

Animal health and animal welfare: different role, same goal

Brussels, 1 June 2023 - AnimalhealthEurope's annual conference gathered over 120 participants to discuss the role different parties can play in reaching the same goal: high levels of animal welfare in Europe.

The event kicked off with an inspired presentation from Sean Wensley, Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and author of [‘Through a Vet’s Eyes’](#). He explained that in recent years, the veterinary profession has clarified a dual responsibility for animal welfare: to protect and promote the welfare of animals under vet care, while also stimulating broader societal change to address the root causes of poor welfare. With this stance, the profession is advocating ethically sustainable animal agriculture.

This was followed by a high-level overview of the current state of play of the revision of EU Animal Welfare legislation from Andrea Gavinelli, Head of Unit for Animal Welfare at the European Commission's DG SANTE. Highlighting the importance of animal welfare within sustainable farming he said:

“Animal welfare is recognised today as a cornerstone of a sustainable food production, and the revision of the EU animal welfare legislation is an important part of the Commission’s endeavours to implement the Green Deal. In line with the ‘One Health’ approach, focus will be put on exploring the nexus between animal welfare, animal health, public health and the environment towards a resilient farming system.”

With a focus on the central role that animal health products and veterinarians play in animal welfare, alongside that of legislators, NGOs and farmers, the first panel session saw Andrea Gavinelli, Mette Uldahl from FVE, Jo Swabe from HSI-Europe, and Thomas Duffy from CEJA discuss the balancing act of ensuring strict biosecurity and disease control measures versus ensuring wider animal welfare needs are met. Participants agreed that good husbandry practices are vital, no matter the farming system.

The second panel - with Birthe Steenberg from AVEC, Claire Fowler from AnimalhealthEurope, Antonio Velarde from IRTA, and Joe Moran from FOUR PAWS - discussed the potential hurdles to making further improvements for animal welfare on farms and how these can be overcome. The financing of implementing changes was seen as the biggest hurdle, with increased training and education also required to support transitions.

The concluding remarks served to underline why animal health takes such a prominent role in ensuring high levels of animal welfare. Rob Kelly, AnimalhealthEurope President concluded:

“Advances in animal health care are prioritising better welfare, improved disease prevention and animal resilience, as well as earlier diagnosis. Good knowledge and use of modern-day animal health technologies can facilitate better animal husbandry and improve overall animal health and wellbeing, contributing to a better life for everyone and every animal.”



Notes for editors:

- You can [download our event booklet](#) with speaker biographies and summary statements on the debate topic from our website.
- See attached also our position on the EU Animal Welfare Legislation.
- AnimalhealthEurope represents 12 of Europe's leading manufacturers of animal medicines and 17 national associations in 19 countries, covering 90% of the European Market.