Animal Health Ireland • Strategy 2026-2030

Healthier animals. Stronger sector.

Delivering positive health outcomes for livestock through independent science, facilitated by vets, to benefit farmers and the wider sector.













Contents

AHI Strategy 2026-2030 2
Chair Foreword 4
CEO Foreword 5
Animal Health Ireland - The journey so far 6
The case for action 8
A changing disease landscape 9
AHI Strategy 2026-2030 10
AHI has a key role to play 12
AHI approach 13
The Strategic Shift - From programmes to sectors 14
AHI strategic framework 15
Delivering the strategy 16
Our key enablers 17
Strategic objectives - Sectors 18
Strategic objectives - Foundations 20
Key initiatives of the strategy 21
Detailed Strategy Objectives 22
Detailed strategy objectives - Dairy health 24
Detailed strategy objectives - Beef health 26
Detailed strategy objectives - Sheep health 28
Detailed strategy objectives - Non-ruminant health 30
Biosecurity and disease prevention 32
One Health and sustainability 33
Farmer engagement 34
Partnership and convening 35
Evidence, data and value 36
Behind the Strategy 37
How others do it - An international benchmark 38
AHI and National Policy 40
Structured to deliver 41
Methodology 42

AHI Strategy 2026-2030

PURPOSE

Delivering positive health outcomes for livestock through independent science, facilitated by vets, to benefit farmers and the wider sector.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Improving health and welfare outcomes
- Turning independent science into action
- Reducing disease risk
- Earning trust, backed by data

SECTORS & FOUNDATIONS

SECTORS

Dairy | Beef | Sheep | Non-ruminant

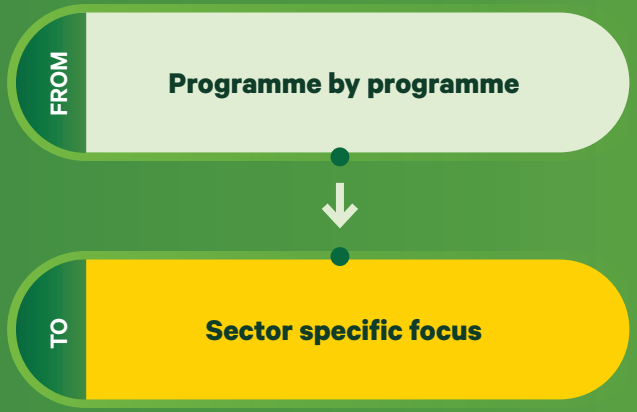
FOUNDATIONS

- Biosecurity and disease prevention
- Farmer engagement
- Partnership and convening
- Leveraging data for insight
- One Health and sustainability

WHY NOW

- Farms are fewer, but herds are bigger and disease moves faster through bigger herds
- Customers and retailers decide welfare standards now, not only farmers
- Markets are won and maintained on evidence, not promises
- Antimicrobial resistance is rising and usage is under closer scrutiny

STRATEGIC SHIFT



A PROVEN TRACK RECORD OF DELIVERY

>97%
fall in Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) since 2013

100,000
the reduction in the national average bulk tank somatic cell count since the start of CellCheck

64,000
the number of Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health (TASAH) visits completed since 2022

KEY MILESTONES

End 2026
Strategy published, Healthy Animal Portal launched, new structure embedded

2027
Scoping of AHI National Scorecard

2028
Midpoint review, ahead of AHI's 20th anniversary

Chair Foreword



"Healthy animals are the cornerstone of our €20 billion industry."

On behalf of the Board of Animal Health Ireland (AHI), I am delighted to bring forward our new strategy for 2026 – 2030.

Healthy animals are the cornerstone of our €20 billion industry. For nearly 20 years, AHI has underpinned that sector, and this ambitious strategy sets out how we will continue to do so.

Our contribution rests on three foundations that have not changed:

Firstly, delivering independent scientific excellence to those who need it by being the trusted and evidence-led health partner for the industry.

Secondly, we have forged genuine partnerships with the industry, pooling the expertise of farmers, veterinarians (vets), processors, universities, State bodies and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) to achieve what decades of individual effort could not.

Thirdly, a commitment to problem solving and future proofing, closing the gap between farm-level care and national disease strategy.

Each of our programmes makes a meaningful impact. Looking specifically at the BVD programme, it has delivered so much. It has taken us from one infected herd in nine to the cusp of eradication, saving an estimated €183 million* across the economy every year.

However, the ground is shifting beneath us. Disease does not respect borders, and the margin for error is narrowing. With some 90% of our beef, sheep meat and dairy exported, the health and welfare we can evidence is one of our clearest points of differentiation, and not one we can take for granted.

AHI will be a force for positive change during the period of this strategy, and our ambition is clear. It is a healthier national herd and flock, a more resilient sector, and a growing reputation as global leaders in animal health.

