

Foreword

The World Organisation for Animal Health has a long tradition of engaging with economists and social scientists in the use of their skillsets in animal health. This comes from a perspective of presenting animal health information in a way that is understandable to funders and investors. It also recognises the use of economics and social sciences in understanding disease spread and management in complex economies and cultures. Hence, previous thematic issues of the *Scientific and Technical Review* have focused on the economics of animal health [1,2].

These economic studies help in telling success stories from the animal health world. Yet concerns remain over the increasing trends of new and re-emerging disease outbreaks, the need for awareness of disease transmission to humans, and the overall impact of animals in poor health contributing to ongoing climate change. This One Health perspective requires different tools and skills to ensure that animal health continues to move towards management of contagious disease as well as improvement of systems that consider production – and welfare-related issues. Ensuring that there is sufficient investment in the animal health system also requires information presented on the scale of animal health problems in economic terms. Once a budget is set, public Veterinary Services and private veterinarians need tools to effectively allocate resources to the most profitable means of management. Overall, these actions call for data that allow evaluation of animal health policies and strategies, so we can learn and rectify mistakes, and present good news on successes with confidence.

The need to invest in economic studies in animal health and to develop burden of disease studies is even more important in the context of the upcoming United Nations (UN) high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance, which will place strong emphasis on One Health. In fact, understanding and gauging the burden of disease in animals is a crucial component to ensure healthy people and a healthy environment, in addition to healthy animals. Knowledge on the burden of animal diseases is also an essential pre-requisite for setting targets and scaling up investments on interventions to meet those targets, issues that will be central to discussions at the UN high-level meeting.

This issue of the *Review*, therefore, focuses on what is required to carry out an economic assessment of animal diseases from a farm to a national perspective. It also explores how this work relates to ongoing studies in human and crop health. I encourage you to

read its contents and support the ongoing work of the Global Burden of Animal Diseases programme.

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References

- [1] Perry BD, ed. The economics of animal disease control. Rev. Sci. Tech. 1999;18(2):276 p. <https://doi.org/10.20506/rst.issue.18.2.11>
- [2] Rushton J, ed. The economics of animal health. Rev. Sci. Tech. 2017;36(1):384 p. <https://doi.org/10.20506/rst.issue.36.1.2604>

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