

# EFSA session: Reflection on animal health

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# The Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

- Provides scientific advice on all aspects of animal diseases and animal welfare (mainly food producing animals)
- Risk assessment, quantitative risk assessment, modelling
- Microbiology and pathology (applied to infectious diseases of food-producing animals, including aquatic animals)
- Epidemiology
- Animal welfare
- Animal production (husbandry, housing and management, animal transport and stunning and killing of animals)

# Economic considerations in animal health

- Transboundary/notifiable diseases controlled by public authorities (ASF, AI, FMD etc.) require policies which can affect entire livestock sector and international trade
  - Evidence-based decision-making → Risk assessment
  - Economic impacts of policies can play an important role and should be taken into account in decision-making!
  - Epidemic diseases require rapid decisions – need to have analytical capacity & expertise readily in place
- For many diseases, farming practices and farm structures play an important role
  - Poor practices and biosecurity can elevate disease risks
  - Costs and benefits of adopting specific standards ?
  - Why improved practices are not applied?
- Incentives to report and prevent diseases

## Where does previous economic research on animal health focus?

- According to a review conducted by the NEAT project
    - Highly contagious diseases such as FMD (10%) or CSF (5%)
    - The most common endemic diseases such as mastitis (5%), BVD (3%) or Johne's disease (3%)
    - Food safety-related hazards such as salmonella (5%) or BSE (3%)
    - About half of publications focus on Europe
- ➔ In many respects, matches with EFSA's topics of interest

# Economic considerations in animal welfare

- Economic literature on animal health mainly focuses on
  1. Consumers (WTP, attitudes, acceptance etc.)
  2. Cost implications of higher welfare standards
- Other important economic considerations include
  - Barriers for trade – Animal welfare in gaining in importance in international trade
    - Do animal welfare standards disrupt free trade? When?
    - Interdisciplinary collaboration may be essential
  - Producers' incentives to adopt animal-friendly solutions
    - Do economic factors increase the risk for animal welfare?
  - Interactions between welfare, health and food safety
    - e.g. production diseases and risks due to production types

## Strengths of EFSA approach

- Science-based, well-known experts
- Well-focused but often provides a good overview on the risks
- Specific issues that AHAW had examined are very relevant also from economic research perspective
- EFSA's work provides a lot of possibilities in data sharing and method development issues
- Current reports provide useful and extensive information on for economic research
  - Tail biting risk assessment, housing-related work, animal-based welfare measures
  - Work on metabolic, reproductive and locomotory problems
  - Work on transboundary diseases

## Points for discussion

- In some domains taking economic consideration on board could strengthen the EFSA's advice and provide wider arguments for recommendations (when and where to apply)
  - Control measures for notifiable diseases, such as African swine fever containment measures
  - Measures supporting EU animal health policy and disease categorization
  - AMR-related work where stakeholders' choices play an important role



## Points for discussion

- Risk assessment is a basis for evidence-based decisions
  - Also economics deals with decisions, but from different perspective (preferences  $\Leftrightarrow$  consequences of choices)
  - Risk communication is an integral part of risk management
  - Interdisciplinary work on how to communicate efficiently and to develop trust is needed?
  - Quantitative information is essential for economic analysis
- Risk finance and cost-sharing mechanisms are not within the scope, but they may be essential to meet the goals, especially for eradication programmes
- Economics could contribute to address risks associated with economic agents' behavior



Thank you!