

# Next generation livestock farming

What drivers for improved health and welfare?



THE VOICE  
OF THE ANIMAL  
MEDICINES INDUSTRY



# Next generation livestock farming

What drivers for improved health and welfare?

Today in Europe every sector is called on to live up to the EU Green Deal, and Europe's livestock sector in particular is faced with a multitude of demands set out in the EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. The European Commission has identified research and innovation as key means for achieving sustainable food systems and has stated that animal health and welfare are a precondition for sustainable livestock farming.

I'm pleased to have been appointed the new President of AnimalhealthEurope at this pivotal moment. New legislation impacting our sector comes into force in 2021, Europe is reviewing its food systems looking for areas for improvement, the animal welfare legislation is undergoing review, and on top of that, the animal health sector is currently at the forefront of a technological and digital transformation offering supporting solutions to farmers collectively known as Precision Livestock Farming.

Breakthroughs in biotechnology, detection tools and robotics, genomic testing, and advanced vaccines, amongst others, are set to become essential tools for the sustainable future of both livestock farming and the veterinary profession. These tools will support our next generation of livestock farmers in optimising the health of animals to reduce environmental impacts, ensure better traceability, improve animal welfare and support responsible use of medicines. We believe that access to such cutting-edge technologies, accompanied by the knowledge and skills to use them, will lead to an innovative, dynamic and modern profession that will attract new talent to Europe's rural areas and help deliver on the Green Deal aspirations.



**Hans-Guenther Dittrich**

AnimalhealthEurope's President

# Programme

Introduction of speakers and  
debate topic

Opening speech

**What future for Gen Z  
livestock farmers?**

Moderator:

**Jennifer Baker**

Journalist

**Prof.dr.ir. Louise O. Fresco**

President Executive Board, Wageningen  
University & Research

## Q&A Session

Panel Debate

**Precision technologies  
and policies: what drivers  
for improved health and  
welfare?**

*Event Moderator*

**Alexander Bernhuber**

MEP & Young Farmer

**Kerli Ats**

Young farmer & CEO of the Estonian  
Farmers' Federation

**Tommy Heffernan**

Veterinary consultant and educator

**Roxane Feller**

AnimalhealthEurope Secretary General



Better known as Brusselsgeek, Jennifer has been a journalist in print, radio and television for 20 years, the last 10+ specialising in EU policy.

She has worked across a wide range of media, from editing a national daily paper in Malta, to reporting on European affairs for Middle Eastern television, and has a wealth of experience in navigating the political quagmire of the EU. As well as an address book packed with insider sources and contacts in Brussels, Jennifer is skilled at translating EU policy-speak into understandable English.

Regularly listed as one of the top influencers in the EU bubble, Jennifer was awarded #1 Tech Influencer 2019 by ZN, was listed by Politico as one of the Top 20 Women Shaping Brussels in 2017, and was named by Onalytica as one of the world's Top 100 Influencers on Data Security 2016. She is also a GLG expert Council Member providing advice on EU Policy, and was an original member of the Expert Council of the Good Technology Collective.

Jennifer regularly features as an EU expert on BBC radio, Euronews, SkyNews and others, and hosts Brussels' must-watch weekly roundup show TOTW for Euractiv. She has written for some of the biggest names in media, including ArsTechnica, Computerweekly, TheNextWeb, and The Register.

# Prof.dr.ir. Louise O. Fresco

President Executive Board, Wageningen University & Research



## Bio

Louise O. Fresco is the President of the Executive Board of Wageningen University & Research in The Netherlands. Louise combines a long academic career as a professor at Wageningen and other institutions with an extensive involvement in policy and development, with many programs in Africa, Asia and Latin America and teaching in Sweden, Belgium and the US.

Louise O. Fresco is a member of eight Scientific Academies and holds four honorary doctorates. Ten years of her career were spent at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN.

She is a non-Executive Director on the board of Syngenta as well as of various philanthropies while previously she served on the supervisory boards of companies like Rabobank and Unilever and at the board of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. Her successful book “Hamburgers in Paradise, the stories behind the food we eat” was translated in several languages. In total she published thirteen books of fiction and non-fiction, and she also writes a bi-weekly column in NRC, the leading evening paper of The Netherlands. She presented a six-part documentary on food and development for Dutch public television (to be found in translation on her website [www.louiseofresco.com](http://www.louiseofresco.com)). You may have seen her TED talk in Palm Springs in 2009.

