BioSecure
Enhanced and cost-effective biosecurity in livestock production

KREAVET

PRACTICE ABSTRACT # 48

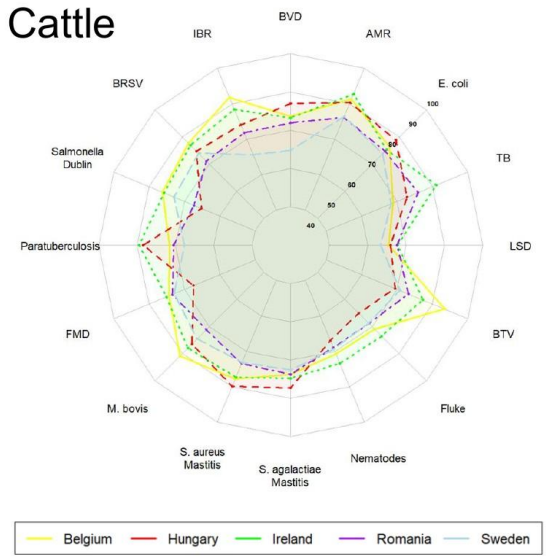
Veterinarians' Perception of Livestock Infectious Disease

Background: Livestock production represents close to half of global agricultural value, yet infectious disease continues to undermine the sector's sustainability. Endemic pathogens affect productivity and welfare, transboundary and epidemic can lead to substantial mortality, control measures and trade disruption. Zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance pose a threat to human health. Designing effective control and biosecurity strategies requires an understanding of how key stakeholders view disease risk. Veterinarians are among the most trusted advisors to farmers and are central to communicating prevention messages, yet their risk perceptions have received comparatively little attention at the European scale.

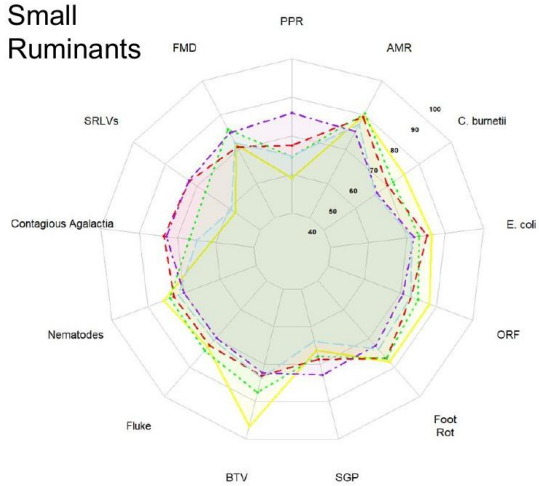
Methods: BIOSECURE administered an online cross-sectional survey to veterinarians working in the cattle, small ruminant, pig, and poultry sectors in Belgium, Ireland, Hungary, Romania, and Sweden between May and November 2024. Respondents rated 59 sector-specific diseases across three facets of risk perception: the perceived likelihood of an outbreak occurring, its perceived impact, and the perceived difficulty of control, each on a five-point scale. Awareness of each disease was also recorded.

Results: Perceived risk varied substantially across both countries and production sectors. The transboundary diseases African swine fever, foot and mouth disease, and avian influenza were broadly perceived as high risk, although bluetongue, lumpy skin disease, peste des petits ruminants, and sheep and goat pox showed pronounced regional variation. Bluetongue was the highest-risk disease for both cattle and small ruminants in Belgium, while peste des petits ruminants ranked highest in Romanian small ruminants. Endemic diseases, including mastitis, IBR, PRRS, and a range of bacterial infections, were frequently perceived as posing a greater risk than transboundary diseases. Antimicrobial resistance was rated as high risk in most countries, with Sweden and Romania as partial exceptions.

Cattle



Small Ruminants



Antonopoulos *et al.* (2026)
https://doi.org/10.1186/s12917-026-05410-1

Conclusions

Veterinarians' perception of risk differs markedly by country and sector, often tracking the relative importance of production systems and national disease history. Notably, endemic disease was frequently prioritised over transboundary disease, contrasting with EU-level stakeholder views.

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