BioSecure
Enhanced and cost-effective biosecurity in livestock production

KREAVET

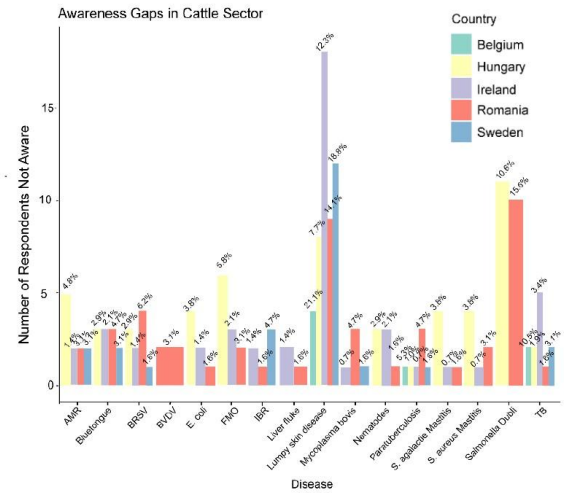
Veterinarians' Perception of Livestock Infectious Disease: Awareness Gaps

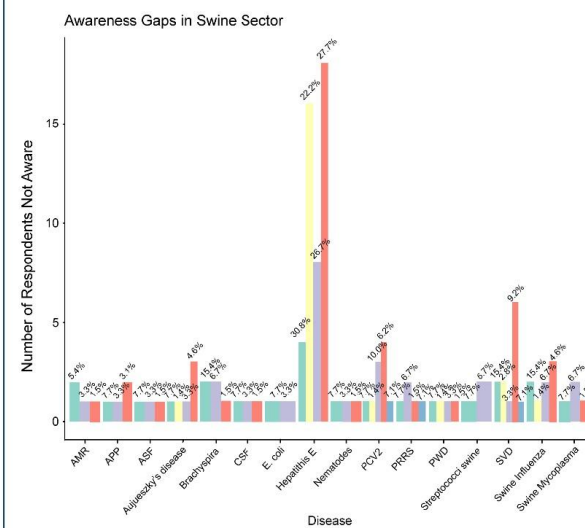
PRACTICE ABSTRACT # 49

Background: Infectious disease in livestock threatens animal welfare, farm productivity, and, in the case of zoonoses, human health. Effective control depends on understanding stakeholders awareness of disease. Veterinarians occupy a pivotal position in this system: they advise farmers, deliver diagnostic and preventive services, and act as a frontline for the detection of emerging and transboundary threats. Where veterinary awareness of a given pathogen is incomplete, early detection and appropriate control may be delayed, with consequences for both animal and public health. Awareness gaps among European veterinarians have not previously been characterised across multiple sectors and countries.

Methods: an online cross-sectional survey was distributed to veterinarians working in the cattle, small ruminant, pig, and poultry sectors in Belgium, Ireland, Hungary, Romania, and Sweden May-November 2024. Participants rated 59 sector-specific diseases on three facets of risk perception (perceived likelihood, impact, and ease of control), each on a five-point scale, and were additionally able to indicate that they were not aware of a given disease. Awareness gaps were quantified as the proportion of respondents per country and sector reporting no awareness of each disease.

Results: The majority of veterinarians surveyed reported awareness of most diseases, but several notable exceptions emerged. In cattle, lumpy skin disease showed an awareness gap in every country surveyed (7-18% of respondents), and 10-15% of respondents in Hungary, Ireland, and Romania were unaware of *Salmonella* Dublin. The largest gap was for Hepatitis E in the pig sector, where 20-30% of respondents in Belgium, Hungary, Romania, and Ireland reported no awareness. Sweden showed substantial gaps for small ruminant lentiviruses (29.7%), Coxiella burnetii (13.5%), and, in poultry, Mycoplasma gallisepticum and histomoniasis (25% each). Awareness gaps also correlated with the number of sectors in which a veterinarian worked.





Antonopoulos *et al.* (2026)
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Conclusions

Critical awareness gaps exist for both zoonotic and transboundary livestock diseases among European veterinarians, with implications for surveillance, early detection, and One Health. These awareness gaps may be influenced by disease eradication efforts, control programmes, and national epidemiology.

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