

# Veterinarians

vital for animals, vital for people



Federation  
of Veterinarians  
of Europe

# Veterinarians : vital for animals, vital for people

You may think you know what veterinarians do. Look after our cats and dogs when they're ill. Keep farm animals healthy. Help wild animals.

All true. But did you know that veterinarians play a vital role in looking after people's health too? Not to mention in protecting the environment and the economy?

From making sure the food we eat is safe to stopping animal disease spreading to people and costing the farming industry millions, we couldn't survive without veterinarians.

**Human health + animal health = one health!**



## Why are veterinarians important?

### 01 Veterinarians... look after your pets and animals on the farm

Can you imagine your pet's life without a veterinarian? No treatment when they were ill. No vaccinations to stop disease. A shorter, poorer life. All animals deserve to be happy and healthy, and veterinarians make sure this happens. They help farmers look after their animals and care for animals in slaughterhouses and zoos, making sure they are well and kept in the best possible conditions.

Two thirds of veterinarians in Europe do this type of work, and are known as practitioners. The scope of practitioners' work has come a long way. At first, they only helped horses fighting in wars, then other farm animals including bees and fishes. Now, as people have an ever growing variety of pets and want the best care for them, practitioners have learned to care for rabbits, ferrets, rodents, birds and snakes, to name just a few. Many also treat zoo animals, wildlife and animals used in sport (like horses and greyhounds).



### 02 Veterinarians... mean you can enjoy a juicy steak - safely

If you're a fan of tender steak or delicious hamburgers, tasty chicken or succulent lamb, you need to stop for a moment and thank not only the farmers who raise animals, but veterinarians too. They make sure the meat – as well as dairy products, fish and eggs – you eat comes from healthy animals and is disease-free.

People can get fatal diseases like Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), Salmonella and E. Coli from coming into contact with or eating meat or dairy from animals with these conditions. In fact, three quarters of newly-discovered human diseases and 61% of all human infectious diseases come from contact with animals.

Veterinarians specialising in food hygiene work on farms and in slaughterhouses, testing and inspecting animals for these conditions – and making sure they never make it into the food chain and on to our plates.



These veterinarians also watch for signs that animals may have ingested chemicals that could lower the quality of their meat. They watch for signs of "food fraud" too – that companies are lying about the quality of their products.

### 03 Veterinarians... make sure everyone has enough to eat



The world's population is growing every day – and we're struggling to find food for everyone. By 2020 will we still be able to meet the demand for milk, eggs, fish and meat? Veterinarians will lead the way. They'll help make sure the world can produce enough animals to eat by stopping disease and by helping animals bred using modern techniques like artificial insemination and embryo transfer. These techniques can help save rare and endangered species too.



#### 04 Veterinarians... keep our farming industry strong

Did you know there are 14 million farmers in Europe<sup>1</sup>? They and their families depend on a healthy farming industry for their livelihoods. But without the support of veterinarians to keep disease in check, farming could collapse. Meat, dairy products and eggs would be unsafe, and impossible to sell. Outbreaks of diseases like avian influenza or bovine tuberculosis could shut down production on farms, costing millions.

Veterinarians' help to carefully monitor and prevent serious diseases means farmers across Europe can support themselves and their families.

#### 05 Veterinarians... boost the economy

Every year, farming contributes not millions, not billions, but trillions of Euros to the European economy. That's only possible because of veterinarians. Farmers and businesses would struggle to trade meat and dairy products, especially internationally, if they couldn't guarantee it was safe. Veterinarians' inspections and certificates give importers and exporters the proof they need, encouraging them to buy and sell, boosting the national and international economy – for everyone's benefit.



#### 06 Veterinarians... protect our environment



We all know damage to the environment and climate change are big problems. Farming and keeping animals contributes to both. Without veterinarians being there to support farmers, they could cause a lot more harm. Veterinarians help farmers and other animal keepers to act in the most environmentally-friendly way possible.

For example, veterinarians guide farmers in using animal medicines and chemicals responsibly and treat waste so it doesn't cause damage to the environment.

