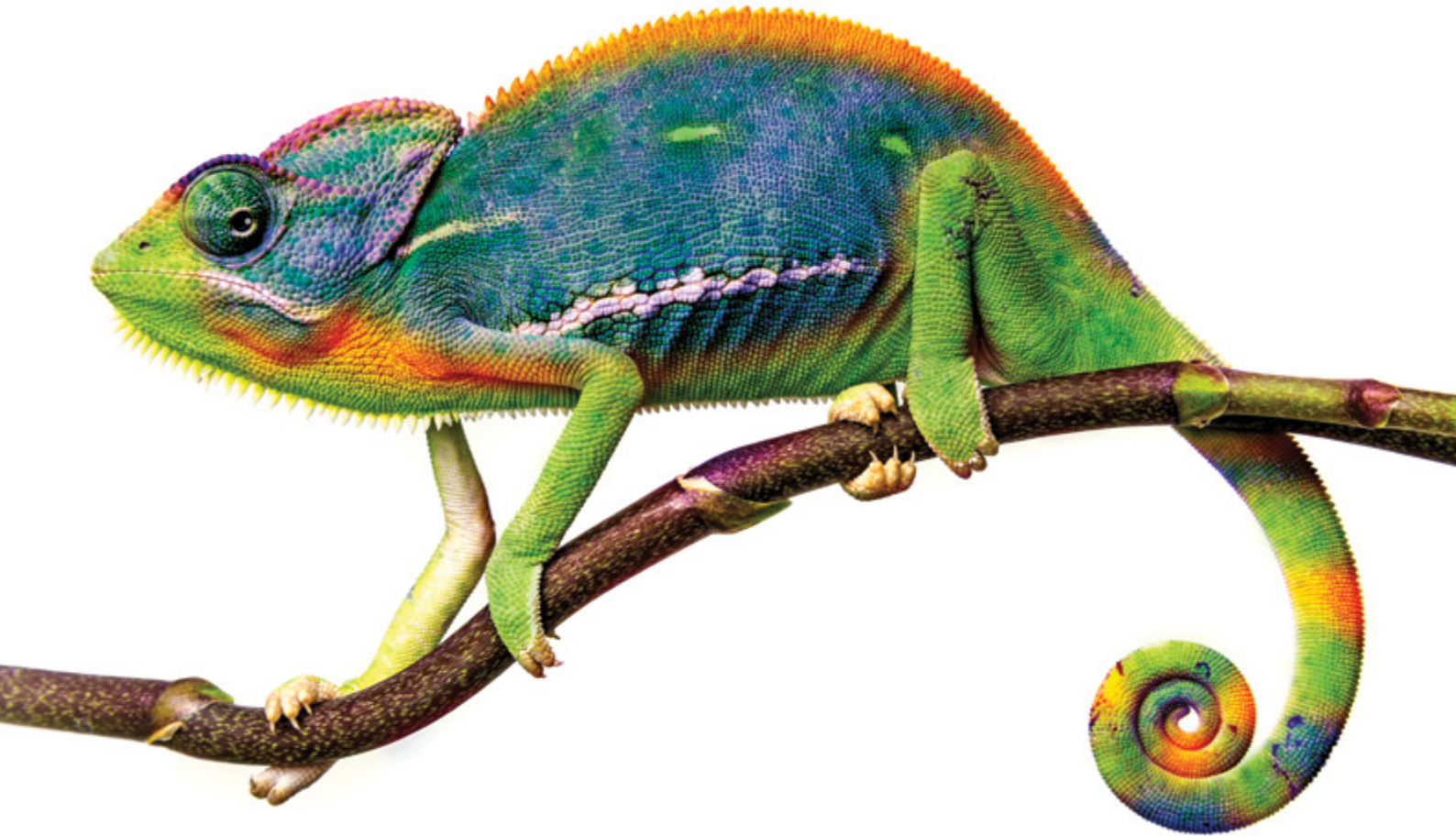


SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE
VETERINARY PROFESSION



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The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of veterinary organisations from 38 European countries. We also represent four vibrant sections, each of which representing key groups within our profession: Practitioners (UEVP), Hygienists (UEVH), Veterinary State Officers (EASVO) and veterinarians in Education, Research and Industry (EVERI).

FVE expresses its gratitude to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for having designed this brochure.

All graphs and statistics: *FVE Survey of the Veterinary Profession in Europe April 2015*

www.fve.org

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Shaping our future

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) represents about 220 000 European veterinarians. FVE's 2015 survey of the veterinary profession in Europe of the veterinary profession in Europe revealed a number of interesting findings, such as the need for professional diversification, for improved support of new and recent graduates and for better use and uptake of IT-based tools. It furthermore identified the need to improve the wellbeing of vets, to enhance female leadership and to gain a better grasp of business matters.

These findings called for introspection and reflection, to find how we can improve and shape our profession's future. This led to VetFutures Europe, launched by FVE in the spring of 2016. Its goal: to identify challenges facing our profession now and in the coming decades, and to develop an action plan to address these challenges.