James Lynch
Chair, Animal Health Ireland

*An economic analysis of the BVD eradication scheme in Ireland, *ifac* (2025)

CEO Foreword



> *"At the centre of that sector are healthy animals, and the role of AHI has never been more crucial."*

Our industry is changing, and the world around it is changing faster still. Emerging diseases, harder-won export markets, tighter margins and a society further from farming than ever before. These are not distant threats, they are here now.

It is incumbent on all of us to act together, to secure the future of the sector we depend on. At the centre of that sector are healthy animals, and the role of AHI has never been more crucial. That is why every animal counts, more than ever.

That belief runs through every page of this ambitious strategy, and through the work of the committed AHI people who deliver it.

At its heart, this strategy was developed by everyone in AHI. From our team to our funders and Government, everyone in the AHI ecosystem had a key role in its creation. We have placed farmers at the centre, helping them keep healthy animals on family farms. That ambition is delivered and supported by vets, industry, and Government, working hand-in-hand through independent science in action.

It is a tangible partnership, and it reflects the best of what our sector can do when it pulls together.

This strategy was grounded in six years of our own reporting, international benchmarking against peers, in a survey of our full funder base, and eleven one-to-one conversations with stakeholders who wanted to help shape it.

Key commitments hold it together; building a sustainable future, achieving success through collaboration, and turning independent science into action. That last has always been our hallmark, and always will be.

Everything the sector values rests on the same foundation of healthy animals, kept healthy through independent science. That includes the economic return from a productive animal, the welfare standards we are proud of, and the market access our exports depend on.

I acknowledge the critical importance of the Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and Implementation Groups (IGs) model which have served the sector so well since the inception of AHI. The TWGs gather the best and brightest minds from across the sector to put in place the cutting-edge science and advice to advance our efforts. From here the IGs take this leading science and implement it at farm-level.

The importance of the TWGs and IGs will only grow as part of the AHI strategy. I thank everyone involved for the efforts.

AHI is more than an acronym. For nearly twenty years it's been proof of what Irish farming can deliver when it works together.

With your support, the best of that story is still ahead of us.

Patrick Donohoe
Chief Executive Officer

Animal Health Ireland - The journey so far

From a single programme to a national infrastructure for non-regulated animal health; built by industry, government, farmers and vets working together.

17
years of continuous partnership between industry and government

8
national programmes spanning dairy, beef, sheep and pigs

5-year
Memorandum of Understanding with DAFM, the first of its kind, secured in 2025

2009
AHI established as a not-for-profit public-private partnership to tackle non-regulated diseases

2010
CellCheck launched; technical working groups formed across priority diseases

2013
Compulsory national BVD eradication programme commences

2014
CellCheck regional workshops and Milk Quality Awards; SCC begins sustained decline

2015
Parasite Control Programme developed to reduce unnecessary anthelmintic use

2016
Beef HealthCheck launched, returning slaughter data to farmers

2017
Irish Johne's Control Programme formally launched as a national voluntary programme

2018
BVD herd-level prevalence falls below 1%; eradication endpoint in sight

2019
Ten-year anniversary; Pig HealthCheck launched with industry

2020
Expanded remit including antimicrobial stewardship supporting iNAP

2021
Animal Health Surveillance launched; parasite control outputs expanded

2022/23
AHI delivered the first of the highly impactful Parasite Control TASAHs

2025/26
First five-year MoU with Government; Healthy Animal Portal launch

A COLLECTIVE EFFORT

ANIMAL HEALTH IRELAND

Turning independent science into practical actions; through formulation, dissemination and implementation.

GOVERNMENT

Co-funder and policy partner, underpinning programmes with long-term commitment.

FARMERS

The engine of it all, testing, tagging and implementing actions on farm.

VETERINARIANS

Delivery of AHI science to the farm through advice and herd health planning.

INDUSTRY

Co-funds and co-leads the partnership, using its reach to keep farmers engaged.

AHI IN ACTION

BVD SUCCESS

>97%

fall in BVD positive herds since the programme began in 2013

€183m

saved across the economy every single year

~150

infected herds left in Ireland in 2026

Source: AHI, ifac

The case for action

WHY THIS STRATEGY, AND WHY NOW

- Our industry is changing, and the world around it faster still.
- Emerging diseases, harder-won and maintained markets and increased regulations make it incumbent on all of us to secure the sector's future.
- At its centre are healthy animals, and the role of AHI has never been more crucial.



A changing disease landscape

The disease landscape facing livestock is intensifying, and animal and human health are inseparable. Yet the systems meant to hold the line are under-resourced worldwide.

75%

of emerging infectious diseases in humans originate in animal pathogens, they grow harder and costlier to manage once human transmission begins.

0.6%

of total health spending goes to animal health systems worldwide, despite animal disease destroying over 20% of global production.

+30%

projected rise in livestock antimicrobial use by 2040 without stronger prevention, as vaccination for notifiable diseases stays below 20%.

