The list below summarises the STAR-IDAZ priority topics, both diseases and infections, as well as cross-cutting issues. Please tick a maximum of five topics that are the highest priority for your organisation.

Table 1: STAR-IDAZ priority topics selected from the represented organisations

	Nb of respondents that identified the topic as a priority	Nb of countries that identified the topic as a priority (AHE and EFSA excluded)
African Swine Fever	10	9
Aquatic diseases	2	2
Bovine tuberculosis	2	2
Brucellosis	2	2
Coronaviruses	0	0
Foot and Mouth Disease	3	2
Helminths (incl. anthelmintic resistance)	3	3
Influenza	15	11
Mastitis	5	5
Mycoplasmas incl. CBPP/CCPP	1	1
Porcine Reproductive & Respiratory Syndrome	1	1
Porcine Respiratory Disease complex	2	1
Poxviruses	1	1
Animal genomics	4	4
AMR and alternatives to antibiotics	15	11
Diagnostics (tools and technologies)	5	5
Emerging issues	7	6
Foresight	0	0
One Health (incl. food-borne pathogens)	12	9
Vaccinology (tools and technologies)	9	7
Vector Transmission and control	10	7
Other	4	4

With "Other" the respondents refer to the following comments:

- 🍃 Biosecurity
- 🍃 The list above now includes diseases or health problems, which are of course important components of animal welfare. However, the list completely misses the psychological component of animal welfare and the opportunity to fulfil behavioural needs.
- 🍃 Welfare and disease burden in intensive animal production.
- 🍃 Efficient and resilient livestock production.

Budget

Question in the survey: You can indicate the annual budget that your organisation spends on animal health and welfare. Describe whether this budget is for research only or includes operational costs for facilities, personnel, consumables, etc.

AnimalhealthEurope

Members spend annually over 600 million euro on R&D activities.

The European Food Safety Authority, EFSA

Development projects and grants: 5-8 million euro.

Federal Public Service Health, food chain safety and environment, BE

Animal health through funding research projects: on average 1,8 million euro is spent on animal health research projects annually (calculated over period 2015-2024), this covers the national and transnational calls.

Ghent University - PROVAXS, BE

7 million euro (contract research).

Natural Resources Institute, Luke, FI

We have approx. 30 researchers (2/3 PhDs or equivalents) working in the field of animal welfare, both carrying out research and also promoting animal welfare by communicating research information to the public. In addition to personnel costs, our costs include consumables, animal husbandry and maintenance of infrastructure like barns and aquaculture facilities. The annual budget varies depending on the number and size of projects.

French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational health, ANSES

Annual total budget 50 million euro.

National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, INRAE

3 Million euro including operational costs.

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Labs, IE

Over the last 10 years there has been approximately 1.5 million euro per year funding provided by DAFM for Research in the general area of animal health and welfare in Ireland. Additional spending would be in the area of TB eradication is also provided.

Ministry of Health, IT

Around 6-7 Million euro.

The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, NVWA, NL

Office for Risk Assessment and Research (BuRO) of the NVWA: approximately 500,000 euro (not a set/structural budget).

Wageningen University and Research, NL

5 million euro per year.

National Research Council, CSIC - National Institute of Agricultural and Food Research and Technology, INIA, ES

No specific calls addressed to AH&W at national level. Approximately 7 million euro for research projects on AH&W selected for funding in the frame of national call of knowledge generation. National Research Agency funds, research project developed by organism of research throughout the national territory, including INIA-CSIC, (budget only for research, NOT included operational costs for facilities, personnel, etc).

Research Council for Sustainable Development, Formas, SE

Approximately 25 million SEK (it includes personnel costs, facilities and research).

Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye, TÜBİTAK

Around 1-1.5 million euro for research funding.

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, BBSRC, UK

Our research spent on animal health for financial year 2023/24 was £52 million and for animal welfare £5 million.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA, UK

Approximately £30 million, of which £20 million is contracted by DEFRA (e.g. via calls) and £10 million supports core research programmes at Government institutes.

AH&W Challenges

Question in the survey: What do you consider to be the main animal health and welfare challenges or threats that your country faces in the near future? Have you identified some emerging issues?

European organisations

AnimalhealthEurope

For Europe

- ☛ Climate change and spread of vectors and vector-borne diseases, also via pets.
- ☛ Lack of early coordination and communication between authorities and industry to timely provide solutions for emerging diseases.