An FVE working group on VetFutures Europe was set up in April 2016 to identify priority themes and actions, which were presented to all members of FVE during various general assemblies. Dedicated workshops allowed delegates to share ideas and experiences, discuss proposed actions and suggest a way forward.

The UK Vet Futures Report (2015), produced jointly by the British Veterinary Association and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, served as an inspiration for the project at European level. Input was also taken on board from other member countries that currently have or are preparing similar projects at national level.

The Professional Pathways document, produced by a taskforce of the European Veterinarians in Education, Research and Industry (EVERI), a section of FVE, provided valuable input regarding non-clinical career pathways.

Altogether, these initiatives and ideas resulted in this VetFutures Europe report covering the following key focus areas:

- Leaders of tomorrow
- Rewarding career pathways
- Broadening the veterinary role
- Sustainable businesses
- Wellbeing of the profession
- Embracing innovation

The challenges and suggested way forward for these key areas are presented in more detail in the next pages.

Our thanks go to the UK Vet Futures team, EVERI taskforce, FVE delegates and members of the VetFutures Europe working group for their valuable time, input and feedback.

We hope the recommendations and suggested actions can serve as a framework of actions at FVE level, and as a blueprint for member associations at national level. Countries are also invited to take leadership on certain topics. Together, we will shape the future of our profession. Because vets are vital!

Rafael Laguens
FVE president

“The best way to predict your future is to create it.”

Abraham Lincoln

Leaders of tomorrow



Ambition

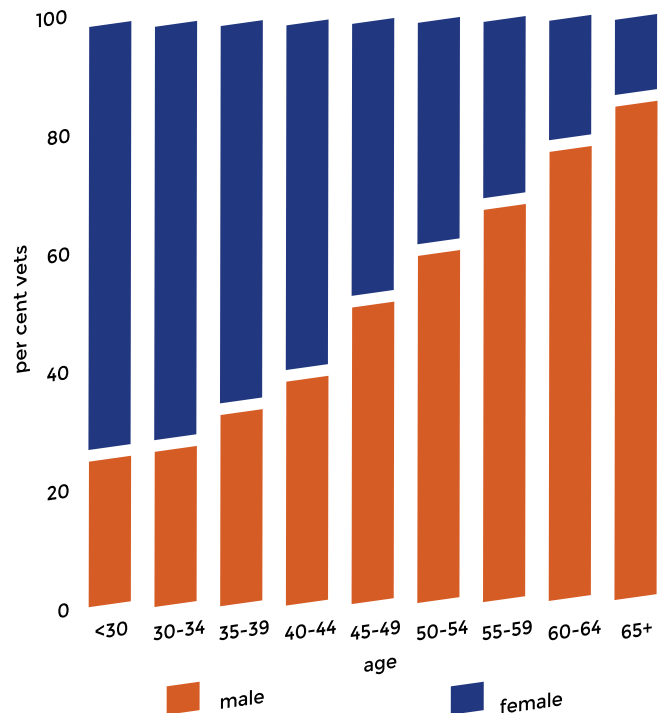
- *Encourage leadership skills.*
- *Strengthen the voice of the profession to speak out on relevant issues.*

The veterinary profession needs to help develop tomorrow's leaders and provide them with a clear view of the profession and of what goes on in a wide range of leadership roles. Young graduates need to be more confident, gain business skills and have positive role models.

Talent should be identified and nurtured, and lifelong learning in leadership should be developed and encouraged. Undergraduate and postgraduate veterinary education should focus on critical thinking, and on communicating clearly, speaking out on veterinary-related societal issues.

Veterinarians' age analysed by gender in Europe

The split between male and female is dramatic



According to the 2015 FVE survey of the veterinary profession in Europe, 53% of all veterinarians – and 70% of all veterinarians under 30 – are female. More women should be encouraged to take up leadership roles, as they are often underrepresented in leadership roles.

Strong leadership calls for a strong voice. Veterinarians must be confident in their role as experts in the fields of animal

health and welfare and of public health. They need to take a pro-active stance and speak out as one voice, ensuring they are heard by the public and by decision-makers at national and European level, calling for evidence-based policies.

This implies cultivating relationships with stakeholders, policy-makers and the media, speaking in a confident, compelling, easy-to-understand way. ●

Recommended actions

1. Increase leadership and business skills in veterinary undergraduate and post-graduate education in collaboration with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and VetCee.
2. Identify and encourage all veterinarians (including women and young graduates) to join the board/presidential pathway/working groups. Close the 'confidence gap' that women/young people have in themselves.
3. Collaborate with the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) on leadership and how to manage the expectations of students/first-time employees and employers.

