


# ONE HEALTH:

Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations  
Strategic Action Plan





**The One Health vision is a unifying force to safeguard human and animal health, to reduce disease threats and to ensure a safe food supply through effective and responsible management of natural resources**

*“Part of FAO’s global mandate is to prevent, detect, contain and eliminate animal and human health risks that originate from existing, emerging or re-emerging diseases that threaten lives, livelihoods, food security and trade.”*

*Dr Juan Lubroth,  
Chief Veterinary Officer, FAO*

One Health represents a holistic vision to address complex challenges that threaten human and animal health, food security, poverty and the environments where diseases flourish. These problems threaten global health and economic well-being, including international trade. Many of the dangers stem from diseases circulating in animals, transmitted by food or carried by vectors.

FAO is a hub of technical knowledge that embraces One Health across its various areas of expertise:

- Managing animal health, natural resources, fisheries and forestry;
- Promoting access to safe, nourishing food;
- Adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects;
- Formulating policies for sustainable agricultural production; and
- Advocating for gender equality.

FAO’s priorities in One Health

- Leverage the lessons learned in combating H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza to tackle a host of animal diseases that threaten human health and livelihoods at the disease source;
- Strengthen surveillance systems at the regional, national and local levels to prevent and detect disease emergence and contain disease spread;
- Understand disease risk factors, including the socio-economic context, to prevent and manage disease outbreaks;
- Develop capacities at regional, national and local levels; and
- Reinforce safe animal production practices and veterinary infrastructure in the long term to defend against high-impact diseases.

## **The Challenge: Protecting health and food security**

Over 60 percent of existing and emerging pathogens affecting humans originate in animals. Of those, 75 percent come from wildlife.

These diseases create public health scares, can wipe out food sources and cause economic upheaval globally and locally, especially for farmers dependent on livestock for their food and income.

Disease risks are multiplying exponentially due to global trends: booming trade, increased demand for meat and animal products – such as milk and eggs – from emerging economies, the urgent need to produce more food for a growing population, and intensification of farming to ramp up that production. Yet unregulated expansion of livestock farming encroaches on pristine habitats, pushing domestic animals, humans and wildlife into closer and more frequent contact. Crowded, unhealthy conditions create the same tinderbox for disease in animals as they do in humans: HIV, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza and pandemic H1N1 influenza that emerged in 2009 are recent examples.

The 2011 global declaration of freedom from rinderpest was a milestone, but the recent spread of animal diseases, such as African swine fever, foot-and-mouth disease, *peste des petits ruminants* and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome underlines that the “business as usual” approach won’t win the battle. Zoonotic diseases, those which can pass between animals and humans, such as anthrax, brucellosis, rabies and Rift Valley fever, not only threaten global food security but also continue to kill hundreds of thousands of people every year. Other illnesses leave victims permanently disabled and families destroyed.



# Strategic Action Plan

Objective: to achieve food security and health security by strengthening veterinary and animal production systems so they can better monitor disease threats and care for the health of livestock and the environments they are raised in.

During the fight against H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza, FAO learned that to better deal with the increasing number of new and re-emerging diseases, health management had to be broadened across sectors and health systems needed to be created that would be able to defend against modern disease challenges.

## Action areas

- To understand the drivers of diseases emerging from pathogens already circulating in animals and how they are transmitted and spread, sometimes making the jump to humans;
- To intensify the ongoing collaborations among experts working in the livestock, wildlife, human and environmental health sectors;
- To promote socially acceptable and economically viable strategies that address the socio-economic impact of animal disease and control measures, especially on local incomes;
- To underline the importance of good governance and increased investments to strengthen local capacities in agricultural policymaking;
- To refresh veterinary expertise in the field through continuing education opportunities, agricultural extension services and training in accepted best practices and techniques;
- To ensure women's energies, contributions and resources are maximized via policies that take gender into account;
- To intensify messaging across institutions dealing with public health and to build capacities in advocacy and risk communications;
- To establish and expand public-private partnerships to support prevention and rapid response systems to tackle diseases at source;
- To review progress and make improvements where weaknesses exist to constantly move closer to our goal.

FAO focuses on countries most in need by catering strategies to the local context and by engaging local people — from high-level government authorities in the capitals to elders in remote rural villages. FAO works to strengthen existing systems to hone them, rather than creating new structures. FAO's strength lies in its ability to reach out and work in partnership to advance global health and eliminate poverty.

# FAO in Action

## Advocacy

- Ensure political commitment and increased financial resources to combat high-impact animal diseases that threaten food security and human health, especially in the world's most vulnerable countries;
- Promote long-term strategies and investments that strengthen animal health and public health infrastructures;
- Foster safe production and marketing practices through public-private partnerships along the food chain.

## Capacity development

- Enhance the quality of locally-available technical and management skills;
- Improve the capacity of public and private veterinary and animal production services;
- Ensure that countries and regions have the capacity to develop and implement policies and strategies in animal health;
- Develop cross-sector relationships to balance food security and natural resource management;
- Strengthen the worldwide network of laboratories to provide and exchange technical information on pathogens;
- Promote participatory approaches at the community level such as farmer/livestock field schools and One Health clubs to support best practices in production, marketing and public health;
- Improve access to technical information via educational extension programmes for farmers and continuing education opportunities.

## For immediate action

- Incorporate food safety, waste management and the environment solidly into considerations of veterinary public health;
- Address wildlife health from a natural resource management perspective;
- Apply knowledge of socio-economic impacts of disease into livelihood protection strategies that take into account the costs and benefits to farmers, traders and consumers;
- Lower disease threats by mapping farming systems and food production chains as drivers of disease emergence, maintenance and spread;
- Scale up communications to reach target audiences at the grassroots level and upward;
- Conduct epidemiological studies and risk analyses to understand the increased risk of disease emergence, maintenance and spread between domestic and wild animals and humans;
- Improve communication among agencies and sectors to build trust among neighbours, transfer knowledge and gain insight through participatory approaches.



## **Global leadership, regional cooperation, local action**

FAO is taking a lead role in One Health through the Organization's international status and neutrality, its expertise in hundreds of disciplines, its vast network and its ability to develop and implement high-level policies as well as village-level strategies where community outreach and involvement are most needed.

## **One Health partnerships**

FAO's global partners in One Health are the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At the regional and national level, FAO is expanding its partnerships with a host of additional agencies, funding partners, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and national and local authorities.

## **A call to action**

FAO urges the international community to support the Strategic Action Plan for One Health.

**United in partnership,  
achieving One Health is possible.**



## For further information:

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Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 Rome, Italy  
[www.fao.org/ag/againfo/home/en/index.htm](http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/home/en/index.htm)

## Resources:

### Strategic Action Plan

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/021/ma145e.pdf>

### FAO-OIE-WHO Tripartite Concept Note:

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/ak736e/ak736e00.pdf>

### Fourth Global Report on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza:

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2252e/i2252e00.pdf>

### Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Diseases and Pests – Animal Health Component

<http://www.fao.org/ag/empres.html>

### EMPRES Wildlife Health and Ecology Unit:

<http://www.fao.org/avianflu/en/wildlife/index.html>

### Crisis Management Centre – Animal Health

[www.fao.org/emergencies/programmes/CMC-AH](http://www.fao.org/emergencies/programmes/CMC-AH)

### Veterinary Public Health:

<http://www.fao.org/ag/vph.html>

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