The European Food Safety Authority, EFSA

Vector borne diseases, HPAI, One health; Welfare indicators and cut-offs and monitoring by data collection and platforms.

Austria

Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health Care and Consumer Protection, represented by the Veterinary University of Vienna

Highest priority: HPAI, ASF, (perhaps FMD).

High priority: AMU/AMR.

Belgium

Federal Public Service Health, food chain safety and environment

- ☛ Influenza: genetic drift and zoonotic aspects.
- ☛ Bluetongue virus.
- ☛ Epizootic haemorrhagic disease virus.
- ☛ IBR free status / traceability/ vaccination (implementation animal health law).

Ghent University - PROVAXS

1. Limited availability of antibiotics and the search for alternatives to antibiotics (including vaccines).
2. Preparedness for monitoring and control of emerging diseases.
3. Environmental changes due to climate changes (T°, CO2, thriving fungi with aggressive fungal products (spore proteases and mycotoxins)) and due to pollution (micro/nanoplastics) are affecting the respiratory and intestinal barriers.
4. Novel insights are giving possibilities to improve the control of infectious diseases. The respiratory and intestinal microbiome and secreted toxic products (enzymes, toxins) are

damaging the respiratory and intestinal barriers and are negatively affecting the outcome of infections with pathogens (viral/bacterial).

5. An urgent need to develop alternative food production methods for increasing the total supply of high-quality protein in a sustainable manner.

Sciensano, the Belgian Institute for Health

- ✦ AMR.
- ✦ HPAI, Vector-borne diseases, Poxviridae, ASF.
- ✦ Economical diseases (PRRS, bovine tuberculosis, ...).

Finland

Natural Resources Institute, Luke

The welfare of broilers and especially the welfare of broiler breeders that is the parent stock of the meat broilers. Broilers are the most consumed animal individuals in our country. We are totally dependent on huge international companies in providing the broiler (and layer) genetic material as the parent and grandparent animals and if there are some issues rising in the breeding we will also face problems. The welfare of layer chickens in our country is understudied. The welfare of monogastric animals in organic production in our country (layers and pigs) has not been studied. If we aim to increase the proportion of organic production in our country the health and welfare issues related to nutritional deficiencies should be studied.

France

Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety, ANSES

- ✦ ASF, HPAI, FMD, TB, Vector Borne diseases, Disease X
- ✦ Adaptation of animal production / EU welfare regulation

National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, INRAE

- ✦ Effects of climate change (heat waves, adapting to available nutritional resources, etc.) on health, welfare and resilience, including susceptibility to infections and the effectiveness of prophylactic or therapeutic measures.
- ✦ Emerging epidemics (avian influenza, ASF, CCHFV, EEHT, etc.) for animal health and One Health issues (incl. pathogens with pandemic potential).
- ✦ Endemic animal diseases.
- ✦ Antimicrobial and antiparasitic resistance.
- ✦ Transport and slaughter conditions.
- ✦ Identification of the long-term links between better welfare and physiological balance, the role of microbiota, the psycho-neuro-endocrine mechanisms linking positive mental state and health, and the trade-off between the physiological functions of production, reproduction and immunity.
- ✦ Study of the relationships at the group level between welfare, health and production.
- ✦ Co-construction of innovative systems with livestock farmers, as well as analysing the cost, acceptability and impact of improved systems on their working conditions and well-being.

- At the production chain or territory levels, study of the best strategies to improve animal health and welfare while preserving economic viability, the labelling of products and the consumers' willingness to pay.
- Exploration of the consequences of heterogeneity in animal traits on the processing of animal products, and the spatial distribution of livestock farming and the organisation of the production and value chain.
- Adaptation to outdoors of breeders (e.g. organic broiler breeders, sows with piglets...).
- Welfare issues due to biosecurity measures (such as during poultry confinement...).

Germany

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity, BMLEH

Animal Health

- Vector borne diseases including zoonoses.
- Zoonoses with potential for pandemics like Influenza.

As regards Animal Welfare: growing costs of production as well as keeping pet animals and horses. No commitment of consumers to spend more money on food of animal origin with more animal-friendly production.