Rewarding career pathways



Ambition

- *Ensure stimulating and rewarding career pathways at all stages of a veterinarian's working life.*
-

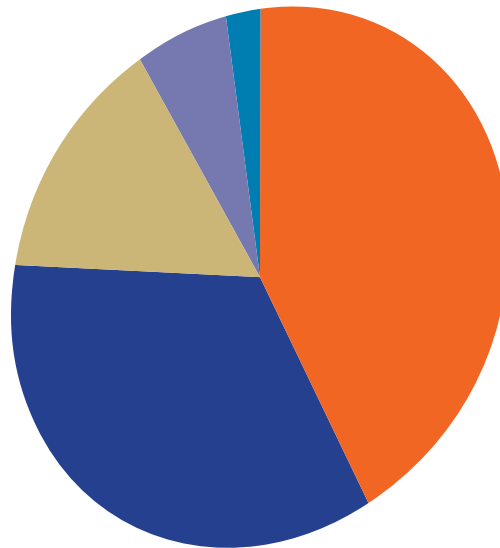
According to the 2015 FVE survey, around one quarter of veterinarians do not plan to continue to work within the veterinary profession until retirement – or are unsure about it. When asked how likely they would choose a career as a veterinarian, if they were starting out again, only 6.5 out of 10 said they would.

The dropout rate and dissatisfaction with their work seems

on the increase, in particular among recent graduates.

Several career paths can be identified: careers in research (industry or academia), careers as a practitioner in niche areas (laboratory animals, aquaculture, bees, exotic animals) and careers as a manager (animal welfare, One Health, industry, food safety, ethics, environment, disease control). More information about these new career paths should be

Do you expect to work as a vet until retirement?



-  no - definitely
-  no - probably
-  maybe
-  yes - probably
-  yes - definitely

provided to both undergraduates and recent graduates.

Factors to help improve job satisfaction and encourage flexibility should be applied throughout a veterinarian's career:

- Inform schoolchildren who want to become vets about all kind of career options
- Ensure veterinary graduates are adapted to a range of veterinary careers
- Provide recent veterinary graduates and undergraduates with career 'roadmaps'

- Mentor and coach young graduates during the first steps of their working life
- Set up a network between young veterinarians
- Provide experienced veterinarians with skills allowing professional flexibility

While mentorship and coaching are particularly important for young graduates, more should be done to find out if veterinarians are fulfilled and appropriately valued in their careers, to prevent disillusionment leading to veterinarians leaving the profession completely. Job satisfaction should be covered by veterinary demography surveys. ●

Recommended actions

4. Organise a network of recent graduates working in different sectors.

5. Set up a careers hub together with the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). Ensure future undergraduates are well prepared to undertake veterinary studies. Encourage students and veterinarians to look for new opportunities and to be flexible and open to change.

6. Investigate veterinary career satisfaction across Europe. Include specific questions in the next FVE demography survey or/and in member country's national surveys. Specifically target recent graduates (less than five years out) to assess their career satisfaction. Try to reach veterinarians who left the veterinary profession completely.



Broadening the veterinary role

Ambition

- *Explore new opportunities to fully utilise veterinary skills and expertise.*
-

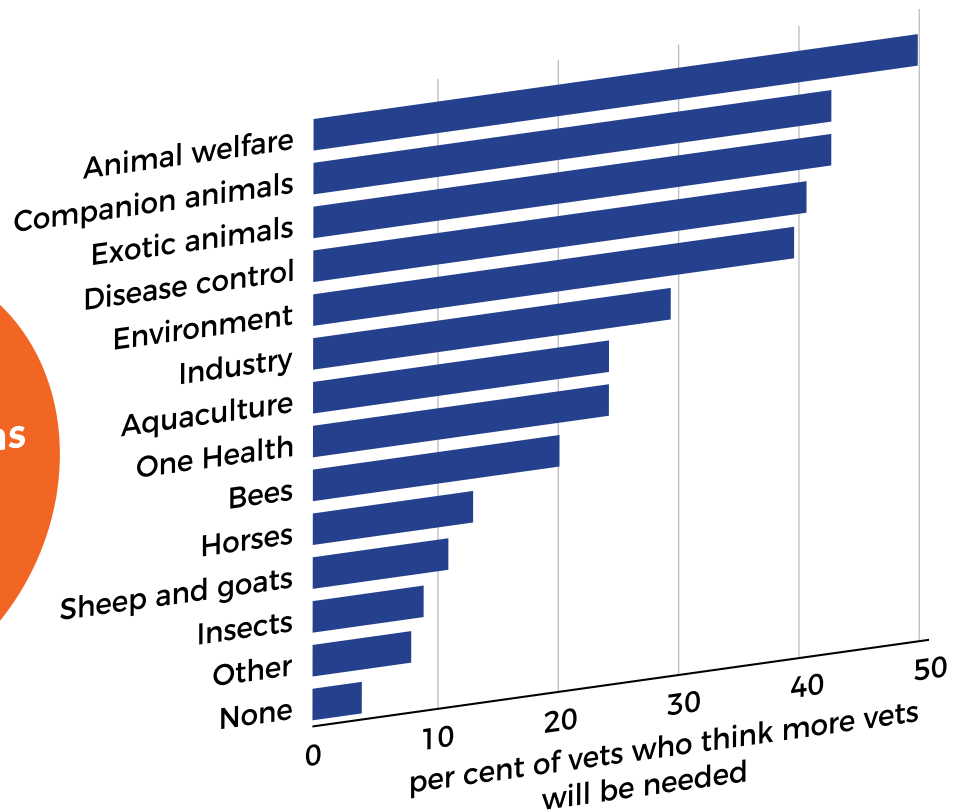
Our profession has always been flexible, evolving over the centuries from horse surgeons to livestock vets and to companion animal practitioners, food hygienists and public health consultants, adjusting to the needs of society. Today, it is as important as ever to keep an open mind for new areas where veterinary expertise is needed.