What it means for Ireland

Recent history, from COVID-19 to avian influenza, shows how livestock-adjacent pathogens can cross into people. Leading disease-control programmes are how Ireland, as a small, export-dependent country, stays ahead of that curve. This has been, and will remain, AHI's core purpose.

A RISING BAR FOR IRISH PRODUCE

Our licence to market livestock products globally depends on evidence we can stand over. Ireland exports the majority of its beef, dairy, sheep meat and pigmeat. Markets and society now judge that produce on credentials we must be able to evidence.

MARKETS

HARDER WON, HIGHER RISK

90% of our beef, sheep meat and dairy is exported.

Continued access to premium markets increasingly turns on verifiable health, welfare and traceability. We must continue to compete on health evidence as one of our clearest points of differentiation against our competitors.

SOCIETY

FURTHER FROM THE FARM GATE

Welfare expectations are now set by customers and citizens, not by the sector. There is a growth in consumers feeling uninformed about farming and a reliance on labelling, assurance schemes and trusted third parties to judge standards.

Positive attitudes do not reliably convert into purchasing, and a single media story can trigger public response and investigation. Independently evidenced standards are what hold trust.

Sources: WOAH, 2026; FAO, 2026; Bord Bia, 2026; Teagasc/Queen's University Belfast/UCD, 2022.





AHI Strategy 2026-2030

AHI has a key role to play

The gap between farm-level care and national disease strategy is not filled by markets or regulation alone. AHI has the convening capability, scientific expertise and industry proximity to play a key role in delivering on this.



THE STRUCTURAL GAP

Non-regulatory diseases carry major costs to profitability, welfare and export value, yet fall outside statutory control. Private markets and government alone do not address them.



THE PROVEN MODEL

An industry-led, not-for-profit partnership of farmers, processors, vets and DAFM, pooling expertise across technical groups, universities and State bodies to achieve what individual effort could not.



THE VALUE CASE

Prevention is estimated to be around a hundred times cheaper than responding to an outbreak once it emerges. Acting early is not just safer, it is far better value for the sector and the State *(World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).*

The proof

BVD, from one infected herd in nine to the cusp of eradication, saving an estimated €183 million across the economy every year. Whatever shape the sector takes, AHI will always stand for independent science turned into action that protects animals, livelihoods and the reputation of Irish farming.

Sources: Animal Health Ireland, 2011–2026; WOAH, 2026; Teagasc; ifac

AHI approach

WHO WE ARE

Not-for-profit, independent, technically credible. The honest-broker convener that powers partnership between farmers, vets, industry and the State, and turns science into action.

WHO WE ARE NOT

Not a regulator and not an enforcement agency. Our influence comes from being trusted, independent and credible, not from powers we do not have.

SHIFTING THE APPROACH



The Strategic Shift - From programmes to sectors

What brought us here has worked. The next step is to organise around how farmers, vets and funders actually think; by sector, not by disease.

FROM

Programme by programme

- Organised around individual diseases
- A programme for each disease
- A segmented approach by programmes for cross-cutting issues
- Structure the sector has to translate for itself

TO

An outcomes partner per sector

- Organised around dairy, beef, sheep, non-ruminant
- Tailored roadmap per sector
- A clear owner for every outcome that matters
- Matches how farmers, vets and funders already think

Why it matters

With output expected to plateau, growth must come from healthier, more productive animals, not more of them. AHI is the critical independent facilitator of science delivering key advice to support healthy animals and, ultimately, output.

AHI strategic framework

Our strategy on a page, a single purpose, the principles that guide us, the sectors we serve, on foundations that don't change.

Purpose	Delivering positive health outcomes for livestock through independent science, facilitated by vets, to benefit farmers and the wider sector.				
Guiding principles	Improving health and welfare outcomes	Turning independent science into action	Reducing disease risk	Earning trust, backed by data	
Sectors	Dairy health	Beef health	Sheep health	Non-ruminant health	
Foundations	Biosecurity and disease prevention	One Health and sustainability	Farmer engagement	Partnership and convening	Leveraging data for insight

Delivering the strategy

OUR PEOPLE

Existing programme leads move into the new sector structure, each retaining ownership of the initiatives they know best while taking on the wider sector remit.

A new AI and data lead, alongside health psychology and communications, will sit across all four sectors from the outset rather than inside any one of them.

OUR FUNDING

Building on the new five-year Memorandum of Understanding, we will work with Government and industry to put animal health funding on a more sustainable footing.

OUR GOVERNANCE

The Board and team of AHI will hold ourselves to the highest standards. Carrying out functions and responsibilities with distinction among our funders.

KEY MILESTONES

End 2026
The new strategy is published, Healthy Animal Portal launched, new structure embedded. The new AHI Member Charter will be agreed upon. Work to commence on scorecard.

2027
Continue focus on sectoral outputs to benefit farmers and industry. First iteration of the national scorecard is published.

