

BVA manifesto for 2017

The British Veterinary Association is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the UK. We promote evidence-led policy drawn from the scientific and clinical expertise of our members working in all areas of the veterinary profession.

Veterinary surgeons are on the frontline of caring for animals, diagnosing and treating disease, providing preventive healthcare, animal welfare advice and emergency aid, and undertaking pioneering research into animal and public health. It is vets who monitor and protect the welfare of livestock from birth to slaughter, who ensure our food is safe to eat and who care for our well-loved pets. Our members work at the cutting edge of science and at the heart of the communities in which they practise. As such they are in a unique position from which to offer the next Government evidence-based and informed advice and policy recommendations.

Since the EU Referendum in June 2016 BVA has been developing principles and recommendations for the UK's Brexit negotiations to secure the best possible outcome for animal health and welfare and public health. This manifesto highlights our Brexit priority asks alongside our domestic policy recommendations for the next Government. We believe they provide a clear pathway to improving animal health and welfare in the UK and we look forward to working with the next Government to develop and implement them.

Securing a successful outcome for animal health and welfare after Brexit

The next Government should:

1. Guarantee working rights for non-British EU vets and veterinary nurses currently working and studying in the UK, and for British vets and VNs working in the EU, at the existing level with no time limit to ensure the need for veterinary services can be met.

2. Maintain current animal health and welfare standards and prioritise them in all trade negotiations to develop a unique, high standard of animal health, welfare and food hygiene as a selling point for the UK.
3. Commit to maintaining a single standard for meat produced for both domestic and export markets based on current standards of food hygiene legislation and enforcement, including veterinary certification and controls.
4. Guarantee the UK veterinary profession ongoing access to all existing veterinary medicines licensed through the EU regulatory systems in order to meet animal health requirements, whilst continuing to play a leading role in tackling antimicrobial resistance internationally.
5. Ensure any public money to replace the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is used to support and incentivise public goods, including animal health and welfare, disease surveillance, biodiversity and environmental stewardship.
6. Develop a regulatory and legislative framework to ensure the UK continues to be a globally attractive place for research and development (R&D) and ensure reciprocal surveillance data sharing with Europe to detect new and emerging diseases.

Safeguarding animal health

The next Government should:

7. Protect the UK from exotic disease through maintaining a robust and coordinated surveillance network and, specifically, through reforming the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) to reintroduce tick treatments for dogs and cats alongside tapeworm treatments for cats.
8. Support vets and farmers to combat endemic livestock diseases across all species and maintain a comprehensive approach to tackling bovine TB using all evidence-based measures and investing in further research.
9. Introduce measures to ensure the internet sale of medicines is safe, responsible and accredited, and continue to support the responsible use of antimicrobials to safeguard their future use in animals and humans.

Promoting animal welfare

The next Government should:

10. Improve the welfare of millions of animals by requiring all animals to be stunned before slaughter to ensure they are insensible to pain. In the short term the Government should reduce the welfare harm of non-stun slaughter by introducing immediate post-cut stunning, and clearer labelling of meat as stunned or non-stunned to allow consumers to make an informed choice.

11. Introduce mandatory CCTV use in all approved slaughterhouses and ensure Official Veterinarians (OVs) have unrestricted access to slaughterhouse CCTV footage.

12. Introduce mandatory method of production labelling with welfare outcome safeguards to enable consumers to purchase products that support a good life and humane death for farmed animals.

13. Overhaul legislation on the sale of pets to ensure it is fit for purpose for the internet age and update dog breeding and licensing laws to ensure best practice in the breeding and sale of companion animals.

14. Introduce domestic legislation on Equine Identification to update the current horse passport system, including a fully operational central equine database and retrospective microchipping of all horses.

15. Ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses, bring forward legislation to stop the keeping of primates as pets, review legislation and guidance on the sale and ownership of exotic species to ensure their health and welfare needs can be met, and support calls for an EU-wide ban on the importation of wild-caught reptiles and amphibians to be kept as pets.

16. Provide adequate resources to local authorities to enforce animal welfare, animal disease and food safety legislation effectively.

Recognising the vital role of veterinary surgeons

The next Government should:

17. Maintain and promote veterinary expertise within government departments and agencies, for example, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Food Standards Agency and Home Office, recognising the value of veterinary input to both policy development and implementation.
18. Review the implementation of tendering arrangements for OV (official veterinarian) services to ensure the system does not negatively impact upon the UK's veterinary practice infrastructure creating black holes of service provision.
19. Ensure that allied professionals working in the animal care sector are well regulated and are working alongside veterinary surgeons as part of the veterinary-led team to protect animal health and welfare.
20. Embrace partnership working between government and the veterinary profession, recognising the unique skills, knowledge and expertise of veterinary surgeons across animal health and welfare and public health.

Contact us

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