The 2015 FVE survey shows that the increased number of veterinary graduates makes it important to consider new opportunities within the veterinary field. This is even more important in view of the recent changes in society that have

led to considerable changes in veterinary roles, even in so-called traditional practice. Ethics and environmental and economic issues have greatly impacted veterinary practice, while economic pressures have had a negative impact on areas such as food safety.

The mind-set to enter into a wider range of career options starts during undergraduate training. The veterinary degree opens many doors because it provides an individual with the ability to analyse problems and find solutions in many and varied situations – also outside of so-called core traditional roles.

Areas where more veterinarians will be needed in Europe



Whilst much has been done over recent years to widen and increase the range of skills and training offered to undergraduates there is still a need to further widen the training base so that other fields, such as One Health, aquaculture and bee health, become part of the curriculum.

Additionally, new and recent graduates should be encouraged to explore new possibilities and consider a diverse range of professional areas in which they can use their skills and expertise. Increased awareness

and improved advice about veterinary career options should also be communicated to young people prior to undertaking veterinary studies.

Market intelligence may help identify and develop upcoming professional areas, which should be approached in a confident, pro-active manner. A working group should be set up to explore non-traditional, emerging or growing professional areas, including animal welfare, One Health, environmental protection, aquaculture, bees/insects and disease control. ●

Recommended actions

7. Increase the visibility of the wide array of roles veterinarians play (campaigns 'Vets are everywhere', 'Vets are vital').
8. Explore new professional territories requiring veterinary expertise and leadership (health of food- and feed-producing 'minor species' such as fish, bees and insects).
9. Continue to promote the 'One Health' concept with European doctors and other health professionals, including those working in the environment.



Sustainable businesses

Ambition

- *Explore sustainable business models ensuring that veterinarians are properly valued and remunerated.*
-

Veterinary businesses are changing: a growing number of women are joining the profession, and will soon outrank their male colleagues in numbers, corporate clinical networks are emerging, veterinary nurses and support staff play an increasing role in practice, while clients are more aware and demanding of high quality services – often at low cost.

These changes call for good business and finance skills, whether learned during the undergraduate curriculum or through continuing education. Networks linking up practices should be set up, not just to allow benchmarking and comparing business performance, but also to provide mutual support and exchange experience on client communication.

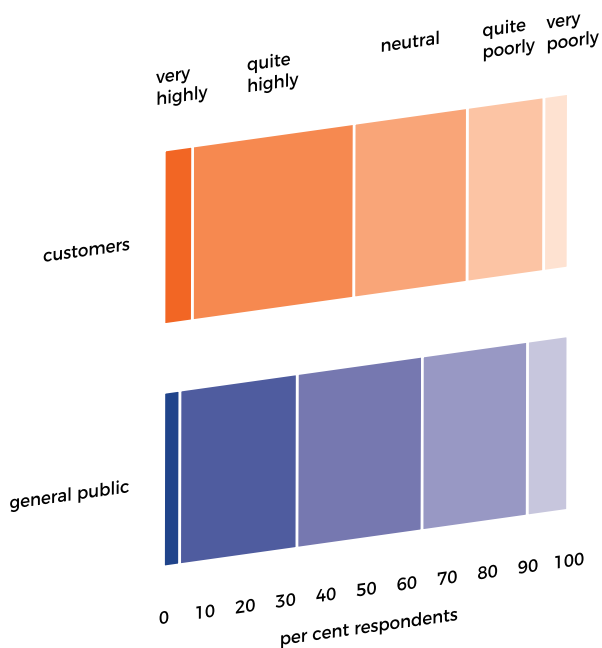
Public expectations and perceptions need to be understood and managed, and veterinarians need to improve their communication of charging realistic, sustainable fees to their clients. Communication tools should be developed to improve clients' understanding of realistic veterinary costs and fees, and to promote the value of veterinary care. It is also recommended that veterinarians move away from a reliance on merchandising to become increasingly dependent on charging fees for professional expertise and time investment – the profession's added value.

According to the 2015 FVE survey, there are also a number of areas that indicate 'either a lack of awareness or a lack of understanding of the importance of core business, legal and financial matters and skills'. In particular, the survey revealed a 'worryingly high number of colleagues' that have made 'inadequate pension provisions,' are unaware of their requirement to have 'appropriate indemnity insurance cover, feel exposed from an employment rights perspective, and are unprepared for retirement.'