2028
Ahead of the 20th anniversary of AHI, and with the strategy well-embedded, a midpoint review will be conducted.

OUR KEY ENABLERS

- Independent science in action, delivered by the people and partners who make it work.
- Each enabler feeds the others, and all of them run through everything we do.
- This is what turns a strategy into results on the farm.



Strategic objectives - Sectors

DAIRY HEALTH

A complete herd health offering for every dairy farmer and co-op.

- Refresh CellCheck beyond somatic cell count.
- Rebuild Johne's with a more farmer focused design, a national picture.
- Push towards BVD freedom, building on the progress to date.
- Establish lameness, longevity and dairy welfare as key areas.
- Expanded CalfCare laying the foundations for lifelong animal health.
- Develop and launch a voluntary Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) control programme.



BEEF HEALTH

A full beef health offering built around reputation and market maintenance and access.

- Develop Beef HealthCheck for the next decade focusing on key farmer outputs.
- Refocus CalfCare to ensure animals are breeding or finishing efficiently.
- Tackle lameness as one cross-sector response, not two.
- Publish an international benchmark of Irish beef health performance.
- Support the market maintenance and growth activities of the sector.
- Develop and launch a voluntary Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) control programme.



SHEEP HEALTH

A newly launched sheep health programme focusing on parasites and lameness.

- New sheep programme with a focus on anthelmintic resistance and lameness.
- Support cross-border sheep health initiatives.
- Support industry on the need for a unified health approach for lowland and upland flocks.
- Support the market maintenance and growth activities of the sector.



NON-RUMINANT HEALTH

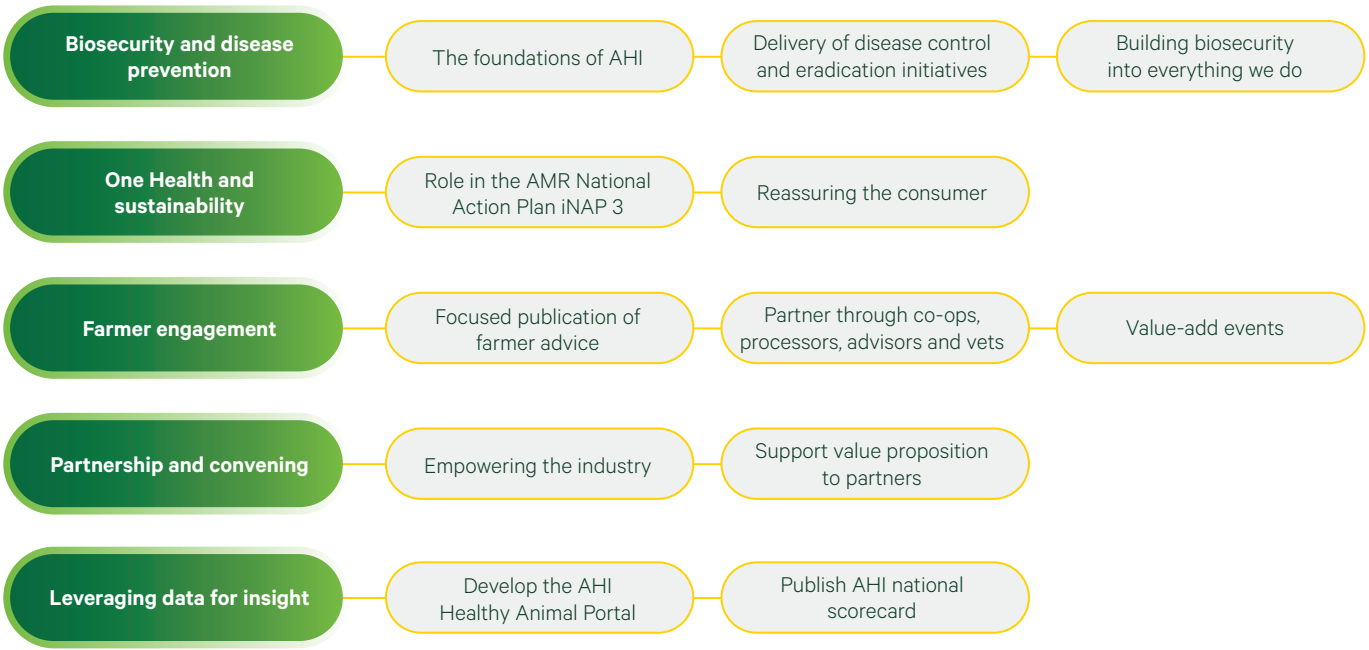
Continue to develop pig health programme, with risk addressed at source. Examine poultry programme.

- Examine expansion of Pig HealthCheck with an agreed scope and funding model.
- Continue to display strong leadership in the sector supporting positive health outcomes from pig herds.
- Support the market maintenance and access efforts of processors.
- State the scope of our wider non-ruminant role by end 2027.