## What Future for Gen Z Livestock Farmers?

Never before have farmers been faced with so many challenges. Generation Z farmers have to mend all the problems with agriculture, from climate change to biodiversity, animal welfare to human health. This sounds impossible, especially in confrontation with ever more critical consumers, but they have many tools and opportunities to invent new ways of farming.

# Alexander Bernhuber

MEP and Young Farmer



## Bio

MEP Alexander Bernhuber was elected Member of the European Parliament in 2019. In the Parliament, he is a member of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), the Committee on Petitions (PETI) as well as a substitute member of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT). Alexander Bernhuber is the youngest member of the European People's Party and he is the shadow rapporteur to the Biodiversity Strategy 2030.

Alexander Bernhuber grew up on a farm in Austria. This is why the future of the rural regions and communities are particularly important to him. No matter whether it is on local, national or European level: In the European Parliament he wants to shape the future for the next generations. Furthermore, he appreciates principles such as family cohesion, homeland solidarity as well as a down-to-earth attitude. He believes that politics need more common sense and a direct connection to the European citizens.

Alexander Bernhuber graduated from the Francisco Josephinum in Wieselburg and completed his Master's Degree in "Agricultural Crop Science" in June 2018. Since 2012, he is managing his own farm in Austria.

## Thoughts on the matter

Precision Livestock Farming is a reasonable opportunity to optimize animal welfare, animal health and the management of farm animals. Furthermore, modern technologies help farmers to analyse animal-related data and support economic goals in animal husbandry.

Due to the constantly growing loss of agricultural land through biodiversity regulations, it is necessary to improve the productivity in food production. Therefore, it is necessary to give our farmers the opportunity to fulfil this mission. Precision Livestock Farming is a useful tool for our farmers in order to reach economic optimization in the production of livestock products. Also because of the increasing number of farm animals, these innovative tools are crucial for farmers to hold a general view on the health of the livestock animals.

In my point of view, the biggest issue regarding these tools is that they are expensive and not available for small sized farmers. Currently, only farmers with a high amount of livestock animals on their farm have the financial resources to invest in these tools. Moreover, I strongly believe the upcoming CAP should provide incentives in order to support modern techniques and innovations and further, to ensure the accessibility to these tools for small farmers.

# Kerli Ats

Young farmer & CEO of the Estonian Farmers' Federation



## Bio

Kerli Ats is a chief executive officer (CEO) at Estonian Farmers' Federation, an umbrella organization representing Estonian small and medium-sized farmers. She is also a member of the European Economic and Social Committee. She is an active farmer herself, managing almost 120 ha of agricultural land in Pärnu county, and is engaged in pasture-raised organic beef cattle production.

Kerli has graduated from Estonian Business School and has a Master's degree in entrepreneurship. Since 2018, she is a doctoral student in Estonian Business School specializing in knowledge transfer and agribusiness networks. She has also studied animal husbandry at Olustvere School of Service and Rural Economics.

## Thoughts on the matter

My main motto in developing my livestock farm is "Together with nature." Sustainability and balance are essential to me. To this end, it is important that my animals have high standards of welfare, that their health is taken care of, and that they live as naturally as possible. However, as an entrepreneur, I believe that a balance between business and the environment can be found, and through the implementation of innovative new digital solutions and tools, I can also secure this for my farm and contribute to the future of sustainable food production.

Adopting digital tools to support farm management is one of the key options or possibilities for pursuing my goals as a farmer. One of my dreams which is related to animal husbandry is that we can use a variety of digital tools, for example, to monitor the movement and behaviour of my animals so that I can analyse their welfare and also assess their health.

Today's biggest obstacle, implementing digital tools, are the cost of this whole systems, which unfortunately I cannot afford as a beef farmer. However, I believe that, from the point of view of animal welfare and health, it must be possible for farmers to use these tools.

Ensuring animal welfare is very important in my farm. To this day, all the investments I have made in my farm contribute to ensuring animal welfare, building stables or installing camera systems etc. However, I believe that, with the help of digital tools, we farmers can do even more to ensure better animal welfare.