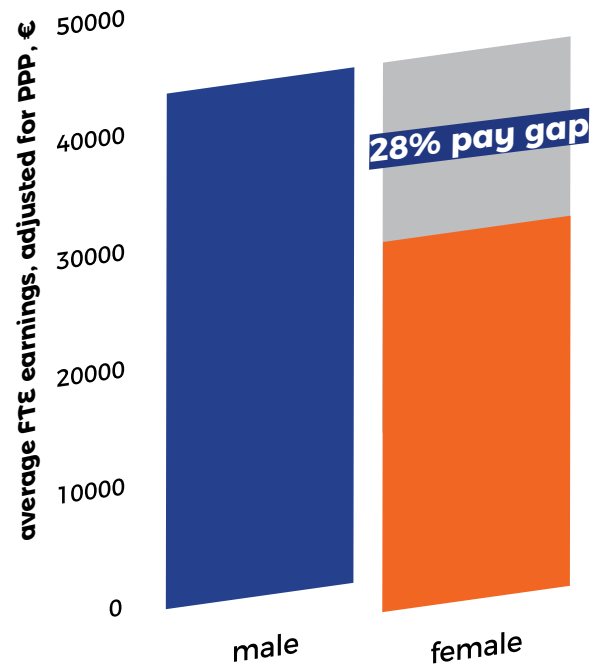
Comparing the same age groups and working hours, the FVE survey also revealed that female veterinarians were paid on average 28% less than their male colleagues. It is recommended that the leaders of the profession should further investigate this remuneration differential and try to find ways to promote female leadership within the profession.

A better use of and support for the entire veterinary care team, providing clinical updates for colleagues returning to practice and an in-depth knowledge of the professional market through benchmarking and market research should also be looked into. Data on regional and national business indicators – including fees, turn-over and business structures – should be collected to gain insight and to help building a range of sustainable business models. ●

How well veterinarians think they are regarded by their customers and by the general public - Europe



Average FTE earnings of veterinarians by gender - Europe (PPP)



Recommended actions

10. Repeat the FVE survey of the Veterinary Profession of Europe in 2018 to gather data on fees, salaries and business structures, turnover of the different practice types, weight according to GDP and other relevant factors and use to build an economic model so the 'value' of veterinary services can be compared across member countries and lessons learned.
11. Carry out a 'trust index' survey throughout Europe to gain insight into the level of trust of society in the veterinary profession compared to other professions.
12. Investigate whether FVE and its members should promote animal insurance/health plans/payment plans providing evidence-based medicine.
13. National members to exchange experience and work on ways (infographs, etc) to explain veterinary costs to clients (and the difference with human health professionals where this is covered by the health insurance).
14. Support practitioners move to more sustainable business models, based on charging fees for expertise and time investment and disease prevention, and to make most out of the animal health visits.



Wellbeing of the profession

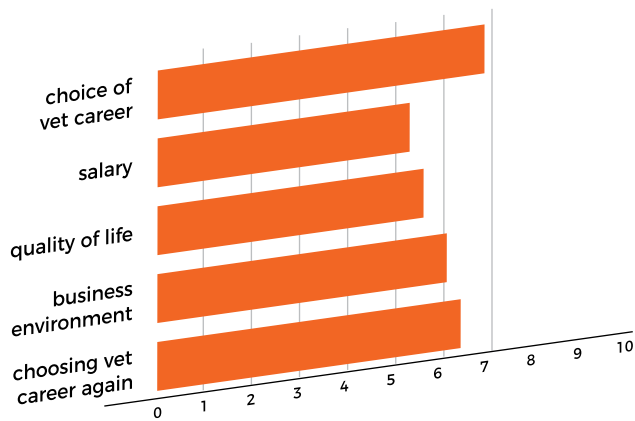
Ambition

- *Improve the mental health and wellbeing of veterinarians. Increase awareness, break down stigma and identify mental health risks.*
-

There is a need to address issues of job satisfaction and work-life balance – for all veterinarians. According to the 2015 FVE survey, European veterinarians gave an average of 5.7 out of 10 when asked to score their quality of life. High levels of stress and reported drug abuse and high suicide rates among veterinary professionals make it important to raise awareness about mental health and suicide issues.

Long working hours, increasing public expectations, professional isolation, insufficient earnings and a lack of preparedness for the realities of veterinary practice have all been cited as possible stress factors contributing to mental health risks. New graduates need support while veterinary students should understand the realities and requirements of the veterinary role – before they enter veterinary school.