Greece

Hellenic Agricultural Organisation DIMITRA

- Capripox viruses.
- Ovine rinderpest/Peste de petits ruminants.
- Foot and mouth disease.

Ireland

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Labs

- Climate and consequential challenges for animal health and welfare.
- Emerging disease including zoonoses, detection and intervention.
- Bluetongue.

Italy

Ministry of Health

- ASF and FMD as diseases.
- Vector borne diseases.
- AMR.
- Biosecurity is an issue.

Lithuania

Veterinary Academy at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences

Piglets tail docking, fur farming, African swine fever, bird flu, AMR, microchipping and registration of pet animals, wild animals in captivity (zoos), rehabilitation of wild animals, stray dogs and cats, animal cruelty.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, NVWA



The transition towards more animal welfare-based livestock farming, including circular, nature inclusive and climate resilient systems, offers important opportunities to improve the lives of animals. However, there is also a risk that animal welfare becomes instrumentalised and treated primarily as a mean to achieve other goals such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving resource efficiency or maintaining economic viability, rather than as a fundamental value on its own. When sustainability transitions are driven mainly by environmental or economic priorities, the intrinsic interests of animals can easily be overshadowed or forgotten.

The continuous search for the so-called perfect animal, for example through genetic selection aimed at improving robustness, productivity or adaptation to specific climates, may further reinforce a system in which animals are adapted to human needs and production environments, instead of the system being adapted to the animal. This can lead to a loss of genetic diversity and a reduction in behavioural and physiological welfare, even in systems presented as future proof.

At the same time, animal welfare and health are increasingly intertwined with broader societal challenges such as antimicrobial resistance, including colistin resistance, the emergence of animal diseases related to management and housing, and the growing impact of climate change on animal health and welfare. These complex interconnections require systemic approaches that recognise animals as sentient individuals rather than production means.

The current political climate in many European countries is not always favourable to improving animal welfare. Economic pressures, polarisation and competing policy priorities can hinder meaningful progress. Safeguarding animal welfare within these transitions therefore requires deliberate attention and strong governance to ensure that the animal does not disappear from view among technological, economic and political interests.

Wageningen University and Research

-  Avian Influenza.
-  Emerging zoonoses.

Poland

National Veterinary Research Institute, PIWeT

Emerging diseases due to climate change, antimicrobial resistance, poisoning of pollinators.




Slovakia

NPPC-Research Institute for Animal Production

Reduction of antibiotic usage through the mastitis preventive programs and management of dairy animal breeding. Better breeding conditions of the dairy female calves before weaning for healthier animals during their production life.

Spain

National Research Council, CSIC - National Institute of Agricultural and Food Research and Technology, INIA

-  Vector borne diseases, vector control.
-  Climate change and dynamics of vector populations.
-  Heat stress.

Sweden

Formas Research Council for Sustainable Development, Formas


New diseases due to climate changes, lack of veterinarians in the farm animal sector, lack of emergency slaughter.

Türkiye

Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye, TÜBİTAK

1. Stray Dog Population Management and Welfare Concerns.
Turkey has enacted a controversial law mandating the removal of stray dogs from public areas, requiring municipalities to capture, shelter, vaccinate, neuter, and offer these animals for adoption. Dogs deemed terminally ill or dangerous may be euthanized. Critics argue that this law could lead to mass killings or inadequate shelter conditions due to insufficient municipal funding. The government's estimate places the stray dog population at around four million, highlighting the scale of the issue.
2. Emerging and Persistent Animal Diseases

Turkey's livestock industry faces ongoing threats from diseases such as:

-  Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI): This disease continues to pose significant risks to poultry, including turkeys, with outbreaks leading to substantial economic losses.

- ❖ Salmonella Infections: Despite improvements in hygiene and technology, Salmonella remains a persistent threat, causing severe economic losses when not effectively controlled.
- ❖ Histomoniasis (Blackhead Disease): Caused by the parasite *Histomonas meleagridis*, this disease can decimate turkey flocks. Currently, there are no approved vaccines or therapeutics to treat affected birds.

3. Animal Welfare in Intensive Farming Systems

Intensive farming practices have led to several welfare concerns:

- ❖ Overcrowding and Rapid Growth: Turkeys bred for rapid growth often suffer from leg deformities, lameness, and other health issues due to their unnatural body sizes.
- ❖ Stressful Handling and Transport: The processes of catching, transporting, and slaughtering turkeys can subject them to significant stress and injury, highlighting the need for improved handling practices.