#### 07 Veterinarians... stop and deal with outbreaks of disease

Occasionally, there will be an outbreak of serious animal disease. The consequences can be dire: diseases like foot and mouth, salmonella or BSE can kill thousands of animals, harm people, ruin the farming industry and cost millions. Every country in Europe employs state veterinary officers to inspect places like farms, slaughterhouses, milk factories and border checkpoints to prevent outbreaks happening in the first place. When outbreaks do happen, veterinarians limit their impact and minimise losses.

Veterinarians detect disease outbreaks all the time; it was a hygiene specialist who detected the 2001 UK foot and mouth outbreak during a routine inspection.

#### 08 Veterinarians... keep the profession strong for the future

Veterinarians don't just work on the front line, treating animals and working with farmers to keep our food safe. Many also work in industry or in labs leading innovative research into new medical treatments and new methods to ensure our food is safe. Many more work in universities or other schools, teaching animal-related subjects and ensuring our animals and food will be in safe hands in the future.

#### 09 Veterinarians... making a positive impact on the world



Afghanistan, Somalia - whenever there is a war zone or a disaster, veterinarians are present. Imagine bomb-sniffing dogs or inoculating cattle on a humanitarian mission, veterinarians lead it. Working in the army, veterinarians look after the four-legged friends of the soldiers but also join humanitarian mission to ensure food and water can safely be consumed and animals can be evacuated safe and sound out of disaster area.

## In conclusion...

Animals. Every person who eats meat, dairy, eggs, fish or other animal products. Farmers. The environment. The economy.

These are just some of the beneficiaries of veterinarians' valuable work.

### Animal health + human health = one health

We couldn't survive without veterinarians. And they need the support of decision-makers throughout Europe.

Find out more about the vital work of veterinarians and FVE on our website [www.fve.org](http://www.fve.org)

## Testimonials



**Joep Driessen**  
Cattle veterinarian

*"Let your cows do the talking! They always speak the truth with their body language. If you can read it, it is easy to make them happily live twice as long... Make this place a better world, for you, the farmer, the cow and the earth!"*



**Nicolas Vidal-Naquet**  
Bees veterinarian

*"Taking care of bees I look after the world of agriculture! Bees do more than just make honey: they fly around pollinating all sorts of fruit and vegetables which end up on our plates. I feel like a "pioneer" in an exciting adventure promoting the veterinary profession"*



**Veronique Renault**  
Cooperation for development, food security

*"More than 1 billion in the world depend on livestock for livelihoods and food security. Veterinarians can highly improve food security and well being of those populations across the world by supporting and improving the livestock productions systems"*



**Richard Weilenmann**  
Lab Animal Veterinarian

*"Vets in industry, from feed to medicines, contribute to safeguarding animal and human health. Developing medicine still needs the support of animals. It's our duty to take care of their welfare and to implement daily the 3 R's (reduce-refine-replace). It's very challenging but makes me proud, that we are the ones doing it"*



**Alain Schonbrondt**  
Fish veterinarian

*"We as humans are not the only populations in our world; we must care for the homes and habitats of ourselves and our native plants and animals. This is what I do daily"*



**Nadia Leoni**  
Companion animals veterinarian

*"I strongly believe clients should feel confident that when they entrust the care of their animals to a member of a veterinary team the animal is going to receive a high standard of care"*



**Aneta Debska**  
Official Veterinarian

*"The role of the Official Veterinarian in ensuring that the meat industry safeguards the health of the public, and the health and welfare of animals at slaughter is often overlooked"*

# How the FVE supports veterinarians' crucial work

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) helps veterinarians across Europe do their valuable work to the highest standard possible - so they can effectively protect animal and human health.

FVE is an umbrella organisation of veterinary organisations from 38 European countries representing more than 200.000 veterinarians in Europe. FVE also includes 4 vibrant sections, each of which represent key groups within our profession: Practitioners (UEVP), Hygienists (UEVH), Veterinary State Officers (EASVO) and Veterinarians in Education, Research and Industry (EVERI).

- We lobby politicians, institutions and NGOs, representing our members' views and influencing them to make the right decisions for veterinarians, animals and people.
- We support our members to do their jobs more effectively, providing information, make sure training is of the highest possible standard, organising discussions and forums and developing standards for the profession.

The end result? Better animal and human health – and more satisfied veterinarians – across Europe.



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