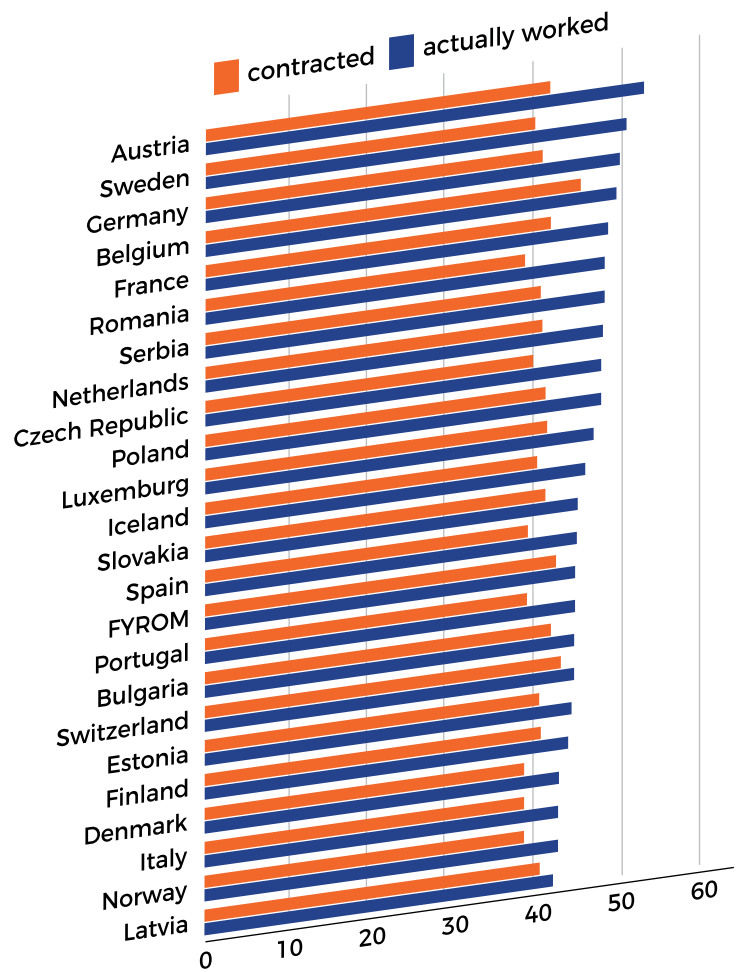
Satisfaction - Europe (marked out of ten)



There is a need for a coordinated, evidence-based approach to mental health and wellbeing of the entire veterinary team. At a European level, professional organisations should exchange experience on national actions and initiatives that have shown to help increase the mental wellbeing of the profession, such as the UK Mind Matters Initiative, which was launched to help address mental health and wellbeing issues across the veterinary team.

The profession should agree on parameters to measure the wellbeing of the profession in different countries, such as the percentage of veterinarians leaving the profession completely or the proportion of veterinarians on long-term health leave. National organisations could then use these parameters to measure the wellbeing of veterinarians in their country and to compare with other countries. ●

Average working hours (number of hours per week)



Recommended actions

15. Keep raising awareness and exchange experience on national actions that worked to increase the mental wellbeing of the profession. To investigate whether it is useful to develop global/European branding of 'Mind Matters.'

16. Organise a workshop on the development of wellbeing programmes.

17. Investigate the possibility of carrying out a survey to measure the wellbeing of the profession in different countries.



Embracing innovation

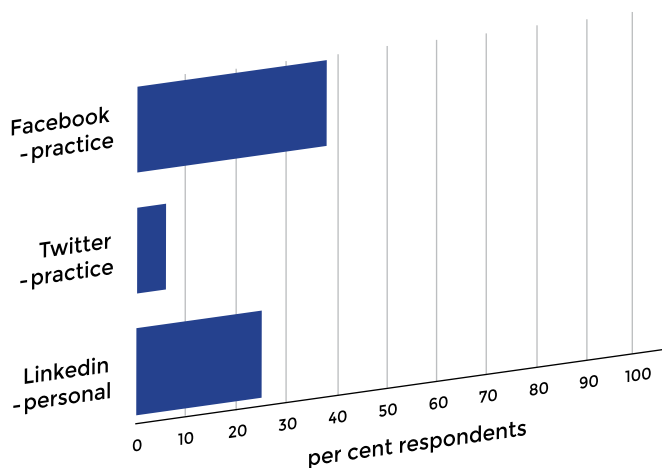
Ambition

- *Accept and encourage innovation beneficial to animal health and welfare. Embrace new technologies that enhance veterinary skills and services.*
-

The 2015 FVE survey revealed the need for the profession to improve its use and uptake of modern IT-based marketing and merchandising techniques. 'The online presence and participation in the virtual market

seems to be underutilised by the profession', the report noted. 'It is unclear if the uptake of IT methods is low as a result of unfamiliarity, a lack of training/awareness or simply as a result of a perceived lack of demand.'

Social media use - Europe



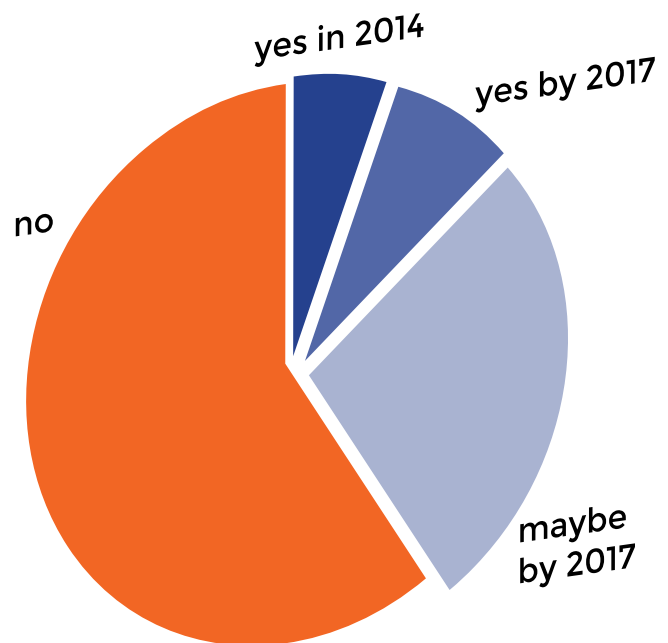
Indeed, only a minority of practices use social media; 38% have an official Facebook page, while just 5% have an official Twitter feed (2014 data).

