

A vote for animal health is a vote for your own health

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Opinion Plus

A Europe whose political and regulatory framework stimulates the growth of innovation in the animal health sector is a Europe that secures a more sustainable future for all, writes Roxane Feller.



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Whether you realise it or not, we all depend on animals for our daily lives. Even people that are not pet owners, are not linked to farming, or that do not eat fish, meat, eggs or drink milk. They still depend on animals.

Animals like the tiny bee pollinating the fruit tree, the trained sniffer dogs protecting our borders from illegal activities, or the grazing animals sustaining Europe's rural biodiversity.

This dependence is mutual. It is our duty to ensure that animals are well-cared for and, when they get sick to ensure they get the treatment they need and the care that they deserve.

Yet treating sick animals is only part of the story. While treatment will always be important, there is an increasing focus on disease prevention and animal resilience, as well as earlier diagnosis, to allow better interventions and practices that improve animal health in general.

Animal welfare is a growing concern for all Europeans and good animal health is an essential precondition to that.

Better management of animal health, preventing diseases and supporting welfare, is a key part of Europe's response to calls for more sustainable farming practices, as well as addressing pressing concerns to reduce the need to use antibiotics for animals.

There has been a significant turnaround in the way that livestock farmers think and operate; healthy animals are now the starting point for more sustainable livestock farming. But how do we ensure that Europe's animals grow up healthy and that vets will have less need to treat illnesses?

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Using animal medicines and our industry's expertise to its full extent is a major part of the solution. Europe is the birthplace of modern veterinary medicine and home to some of the world's leading animal health companies, supporting around 50,000 jobs in Europe. It is the second-largest animal medicines market in the world, with an annual value of over €6bn.

As the animal health industry, we have the capacity to continuously find new ways to optimise animal health. Yet our industry needs support from Europe's decision-makers to pave the way to develop more effective vaccines, faster and more accurate diagnostic tests, and to guarantee a wide range of innovative solutions for optimising animal health and welfare.

We have high hopes for Europe as it moves towards a more sustainable future and we have big ideas on how we can play our part.

Ensuring the deployment of existing animal health solutions and developing new ones are key priorities for the future and we have identified six clear ways in which the EU can lead the way in supporting optimal animal health - and you can help.

The EU can ensure the timely and science-based implementation of the new veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed regulations, providing availability of animal health solutions in all markets, for all species.

It can support the scientific output of its own agency - the European Medicines Agency (EMA) - in determining what range of veterinary medicines should be available and what conditions should be placed on their use.

The EU can prioritise investment at national and European level in innovative early research, by funding programmes such as Horizon Europe. These programmes hold the key to unlocking the information needed to develop new generations of vaccines and other therapies for both animal and human health.

“With African Swine Fever and Lumpy Skin Disease raising their ugly heads on our territory, it is clear that the EU must make a stand on behalf of its animal population”

It can create a regulatory environment that accelerates the time to market for the latest scientific advancement in veterinary medicines. It can also foster an integrated approach to combating diseases and reducing antibiotic resistance by deploying different tools available, including vaccines and diagnostics.

Collectively, these tools will complement and extend the usefulness of therapeutic approaches and products.

The EU can also adopt a strategy that supports innovation to continue developing these different tools, one that raises awareness of their ability to address a broad range of animal diseases, including infectious emerging diseases.

We count on Europe's future leaders to take a firm stand to make animal health a top priority. This goes beyond optimising animal health; it is about ensuring preparedness and rapid response to health needs in the event of emerging or re-emerging diseases.

With African Swine Fever and Lumpy Skin Disease raising their ugly heads on our territory, it is clear that the EU must make a stand on behalf of its animal population. By forging a clear pathway for R&D, timely solutions can be deployed, and better use of the entire toolbox of animal health solutions can follow.

A Europe whose political and regulatory framework stimulates innovation in the animal health sector is a Europe that secures a more sustainable future for all.

Animal Health Matters. This is not just a slogan. It is a statement of fact.

For more information on AnimalhealthEurope's manifesto points for the European elections click [here](#) [1]

About the author

Roxane Feller is Secretary General of AnimalhealthEurope, the representative body of manufacturers of animal medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in Europe. With membership covering 90 percent of the European Market, AnimalhealthEurope represents innovators and generics alike, as well as large, medium-sized and small companies.

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