Strategic objectives - Foundations

The capabilities every sector draws on



Key initiatives of the strategy



DAIRY HEALTH

Cow health and longevity

A complete herd health roadmap for dairy farmers, their co-ops and the entire industry. This will be focused on supporting all elements of healthy dairy farming.



BEEF HEALTH

Beef HealthCheck for the future

Built around producing healthy calves and cattle, regardless of their breed, to support farming incomes and, in turn, reputation and market access.



SHEEP HEALTH

Launch a national sheep programme

A new programme with a clear ambition on improving the health and welfare of lowland and upland flocks.



NON-RUMINANT HEALTH

Continue to develop Pig HealthCheck

Agreed scope and funding. Pig health built around addressing risk at source. Examine poultry sector.

CROSS-SECTOR INITIATIVES

HEALTHY ANIMAL PORTAL

A one-stop-shop for the sector's animal health picture.

NATIONAL SCORECARD

A published annual scorecard giving farmers and the sector visibility on the health of our livestock.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Horizon scanning and alerts on emerging threats or increased instances of diseases. Provides farmers, vets and industry with actions they can take now to reduce their risk via the Healthy Animal Portal.





Detailed Strategy Objectives

Detailed strategy objectives - Dairy health



WHO IT IS FOR

Irish dairy farmers, vets and industry. Direct and in partnership with all of our dairy co-ops.



WHAT WE WILL DO

- Work to protect the integrity of the dairy herd, boosting our health credentials and improving cow longevity.
- Continue to push towards BVD Freedom.
- Refresh CellCheck beyond somatic cell count (SCC) into broader herd health indicators, targeting the middle cohort where the gains remain and defending the progress already made.
- Work with the veterinary industry to support the widespread uptake of Dry Cow Consults and CellCount Solutions.
- Deliver a nationally co-ordinated Johne's Control Programme.
- Establish lameness programme in tandem with beef health sector team.
- Expand the reach, scope and delivery of the CalfCare Programme with clear benchmark data for farmers on calf mortality.
- Develop and launch a voluntary IBR control programme to provide dairy herds with a structured, practical framework to control IBR.



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Advance the national udder health picture, so that there is a larger proportion of Irish dairy farms consistently producing saleable milk below 200,000 cells/ml.
- Improved knowledge at farm level, supported by vets regarding the prudent use of antimicrobials.
- Further progress being made on the path along BVD freedom.
- A defensible national Johne's position, with a published national picture and rising participation.
- Lameness prevalence measured nationally for the first time. Develop a national lameness programme.
- A published longevity dataset that co-ops can use in their own sustainability reporting.
- An updated CalfCare Programme building on the gains and successes already made.

Detailed strategy objectives - Beef health

WHO IT IS FOR

Integrating the needs of suckler, dairy-beef and dairy farmers to support them on the journey of producing a healthy calf for the next generation of the herd or for processing as a beef animal. Supporting the efforts of the beef processing industry to ensure that animals have the highest health and welfare standards to maximise market access and return.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Further develop Beef HealthCheck report to support farmers, with the data quality problem fixed at source alongside DAFM and the veterinary profession.
- Continue the push towards BVD Freedom.
- Establish calf health, welfare and transport as a named programme area.
- Develop high-value seasonal and targeted campaigns to support farmers, vets and advisors in producing healthy cattle.
- Address lameness as one cross-sector priority, joining the dairy and beef response rather than running two.
- Publish an international benchmark of Irish performance on antibiotic use, vaccination, mortality and calf rearing.
- Support the industry on its market access and market maintenance efforts helping to ensure Irish beef retains its position on the global stage.
- Provide the Beef industry with a new Johne's Programme and deliver an assurance scoring system which promotes the sale of low-risk breeding bulls.
- Support the growth activities of the sector.



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- A Beef HealthCheck report with measurably improved data quality and farmer usage.
- Highest standards in prudent antibiotic usage in the national beef herd.
- A published welfare measure for calf health and improvement against it.
- Ireland's international animal health position published annually and used by industry in market access conversations.
- Increased knowledge around calf mortality benchmarking among farmers, vets and advisors.

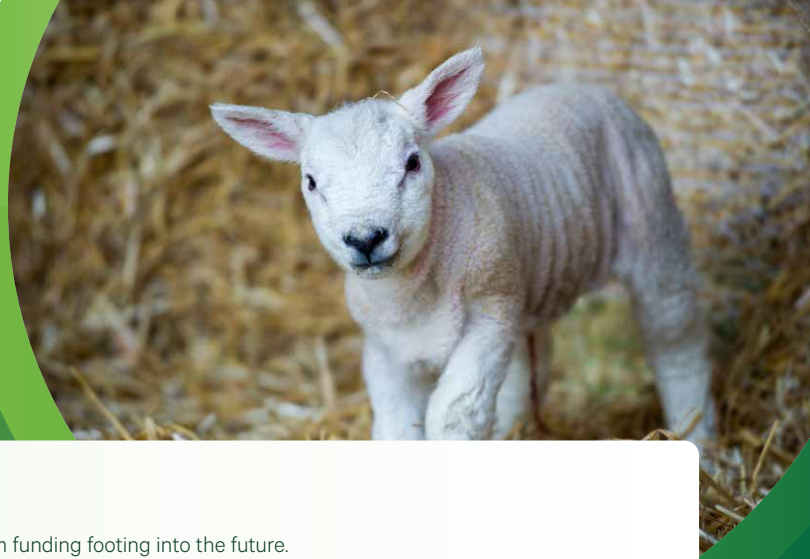
Detailed strategy objectives - Sheep health