The profession should overcome its reluctance to take on IT and be more active on social media and the internet, which is often the first point of call for concerned owners.

But the profession should also be firmly present in other fields of IT, such as online surveillance and diagnostic technology, which is likely to increase in importance in the near future, as are telemedicine, wearable technology and nanotechnologies.

Veterinarians should keep abreast of new technological developments, ensuring that they are beneficial to animal health and welfare and public health. The profession

How many practices sell pet food online - Europe



should also learn how to mine, share and exploit 'big data', which are a great potential source of epidemiological and therapeutic data.

An 'innovation hub' could be set up to highlight new technologies, services and business models with an impact on the veterinary profession to allow staying up to date and ensuring an appropriate regulatory framework is in place. ●

Recommended actions

18. In September 2017, the UK held an inaugural innovation symposium and launched an innovation hub to ensure veterinary professionals are at the centre of innovation in the animal health sector. Explore setting up a European veterinary innovation Council.

19. Consider the regulation of new technologies in close collaboration with the Statutory Bodies Group to ensure innovation is not stifled, while safeguarding animal health and welfare and public health.

Summary

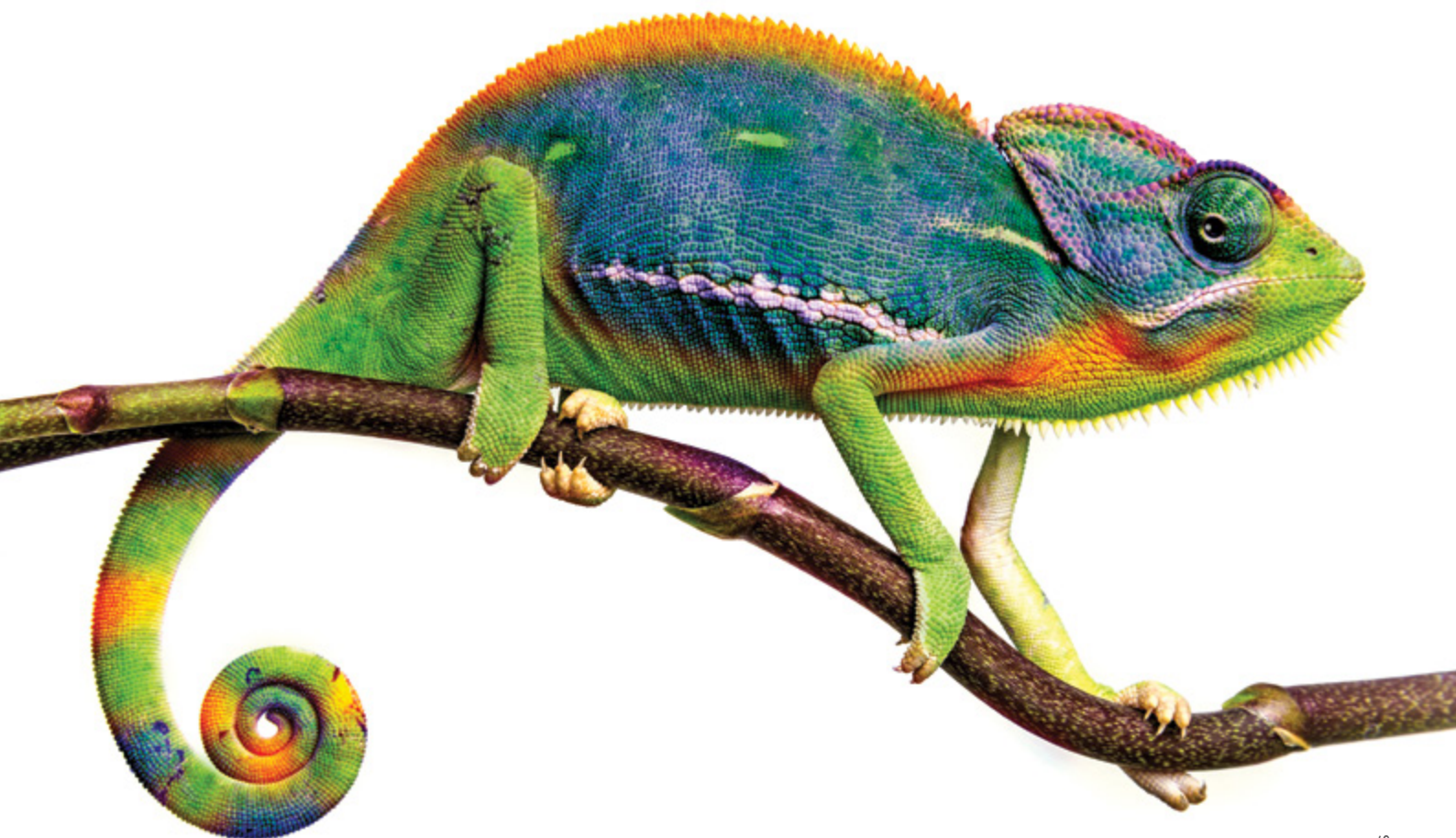
There are many areas that beg for improvement. But most importantly, we must adapt to the ever-changing needs and expectations of the society we serve. Although we cannot look into the future, it is clear that a more diverse, flexible, balanced and forward-looking veterinary profession will be better able to adjust to whatever tomorrow will bring.

