

In a time of shrinking budgets, how can Europe finance healthy herds?

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THE VOICE
OF THE ANIMAL
MEDICINES INDUSTRY

The theme for AnimalhealthEurope's 2026 Annual Conference serves as a follow-up to the discussion from the 2025 conference, "Preventing Disease X: the value of investing in animal health", where speakers and participants highlighted the need to invest more in a preventive approach to animal disease control.

This year the conference will discuss some of the more practical issues surrounding how to secure such investments, with a view to encouraging policymakers, investors, and the farming community to recognise that good animal health is an investment, not a cost.

With many studies and reports showing that preventing disease is more effective and more cost-efficient than treating disease after it occurs, the next step in the chain of moving to a truly preventive approach lacks both financial and political certainty. Effective preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery require strong and predictable financial mechanisms as well as clear political support. Dwindling EU and national budgets, and a tightly squeezed budget for the Common Agricultural Policy don't leave much room for additional funding requests. Aside from the financial aspects, other barriers such as trade policy, or access to vaccines and veterinary services, remain a hindrance to animal disease crisis preparedness, and need to be addressed.

The event will gather farmers, veterinarians, related stakeholders, EU decision-makers, and the animal health industry to discuss:

- Where do we need to invest for better animal disease prevention?
- How and who should finance disease prevention and innovation in this area?
- What actions can help break down other barriers to a more preventive approach?

Event Moderator



Rose O'Donovan has been Editor of AGRA FACTS since March 2010, having previously served as Deputy Editor on the agricultural publication for nearly three years. Prior to working as a journalist, she dealt with international relations on the EU satellite navigation programme at the Galileo Joint Undertaking. Following the completion of a Master of Science at University College Cork (Ireland), Rose moved to Brussels in 2004 to work as an intern in the Cabinet of former European Parliament President, Pat Cox. Hailing from a farming background in West Cork, Rose has a keen interest in the evolution of Irish & European agricultural & trade policy and regularly appears as a moderator on the Brussels & international conference circuit.





Olivér Várhelyi

EU Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare

Roxane Feller

AnimalhealthEurope Director General



Holder Kray

World Bank

Holger Kray is the World Bank's Regional Manager for Agriculture and Food in Europe and Central Asia, responsible for strategic engagement across the region's agri-food portfolio. In this role, he leads operations and advisory services supporting agri-food sector development, market and regional integration including EU alignment, and climate and sustainability solutions.

He has held leadership positions across the World Bank's Europe and Central Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean regions, including establishing the Africa Agricultural Policy Unit.

Prior to joining the World Bank in 2005, he held a senior role at a global management consulting firm, specializing in change management in the financial services sector. He later served as Managing Director of a development consulting firm working with international organizations.

Holger holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Kiel University, Germany.

Francisco Reviriego Gordejo

DG Health and Food Safety



Dr Francisco Javier Reviriego Gordejo obtained his PhD (1999) in Veterinary Epidemiology and his degree (1988) in Veterinary Science from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He holds a postgraduate diploma (2000) in Statistics and Design in Health Sciences from Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona.

He worked as Official vet for the Autonomous Region of Castilla y Leon (1990–2001) implementing eradication programmes, heading the Animal Health Laboratory of Avila and before worked as a veterinarian for pig farmers.

He joined the European Commission in 2001 as a Legislative Veterinary Officer. In 2005 was Head of Sector Epidemiology and Eradication, since 2008 to 2016 was as Head of the Sector Disease Control and Identification, later Adviser to the Director on Crisis management in Food, Animals and Plants and since 2021 is Head of Unit for Animal Health in DG SANTE.

In addition to his work at DG SANTE, Dr Reviriego Gordejo participated in a number of World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) ad hoc groups.



Chantal Rettigner

AFSCA (Belgian Food Safety Agency)

Chantal Rettigner is graduated in veterinary medicine from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Liège in 1997.

After obtaining a diploma of tropical veterinary sciences, she undertook a doctorate in veterinary sciences in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Liège and obtained her PhD in 2004.

She began working for the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain in 2004 as a veterinary expert in the Animal Health and Safety of Animal Products Directorate of the Control Policy DG. Chantal Rettigner became director of the department in 2022 and in 2023 she was appointed chief veterinary officer of Belgium and deputy delegate to WOAH.

Antonella Rossetti

Cabinet of Commissioner Hansen



Antonella Rossetti is a Member of Cabinet of European Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Christophe Hansen, where she follows key policy files related to the EU agri–food sector, including plant and animal health, animal welfare, geographical indications, wine and spirits, promotion policy, and relations with the European Parliament.

She has extensive experience in EU agricultural policy. Before joining the Cabinet, she worked for more than ten years in the European Parliament, including with the Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. She also served as Agriculture Specialist at the U.S. Mission to the European Union and worked as Senior Advisor at the Brussels–based think tank Farm Europe.



Nicolas Berthollet

Veterinarian

Graduate of the National Veterinary School of Lyon, France, Nicolas Berthollet started his career as a mixed–practice veterinarian in the Camargue region of southern France.

