Action for Animal Health

A Call to Action for Animal Health

Today, more than <u>75%</u> of all new human infectious diseases emerge from animals.

We call on governments, donors and international agencies to invest in animal health systems to operationalise One Health and attain the Sustainable Development Goals.

We propose five pillars of action:

Support community engagement and equitable access to animal health services

Increase the numbers and improve the skills of the animal health workforce

Close the veterinary medicines and vaccines gap

Improve animal disease surveillance

Enhance collaboration for One Health

The devastating health, social and economic consequences of COVID-19 have focussed the world's attention on the growing threat from zoonoses (infectious diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans).

COVID-19 is the starkest example to date of why we must invest in animal health to prevent another pandemic. We are only strong as our weakest health system.

COVID-19 joins a long list of zoonotic diseases including rabies, Ebola, SARS, and avian influenza that have killed millions of people.

It is imperative to recognise the complex relationships we have with the companion, production, working and wild animals that we depend on for our food, livelihoods, companionship and well-being. Ensuring that animals are healthy and in good welfare is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Failure to acknowledge the critical role and value of animal health has led to under-resourced national veterinary services with inadequate staff, infrastructure and critical shortages in veterinary medicines and vaccines. Animal-owning communities across the world have insufficient access to veterinary medicines, knowledge and services which makes it less likely that zoonotic diseases will be caught at an early stage. Inadequate or non-existent disease surveillance at critical points like farms, border crossings and wet markets fails to protect animals and people from diseases. This leaves ample gaps for new diseases to emerge on a scale comparable to COVID-19.

By investing in animal health systems the overall burden of zoonotic diseases and pandemic threat will decline, avoiding millions of preventable deaths. The 1.3 billion people dependent on livestock will have a more secure future and food security will be assured for billions more.

Find out more and support the Call to Action: https://actionforanimalhealth.org/

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