4. Antimicrobial Resistance and Biosecurity

The overuse of antibiotics in livestock farming contributes to the development of antimicrobial resistance, posing risks to both animal and human health. Implementing better biosecurity measures and responsible antibiotic use is crucial to mitigate this issue.

United Kingdom

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, BBSRC

Emerging issues:

- ❖ Avian Flu.
- ❖ climate change and incursion of disease and vectors as well as effects of climate change (extreme weather etc) on animal health and welfare.
- ❖ Advancing welfare assessments.
- ❖ Stress and pain.

Challenges: preparedness (vaccines and vaccine technology platforms, diagnostics and other control tools); Non-animal technologies, use of Artificial Intelligence in animal health and welfare research

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA

These are also reflected in the science priorities listed above, but include:

- ❖ Transboundary diseases (FMD, AI, ASF, VBDs).
- ❖ Eradication of bTB.
- ❖ AMR.
- ❖ Emerging diseases, including of epidemic / pandemic potential.

Recent publications

Question in the survey: If your organisation, or another organisation in your country of which you are aware, has recently published an animal health or animal welfare research agenda, you can copy its reference here. Please include the year of publication and the language, with a hyperlink if available. You may also refer to any other relevant publication of your organisation in the domain.

Animal Health Europe

1. A One Health Strategy for a healthier and more sustainable Europe:
https://animalhealtheurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/CalltoAction_OneHealthStrategy_Oct31.pdf
2. Focus Areas for One Health Action: <https://animalhealtheurope.eu/one-health-focus-areas-references/>
3. We are founding member of DISCONTTOOLS, identifying research gaps for infectious disease control in animals: www.discontools.eu
4. We are member of ATF who produce SRIA for sustainable livestock production in Europe: <https://animaltaskforce.eu/>
5. EPRUMA recent publications:
 - 🌿 Best Practice Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Parasite Control in Pets:
<https://epruma.eu/home/best-practice-guides/best-practice-guidelines-for-the-responsible-use-of-parasite-control-in-pets/>
 - 🌿 Best Practice Framework on the Responsible use of vaccines
<https://epruma.eu/home/best-practice-guides/best-practice-framework-on-the-responsible-use-of-vaccines/>

The European Food Safety Authority, EFSA

See here link for the 2025 EFSA Scientific Cooperation plan grants and procurements Open collaboration opportunities & Negotiated procedures:

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/fin/forthcoming-list-of-opportunities-scientific-cooperation-plan.xlsx>

Federal Public Service Health, food chain safety and environment, BE

Drafting currently research agendas relating to AMR and vaccines for veterinary use.

Ghent University - PROVAXS, BE

Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda of the European Partnership on Animal Health and Welfare.

Natural Resources Institute, Luke, FI

A policy brief to promote fish welfare in Finland (in Finnish):

<https://jukuri.luke.fi/handle/10024/556214>.

Background report as a basis for the fish welfare programme (in Finnish, abstract in English):

<https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-419-034-3>.

Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety, ANSES, FR

<https://www.anses.fr/en/system/files/Anses-2025-Work-programme.pdf>

ANSES 2024 Work Programme, in English, adopted by the Scientific Board on 5 November 2024, adopted by the Board of Administrators on 21 November 2024, rectified and adopted by the Board of Administrators on 8 April 2025.

National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, INRAE, FR

Animal board invited review: Improving animal health and welfare in the transition of livestock farming systems: Towards social acceptability and sustainability. *Animal*, 2024, 18 (3), pp.101100. {10.1016/j.animal.2024.101100}. {hal-04495275}.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.animal.2024.101100>

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Labs, IE

Research policy & guidance documents: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine/publications/research-policy-and-guidance-documents/>.

Wageningen University and Research, NL

Global Health

The health of people, animals, plants and ecosystems are all greatly affected by global developments such as climate change, environmental pollution, the spread of infectious diseases and the rise of noncommunicable diseases. This is a global challenge, and an integrated view is required to sustainably balance the health of people, animals, plants and ecosystems. There is a clear need to shift to sustainable food production within a resilient ecosystem, with special attention paid to healthy diets for people and animal welfare.