He then went on to spend nearly two years working as a veterinary attaché at the French Embassy in Japan, handling SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary) matters. Subsequently he joined the General Directorate for Food within the French Ministry of Agriculture (DGAL), where he worked on intra–Community meat trade and organised an event regarding the revision of the “Hygiene Package” during the French Presidency of the Council of the EU, before going on to focus on sanitary negotiations concerning market access and export conditions, particularly for the Asian region.

Following the stint at DGAL, Nicolas served as Deputy Agricultural Affairs Counselor at the French Embassy in Japan, initially handling sanitary issues and later managing the full portfolio of the French Ministry of Agriculture’s competencies for both Japan and Korea.

Today, and for the past ten years, Nicolas has been working as a mixed–practice veterinarian in the Savoie region. In this role, he has conducted field interventions—specifically regarding Non–Contagious Disease management—and coordinated field veterinarians’ activities with official authorities. These responsibilities stem from his roles as the Savoie representative for the GTV (Groupeement Technique Vétérinaire—a professional organisation providing technical expertise and continuing education for practicing veterinarians) and as Regional Vice–President, with a particular focus on liaison with competent animal health authorities.

Montserrat Arroyo

WOAH



Montserrat Arroyo is the Deputy Director General for International Standards Setting and Implementation at the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). She brings over 20 years of experience at the interface of animal health, international trade, and global policy.

A veterinarian by training, she graduated from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and holds a Master's degree in Preventive Veterinary Medicine from the University of California, Davis.

Montserrat began her career in Mexico's National Service of Health, Safety and Agri-Food Quality (SENASICA), working on the prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases, including within the Mexico–United States Foot-and-Mouth Disease Commission. She later held senior leadership positions, including Director of Imports and Exports, where she led international sanitary negotiations and contributed to the establishment of trade frameworks and cooperation agreements. She also served as Director of PRONABIVE, Mexico's national veterinary biologics producer.

Within WOAH, she has held several strategic roles, including Subregional Representative for Central America and the Caribbean, and Head of the World Animal Health Information and Regional Activities Departments. In her current position, she leads global work on international standards, science, and data, supporting Members in strengthening animal health systems, facilitating safe trade, and managing risks related to animal diseases.

Her work focuses on the role of standards in animal health for economic resilience, trade continuity, and food security, promoting science-based policies and international cooperation under a One Health approach.



Marion Picot

CEJA



Marion Picot is the Secretary General of CEJA, the European Council of Young Farmers. The organisation represents 34 young farmers' organisations from all across Europe and has been promoting better living and working conditions for the next generations of farmers. Marion has a background in public policy and has previous experience in local and national governments, where she worked on agriculture, rural development and food systems. She was also a lecturer in the Master of European public affairs in Science Po Lille, France.

She has been working in CEJA since 2018, previously as a Senior Policy Advisor.



Inma Aznar

EFSA

Inma Aznar is a veterinarian who after a couple of years in large animal practice in Ireland and having worked in the control and eradication of the 2001 FMD outbreak in the UK decided to specialise in Epidemiology, with a masters in veterinary Epidemiology from the Royal Veterinary College and a Diploma from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

She worked for 12 years as a Veterinary Epidemiologist for the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine in Ireland, while based in CVERA (Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Assessment). During this time, she also carried out a PhD on the use of modelling for disease control awarded by the Quantitative Veterinary Epidemiology Unit in Wageningen University.

She has worked since in EFSA, where she continued her education with a post-graduate certificate on Sustainable Aquaculture from St Andrews University. In her current job, Inma leads the Animal Health team in EFSA, that provides scientific support to the European Commission and Member States regarding a large range of animal health topics.

Programme

TIMING	TOPIC	SPEAKERS
09:00	Welcome	Rose O'Donovan
09:05	Opening remarks	Commissioner Várhelyi
09:15	Keynote session <i>Animal disease and risk management in the EU</i>	Holger Kray <i>World Bank</i>
09:40	<i>Fireside Chat with WOAH on the PREVENT Forum</i>	Montserrat Arroyo <i>WOAH</i>
10:00	Panel discussion: <i>Who pays for prevention? Rethinking animal health financing in Europe</i>	Holger Kray <i>World Bank</i> Francisco Reviriego Gordejo <i>DG Health and Food Safety</i> Chantal Rettigner <i>AFSCA</i> Antonella Rossetti <i>Cabinet of Commissioner Hansen</i>
11:00	COFFEE BREAK	
11:30	Testimonial: <i>Supporting farmers through animal disease outbreaks</i>	Nicolas Berthollet <i>Veterinarian</i>
11:50	Panel discussion: <i>Policy, trade, knowledge, and capacity: what fixes can make disease prevention an EU priority?</i>	Montserrat Arroyo <i>WOAH</i> Inma Aznar <i>EFSA</i> Nicolas Berthollet <i>Veterinarian</i> Marion Picot <i>CEJA</i>
12:50	Closing remarks	Roxane Feller <i>AnimalhealthEurope Director General</i>
13:00	NETWORKING LUNCH	