WHO IT IS FOR

Upland and lowland sheep farmers to help deliver structured health improvements in the sheep sector.
Support the market access and retention work of processors, ensuring sheep are healthy.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Deliver the funded sheep health programme through the veterinary profession, advisors and processors, focused on anthelmintic resistance and lameness.
- Establish baseline measures for key sheep health metrics.
- Alongside the success of TASAHs, the new Sheep Programme will aim to deliver health improvements to sheep in lowland and upland systems.
- Collaborate with colleagues in Northern Ireland working to deliver a cross-border approach to sheep health and welfare.
- Support the market maintenance and growth activities of the sector.



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- New Sheep Health Programme to be established on firm funding footing into the future.
- Baseline measures on anthelmintic resistance and lameness established.
- Provide evidence based health guidance in key disease areas prioritised by stakeholders.
- Sheep farmers, their vets and advisors taking a proactive and holistic approach to sheep health.

Detailed strategy objectives - Non-ruminant health



WHO IT IS FOR

Irish pig farmers, vets and industry.



WHAT WE WILL DO

- Continue to develop the Pig HealthCheck programme with the sector based on new challenges.
- Continue to develop Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) control from a pilot project into a national programme.
- Address salmonella control, working with DAFM, farmers, veterinarians, Teagasc and processors to understand and remove the barriers to improved control.
- Carry on promoting improved animal health (e.g. best use of the post-mortem data for decision making) as a way to reduce antimicrobial usage.
- State the scope of our wider non-ruminant role by end 2027, examining specifically the poultry sector.
- Support the market maintenance and growth activities of the sector.



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Pig HealthCheck adapted to sector needs, including more focus on animal welfare.
- PRRS control as a national voluntary programme.
- A measurable increase in salmonella control participation from its current base.
- Reduction of the proportion of pneumonia and pleurisy (as recorded by the post-mortem system) over time.
- Reduction of antimicrobial usage at national level over time.
- Plan for the poultry sector developed.

Detailed strategy objectives

BIOSECURITY AND DISEASE PREVENTION

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Build on new focus of TWG around advice and focus on importance of biosecurity.
- Continue to be a key delivery mechanism of the National Farmed Animal Biosecurity Strategy.
- Develop the advisory function of the biosecurity TWG into the go-to national authority on the subject area.
- Examine, alongside DAFM, the potential to define the industry-side role in preparedness and response, complementing rather than duplicating the State's statutory function.
- Deliver biosecurity training exercises with processors, co-ops and the veterinary profession.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- A published national industry biosecurity standard, in use across the sectors.
- A defined and agreed industry-side role in national preparedness.
- Partnership with marts aimed at making meaningful changes to how biosecurity is approached by farmers and livestock marts.

ONE HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Continue to take a leading industry role in delivering the animal health elements of the National Action Plan (iNAP3) on antimicrobial resistance.
- Make responsible antimicrobial use a measurable outcome of every sector offering, on the principle that healthy animals need fewer antibiotics.
- Establish the link between animal health, longevity and carbon as a published evidence base the industry can use.
- Work with human health, food safety and environmental agencies where animal health is part of the answer.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Antimicrobial use falling and benchmarked internationally across all sectors.
- A published animal health and carbon evidence base used in national sustainability reporting.
- Formal working relationships established with the relevant One Health agencies.

Detailed strategy objectives

FARMER ENGAGEMENT

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Publish a clear statement of what Animal Health Ireland offers the individual farmer and hold ourselves to it.
- Forge our farmer-facing content around short, practical, self-serve formats, with video as the default format.
- Work with co-ops, processors, advisors, vets and farming organisations rather than competing with them for farmers' attention.
- Rationalise the events programme. Hold added-value events to a standard of practical usefulness rather than technical completeness.
- Close the gap between our sectoral teams and the farmers affected by their programmes.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Farmer awareness of Animal Health Ireland measured for the first time, and rising year on year.
- Increased farmer understanding of AHI and the role we play.
- A measurable increase in content reach through partner channels.