WUR studies health in a holistic way, by taking an integrated approach, which recognises that human health is closely connected to animal, plant and environmental health. Our transdisciplinary efforts encompass understanding the interaction between microbiomes in ecosystems, animals, plants and humans. Additionally, we focus on pandemic preparedness. We explore the role of nutrition in health and disease, and we aim to create healthier and more sustainable food environments.

WUR's transdisciplinary approach contributes to strategies and practices that reduce lifestyle-related, foodborne and zoonotic diseases, prepare for future pandemics, minimise the burden of disease and ill health, improve food safety and fulfil nutritional needs across the life span and

around the globe. Our commitment is to foster health and sustainability through integrated, innovative, and inclusive solutions"

Research Council for Sustainable Development, Formas, SE

A catastrophe medicine centre is developing in Sweden in case of crises and/or war:

<https://www.sva.se/aktuellt/nyheter/webbnyheter/katastrofmedicinskt-centrum-utvecklas-i-sverige/>.





<https://www.slu.se/en/departments/department-of-applied-animal-science-and-welfare/>.

This is Sweden Food Arenas survey in the animal sector of the research needs that were made in 2024. Unfortunately, it is only in Swedish <https://swedenfoodarena.se/wp-content/uploads/Djurhalsa-och-djurvalfard-250129.pdf>.

Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye, TÜBİTAK, TR

Zoonotic Diseases Action Plan (2019-2023)

Turkey's Ministry of Health introduced the Zoonotic Diseases Action Plan (2019-2023) to tackle the increasing risks of zoonotic diseases. The plan's key objectives include:

-  Raising public awareness about zoonotic diseases and their prevention.
-  Conducting risk analyses and forecasting potential threats.
-  Establishing and enhancing diagnostic laboratories nationwide.
-  Monitoring, evaluating, and coordinating treatment policies.

The plan addresses diseases such as brucellosis, anthrax, rabies, and Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever. It emphasizes inter-ministerial collaboration, involving the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Forestry, and Environment and Urbanization, among others.

<https://www.saglik.gov.tr/EN%2C55636/launch-meeting-for-turkey-zoonotic-diseases-action-plan.html>.

https://vetkontrol.tarimorman.gov.tr/merkez/Belgeler/Zoonotik_Hastaliklar_Eylem_Pani.pdf (in Turkish). This plan is being updated at the moment.

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, BBSRC, UK

It is not animal health research agenda per se but BBSRC has published its health strategic framework which includes a section on Infectious Diseases and AMR.

https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/BBSRC-04092024-240610_BBSRC-Health-Strategic-Framework_FINAL.pdf.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA, UK

DEFRA group Research and Innovation interests, last published in 2021:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-group-research-and-innovation-interests-2021/defra-group-research-and-innovation-interests>.

Comments from respondents

Question in the survey: You can use this field if you have any other comments to share with the WG Management Board.

AnimalhealthEurope

What is the potential impact of changing legislation:

Animal Welfare:

- 🌿 Medicines production, registration and availability (e.g. experimental animal trials, clinical trials, batch release, ...)
- 🌿 Food production (e.g. number of livestock in EU).

Animal Health Law: flexibility in disease management (e.g. trade implications of vaccination, response of disease outbreaks).

Natural Resources Institute, Luke, FI

According to this survey, animal welfare is largely a question of combating animal diseases. More emphasis should be put on the animal's own experience and supporting the psychological welfare of the animal.

National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, INRAE, FR

From the list of STAR-IDAZ priority themes, for which a maximum of 5 items had to be selected, we chose to focus on cross-cutting issues that are the highest priority for our organisation. However, it should be noted that almost all the diseases/infections/pathogens listed are the subject of research at INRAE

Indeed, INRAE has a research department entirely dedicated to animal health, the majority of whose activities focus on veterinary infectious diseases, and which also covers other priority themes such as antimicrobial resistance (antibiotics and antiparasitics) and toxicology. A wide range of pathogens affecting livestock and wildlife are studied, from different angles (epidemiology, host-pathogen interactions, vaccinology, etc.) and from fundamental to applied research.

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, BBSRC, UK

UKRI Tackling Infections programme: <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/browse-our-areas-of-investment-and-support/tackling-infections/>.

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Hein Imberechts

Sciensano, Belgium

July 2026