# Tommy Heffernan

Veterinary Consultant and Educator



## Bio

Tommy Heffernan is an Irish veterinary consultant and educator.

Tommy qualified from UCD with an honours degree in veterinary medicine in 2002. He worked and ran a large 6 vet practice in Co Wicklow for 16 years. He completed a grad cert in dairy herd health in 2014 from UCD. He is also a master cowsignals trainer. Since 2017 he set up a consultancy business working with farmers, vets and the wider agriculture industry. He also spent 16 months in 2019 as animal health specialist for The Irish Farmers Journal.

He completed an international Nuffield farming scholarship in 2018. His report discussed his concept of “A cow centered approach to the modern dairy industry”.

His interests are how we can maximize immunity in farming systems by optimizing the biological needs of our farm animals. He is also involved in research around the microbiome and reduction of antibiotic usage on farms.

He is passionate about educating farmers around animal health topics and is also involved in an agricultural training company called Vision Farming Ltd.

## Thoughts on the matter

The market will drive many legislation changes regardless of whether we agree or not. The big challenge will be to produce food sustainably in livestock systems. Sustainability can be a buzzword used frequently, but it is a complex and sometimes divisive area. However, it will be a reality and will be determined by our actions at the farm and policy level.

We also must continue to maintain high welfare standards and also drastically reduce the use of antibiotics. This will place enormous pressure on our farming systems as they adapt to these new challenges. These challenges are by no means insurmountable but will require leadership at all levels of the supply chain.

There is also the economic sustainability of our food producers to be considered during all this change. We must continue to showcase to the next generation the exciting opportunities in farming in the future.

This is a multifactorial complex system. For me, it is picking a system that fits with our challenges around climate and biodiversity. Ensuring the animals in that system are farmed in a way where their biological needs and behaviours can be met. There will need to be a considerable focus on animal health. Healthy animals will need fewer antibiotics, have improved welfare, and less environmental impact.

# Roxane Feller

AnimalhealthEurope Secretary General



## Bio

Roxane Feller is Secretary General of AnimalhealthEurope. Representing the animal medicines industry in Europe, the association works to maintain a predictable and responsible competitive market place which stimulates innovation and allows wide and sustainable access to safe, effective and quality veterinary medicines.

Roxane started her career in the area of EU political advocacy in Brussels in 1992 heading up social affairs for the European Sugar Industry before moving on to Copa–Cogeca, the organisation representing European farmers and agri–cooperatives, where she was senior policy officer in charge of all food and feed safety–related issues including animal health and welfare for 14 years.

Prior to joining AnimalhealthEurope in February 2015, Roxane was Director of the Economic Department in FoodDrinkEurope, an umbrella organisation representing the food and drink manufacturing industry in Europe.

Married with three children, Roxane studied in the United States and in Switzerland. She is a lawyer by training and speaks French and English, with an excellent knowledge of German, Spanish and Dutch.

## Thoughts on the matter

The animal health industry works directly with livestock farmers and veterinarians to understand current and future needs in order to set priorities for research and development. The agri–food sector in general and the livestock sector in particular is moving into an era of digitally enhanced farming, where valuable data is generated during the various stages of day–to–day farming in order to optimise the health and welfare of animals, reduce environmental impacts and ensure better traceability, and improve farm management efficiencies and productivity.

Farmers both young and old, have long been adopters of advanced tools and practices to improve farm management. And the growing use of innovative animal health solutions such as smart collars and electronic ear tags, 3D cameras, sensors and detection tools, are prime examples of progress towards improved animal husbandry, which anticipates animals' needs, and supports more sustainable farming.

And when it comes to the next generation of farmers, we believe that this connected health approach, with integrated solutions, and effective data use, will play a key role, not only in empowering farmers to deliver on Farm to Fork goals, but also in ensuring generational renewal for Europe's rural areas.

## AnimalhealthEurope

168 Avenue de Tervueren | Box 8

1150 Brussels | Belgium

info@animalhealtheurope.eu

 @animalhealthEU

 /animalhealthEU

 AnimalhealthEurope

**animalhealtheurope.eu**



AnimalhealthEurope represents companies that research, develop and manufacture veterinary medicines in Europe. It represents innovators and generics alike, as well as large, medium-sized and small companies. AnimalhealthEurope's membership covers 90% of the European market for veterinary products.