PARTNERSHIP AND CONVENING

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Protect and strengthen the independent excellence position, technically grounded and trusted by all sides.
- Protect reformed TWG structure while reforming the IGs with clear decision-making authority, disciplined agendas and a defined lifespan for every group.
- Ensure the farmer and veterinary voice in our governance, so the people closest to delivery have a say in design.
- Deepen the Ireland Inc partnership with Teagasc, Bord Bia, ICBF and the Government, and use it internationally.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- A reformed governance and working group structure in place.
- Stakeholder confidence in our independence and technical authority measured and maintained.
- The Irish model presented and recognised internationally.

Evidence, data and value



WHAT WE WILL DO

- Ensure the continued roll-out and updating of the AHI Healthy Animal Portal to encompass new and emerging diseases and trends.
- Adopt a single national AHI Animal Health Scorecard.
- Independently validate and publish the economic value of AHI Programmes.
- Ensure that AHI's stakeholders have access to the latest data, insights and technology developed by AHI.
- Support the building of data products including the economic case for lameness, a national Johne's picture and international benchmarking.
- Benchmark AHI performance in key areas of animal health.



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- A national animal health scorecard published annually.
- Delivery reliability published every year, and improving.
- An independently validated economic value for programmes, published and used by our funders.
- A measurable improvement in stakeholder confidence that AHI demonstrates a return on their investment.



Behind the Strategy

How others do it - An international benchmark

In shaping this strategy, AHI examined how comparable national bodies are built and funded. The pattern is consistent, independent, not-for-profit partnerships, jointly funded by industry and government, organised to deliver disease control and market assurance at national scale.

ANIMAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA

Australia

Model

Independent not-for-profit, established 1996, bringing government and industry together across a whole-of-sector animal health and biosecurity system.

Funding

Funded by member subscriptions calculated on each industry's gross value of production, on a rolling three-year average.

ANIMAL HEALTH CANADA

Canada

Model

National not-for-profit uniting federal, provincial and territorial governments with industry on a cohesive farmed-animal health and welfare system.

Funding

Jointly funded by member governments and industry, with recent federal investment of CAD 13.3m (2024–29) for surveillance, emergency management and welfare.

Sources: Animal Health Australia; Animal Health Canada; OSPRI New Zealand, 2026; Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland.

OSPRI

New Zealand

Model

Not-for-profit running the TBfree eradication and NAIT traceability programmes, industry-led and government-supported.

Funding

Government funds around 40% of TBfree and 30% of NAIT; the balance comes from dairy, beef and deer industry levies.

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland

Model

Industry-led not-for-profit, launched in 2012, a partnership between livestock producers, processors, animal health advisers and government, addressing endemic cattle and sheep diseases across Northern Ireland.

Funding

Directly funded by the agri-food industry, with the BVD eradication programme costing around £1.2 million a year, supported in part by a per-head cattle levy and delivered in partnership with DAERA.

What this tells us

Ireland's closest peers all deliver through independent partnerships that industry and government fund together. AHI's model is well aligned with international best practice; this strategy sharpens it around sectors and outcomes.

AHI and National Policy

AHI does not operate in isolation. Its programmes operate alongside and contribute to Ireland's national policy framework.



FOOD VISION 2030

Better animal health and welfare underpins three of the Food Vision 2030's four missions:

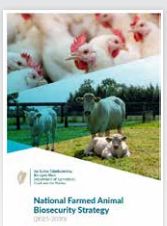
- **A climate-smart sector** - Healthier animals are more productive and lower carbon.
- **Viable, resilient producers** - Disease control protects farm profitability.
- **Food that is trusted and valued** - Verifiable health and welfare credentials open and hold markets.



CLIMATE ACTION

Better animal health is a recognised route to lower emissions intensity:

- Agriculture must cut emissions 25% by 2030 (Climate Act, sectoral ceilings).
- The Teagasc MAC curve lists animal health among its efficiency measures.
- Healthier, longer-lived, earlier-finishing animals mean less carbon per litre and per kilo.



NATIONAL FARMED ANIMAL BIOSECURITY STRATEGY (2025-2030)

AHI is a key delivery partner for national biosecurity:

- Launched December 2025, built around the ABC of Biosecurity: awareness, behavioural change and consistency.
- AHI's Biosecurity TWG develops the Codes of Practice and risk-assessment tools that underpin it.
- Better on-farm biosecurity feeds directly into every area of AHI



ONE HEALTH AND AMR - A LEADERSHIP ROLE

Since 2018 AHI has held a seat on the Animal Health Implementation Committee, chaired by the Chief Veterinary Officer, overseeing delivery of iNAP, Ireland's One Health National Action Plan on antimicrobial resistance, now in its third cycle (iNAP3, 2026-2030). Healthy animals need fewer antibiotics, which places AHI at the centre of national AMR effort.



EU LIVESTOCK STRATEGY

Adopted July 2026, the EU's first livestock strategy puts animal health and disease preparedness at its core; the ground AHI already delivers on.