Rafael Laguens, FVE president

Overview table of ambitions/actions providing a summary of the focus areas and recommended actions.

Priority	Ambition	Recommended actions at FVE/pan-European level
Leaders of tomorrow (page 4)	<p><i>Encourage leadership skills.</i></p> <p><i>Strengthen the voice of the profession to speak out on relevant issues.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase leadership and business skills in veterinary undergraduate and post-graduate education in collaboration with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and VetCee. 2. Identify and encourage all veterinarians (including women and young graduates) to join the board/presidential pathway/working groups. Close the 'confidence gap' that women/young people have in themselves. 3. Collaborate with the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) on leadership and how to manage the expectations of students/first-time employees and employers.
Rewarding career pathways (page 6)	<p><i>Ensure stimulating and rewarding career pathways at all stages of a veterinarian's working life.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Organise a network of recent graduates working in different sectors. 5. Set up a careers hub together with International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). Ensure future undergraduates are well prepared to undertake veterinary studies. Encourage students and veterinarians to look for new opportunities and to be flexible and open to change. 6. Investigate veterinary career satisfaction across Europe. Include specific questions in the next FVE demography survey or/and in member country's national surveys. Specifically target recent graduates (less than five years out) to assess their career satisfaction. Try to reach veterinarians that left the veterinary profession completely.

Broadening the veterinary role (page 8)	<i>Explore new opportunities to fully utilise veterinary skills and expertise.</i>	<p>7. Increase the visibility of the wide array of roles veterinarians play (campaigns 'Vets are everywhere', 'Vets are vital').</p> <p>8. Explore new professional territories requiring veterinary expertise and leadership (health of food- and feed-producing 'minor species' such as fish, bees and insects).</p> <p>9. Continue to promote the 'One Health' concept with European doctors and other health professionals including those working in the environment.</p>
Sustainable businesses (page 10)	<i>Explore sustainable business models ensuring that veterinarians are properly valued and remunerated.</i>	<p>10. Repeat the FVE survey of the Veterinary Profession of Europe in 2018 to gather data on fees, salaries and business structures, turnover of the different practice types, weight according to GDP and other relevant factors and use to build an economic model so the 'value' of veterinary services can be compared across member countries and lessons learned.</p> <p>11. Carry out a 'trust index' survey throughout Europe to gain insight into the level of trust of society in the veterinary profession compared to other professions.</p> <p>12. Investigate whether FVE and its members should promote animal insurance/health plans/payment plans providing evidence-based medicine.</p> <p>13. National members to exchange experience and work on ways (infographs, etc) to explain veterinary costs to clients (and the difference with human health professionals where this is covered by the health insurance).</p> <p>14. Support practitioners move to more sustainable business models, based on charging fees for expertise and time investment and disease prevention, and to make most out of the animal health visits.</p>
Wellbeing of the profession (page 12)	<i>Improve the mental health and wellbeing of veterinarians. Increase awareness, break down stigma and identify mental health risks.</i>	<p>15. Keep raising awareness and exchanging experience on national actions that worked to increase the mental wellbeing of the profession. To investigate whether it is useful to develop global/European branding of 'Mind Matters'.</p> <p>16. Organise a workshop on the development of wellbeing programmes.</p> <p>17. Investigate possibility of carrying out a survey to measure the wellbeing of the profession in different countries.</p>
Embracing innovation (page 14)	<i>Accept and encourage innovation beneficial to animal health and welfare. Embrace new technologies that enhance veterinary skills and services.</i>	<p>18. In September 2017, the UK held an inaugural innovation symposium and launched an innovation hub to ensure veterinary professionals are at the centre of innovation in the animal health sector. Explore setting up a European veterinary innovation Council.</p> <p>19. Consider the regulation of new technologies in close collaboration with the Statutory Bodies Group to ensure innovation is not stifled, while safeguarding animal health and welfare and public health.</p>



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For further information about the 2015 FVE survey of the
veterinary profession in Europe, please go to www.fve.org
Email: info@fve.org

Thanks to all contributors.
Ideas, comments? Please let us know!