

Livestock farming in Europe: what does sustainability look like?

Brussels, 9 September 2020; Reformatted as an online debate, AnimalhealthEurope's annual event focused on the EU Farm to Fork strategy and how the European livestock sector can deliver on sustainability demands.

In a recorded message from Stella Kyriakides, the European Commission's lead on the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Health and Food Safety Commissioner highlighted the need to strengthen the interconnections between human and animal health surveillance systems and agencies in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Recognising the progress achieved so far by veterinarians and farmers around Europe in the prudent use of antimicrobials, she also alluded to the new EU Regulations on veterinary medicines and medicated feed as the key to supporting farmers with achieving the strategy's objective of further reducing antibiotic use and promoting one health cooperation.

Chair of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, MEP Norbert Lins kicked off the debate on what sustainability in livestock should look like. With remarks pointed at the ambitious targets set out in the strategy, he raised questions on *how* farmers can achieve the targets and what reward can be expected for farmers raising animals in a more environmentally sustainable way.

With the headline "Smaller, greener...healthier?" panellists debated the merits of calls for smaller, pasture-based farming systems and the complexities of balancing the traditional pillars of sustainability. Speakers included Livestock Sustainability Consultant Dr. Jude Capper, Wageningen Executive Board member Dr. Martin Scholten, Organics Europe representative and organic farmer Kurt Sannen, as well as AnimalhealthEurope representative Julie Vermooten. Optimising animal health and welfare, improving data use and connectivity, as well optimizing the nutrient cycle within our farming systems using the principles of circularity, were key factors raised in the interesting exchange of views.

Commenting after the debate, AnimalhealthEurope Secretary General Roxane Feller said: "With more than 450 people registered, shifting our event to online has opened a door to a wider array of players all with a keen interest in ensuring the sustainability of animal-source food production in Europe. Despite differing backgrounds of our panelists it was comforting to hear a

unified call for greater access to data, to tools and connectivity to ensure healthy animals, and to investigate more how this all links with sustainability and circular food production. We must uphold a balance in the way we interact with our farm animals and with the environment we live in while securing a sustainable food supply at affordable prices from viable farming practices.”

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Notes for editors:

- This event was organised with [Parliament Magazine](https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/). Visit www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/ and follow [@Parlimag](https://twitter.com/Parlimag) for event coverage.
- You can [download our event booklet](#) with speaker biographies and summary statements on the debate topic from our website.
- AnimalhealthEurope represents 12 of Europe’s leading manufacturers of animal medicines and 19 national associations. Covering 90% of the European Market, the animal health industry enables more than 293,000 direct and indirect jobs (incl. veterinarians), ensures that over a billion animals in Europe - both livestock and companion animals - stay healthy, while providing solutions for million livestock farmers and 85 million pet-owning households across Europe.