WORKING ALONGSIDE

An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Teagasc
Agriculture and Food Development Authority

icbf

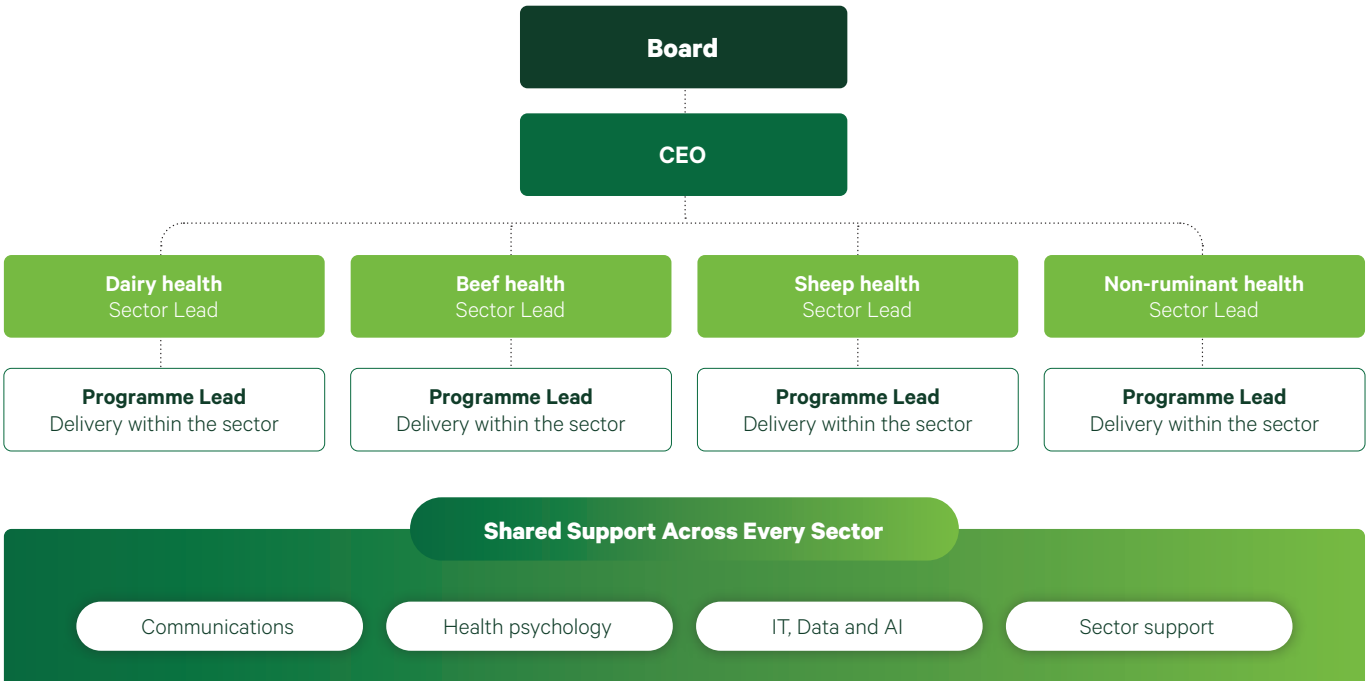
An Roinn Aeráide, Fuinnimh agus Comhshaoil
Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment

epa
Environmental Protection Agency

An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

Structured to deliver

The strategic shift to a sector focus is reflected in how AHI is organised. Sector leads own the outcomes; programme managers run delivery; and every sector is supported by the same shared expertise.



Communications and health psychology strengthen how programmes land with farmers; IT and sector support keep delivery running.

Methodology

The development of the 2026-2030 strategy followed a structured process and was facilitated by *ifac*. It was important to AHI that the strategy was grounded in reality, considering AHI's current position, operating context, future outlook and stakeholder views. The process followed three stages outlined below.

01

DESK RESEARCH

AHI's own annual reports and financial statements 2020 to 2025, the 2022-2026 strategic plan, and international benchmarking of comparable bodies in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Northern Ireland.

02

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Survey was sent out to the full funder base. An additional eleven one-to-one sessions were completed with key stakeholder who expressed an interest in participating in the strategy development process.

03

INTERNAL TEAM WORKSHOPS

Working sessions with the AHI strategy development team, in May and June 2026. The shift from a programme lens to a sector lens was made and stress-tested here, with the people who will have to deliver it.

Stakeholders Who Participated in One-To-One Interviews Were:

Tirlán · dairygold (Golden Valleys, Growing Naturally) · icbf · abp · An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara / Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine · Veterinary Ireland · Irish Farmers' Association / IFA · KEPAK · Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association / ICMSA · eagasc (Agriculture and Food Development Authority) · Lakeland Dairies

AHI gratefully acknowledges the support and contributions of our stakeholders







Animal Health Ireland | 2-5 The Archways, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim N41 WN27
Phone 071 9671928 | **Email** ahi@animalhealthireland.ie