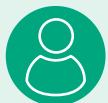


Sustainability and the veterinary profession: Action plan

As an evidence-based, scientific profession there are a multitude of ways that vets can actively contribute to the sustainable animal agriculture agenda. Below BVA sets out a range of activities that vets can undertake at an individual, practice and association level to make a difference through their day-to-day activity.



INDIVIDUALS

- Creating farm health and welfare plans to prevent and control disease, increasing efficiency and welfare
- Using benchmarking tools to monitor and reduce, for example, lameness and antibiotic use
- Advising on and promoting higher welfare systems at times of farm investment, such as building redesign
- Always taking a “3Rs” (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) approach when advising on mutilations – aiming to prevent the need for procedures and using modern analgesia protocols when the procedures are absolutely necessary
- Considering eating “less and better” by reducing consumption of meat while maintaining proportional spend so that this spend is directed towards higher health and welfare products
- Promoting the value of farm assurance schemes. The BVA position on farm assurance schemes and the BVA #ChooseAssured: UK Farm Assurance Schemes Infographic can be used as reference tools when talking to clients or other members of the public about the value of farm assurance schemes and how they can choose ethical and sustainable animal food products
- Upholding existing legislation with regard to protecting public health (the prevention of zoonotic disease), food safety and food hygiene and reporting and monitoring food chain information
- Safeguarding and promoting animal welfare at slaughter and welfare during transport in line with existing legislation



PRACTICES

- Creating practice policies on mutilations based on the “3Rs” (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement) and modern analgesia protocols
- Distributing educational materials (eg The BVA position on farm assurance schemes and the BVA #ChooseAssured: UK Farm Assurance Schemes Infographic) to help clients make informed and ethical food choices (NB this can be undertaken by all practices, eg companion and equine, as well as farm practices)
- Creating and communicating a practice food procurement policy, to be used, for example, when providing animal-derived food to hospitalised patients, or when selecting venues for staff meetings and gatherings. The BVA food procurement policy, incorporating sustainability of harvest, animal health and welfare, fair conditions for producers and food miles, could be adopted for this purpose
- Offering visits to local politicians and key opinion leaders, to discuss the challenges of future animal agriculture and to advocate the best interests of animals when considering solutions



ASSOCIATIONS

- Raising awareness of the challenges facing the global food system, providing thought leadership, opportunities for informed debate, and consistently advocating the importance of animal health and welfare as a sustainable development goal
- Considering the interests of all stakeholders when developing policy related to animal agriculture and ensuring that primary consideration and weight is given to the welfare interests of animals
- Promoting the practical experience, scientific expertise and ethical reasoning abilities of veterinary surgeons to policy makers involved with the future of animal farming
- Collaboratively developing policy on welfare problems affecting farmed animals, as mandated by the BVA animal welfare strategy: vets speaking up for animal welfare
- Developing and signposting evidence-based information to citizens on farm assurance schemes, to enable them to make informed, sustainable and more ethical purchases