



# SUSTAINABLE PROTEIN PRODUCTION

SEPTEMBER 8-10 • VIRTUAL SUMMIT • EDT TIMEZONE

## What does the future of sustainability in animal health look like?

**Rob Kelly, Executive Vice President &  
President, International Operations**

**Claudia Stuckmann-Invernizzi, Head  
of Public Affairs, Retail & Food Chain  
Outreach, International Operations**

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ORGANISERS OF



ANIMAL HEALTH  
INVESTMENT

Ahead of the virtual Sustainable Protein Production Summit, 8-10 September, we caught up with Rob Kelly and Claudia Stuckmann-Invernizzi from Zoetis to get their take on some of the key issues facing sustainability in animal health.

### Can you name some key trends in animal health that are impacting sustainability in livestock and aquaculture?

Rob Kelly: We have seen major developments for a couple of years now. Most farmers and veterinarians see that they can play a very decisive role in preventing disease and managing herd-health pro-actively, instead of accepting that most animals will get sick eventually and need to be treated.

In tandem, new opportunities through technological and medical developments have emerged. Zoetis has developed what we call the Continuum of Care to broaden the veterinary toolbox. We provide solutions to help veterinarians predict, prevent, detect and treat disease across the animal's entire lifecycle.

Let me give you some examples. There are novel technologies like sensor-based Precision Livestock Farming tools, that enable farmers and vets to detect sickness in animals much earlier.

We have also leveraged a deep understanding of the bovine genome and can accurately predict the relative risk of the most common diseases in dairy cattle. Through selective breeding, farmers can now create healthier herds while safeguarding productivity.

Based on our belief that healthy animals build a healthier future, we will continue using our expertise in animal health to solve sustainability challenges facing animals and people. These solutions help

our customers and the food chain meet their ambitious sustainability goals to foster farming practices that provide safe, affordable nutrition for a growing population while increasing animal welfare and ensuring a positive social impact. Ultimately, we believe that our business purpose is also a social purpose. We are bringing value to our customers and society. Whether it is helping pets live longer, happier and healthier lives, ensuring safe and affordable nutrition for people or supporting the success of our vets and producers, Zoetis plays a vital role.

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### Political expectations are rising. To what extent might the initiatives of the European Green Deal also impact livestock-farming?

Claudia Stuckmann-Invernizzi: The European Commission's Green Deal Communication and the Farm to Fork Strategy outline a set of deeply transformative policies. These are likely to affect all stakeholders represented at the Sustainable Protein Production Summit, directly or indirectly. I'll share two examples from the many topics covered by the Farm to Fork Strategy.

Firstly, the EU Commission's target of a 50% reduction in antimicrobial sales

in livestock & aquaculture by 2030 is a worthy aspiration. But let's not forget that across most of Europe a major reduction in antimicrobial sales for animal use has been accomplished; over the past 10 years European antimicrobial sales have gone down by around one third, much more in some countries.

As an industry we support reducing the need for antibiotics, but the impacts need to be closely monitored. Regardless of the specifications that the EU Commission proposes in this context, the most important part is to reduce the need for antibiotic treatment in the first place! This can be achieved through good management and hygiene as well as broadening the veterinary toolbox. Through a combination of tests, diagnostics, digital tools, data analytics, vaccines and novel therapeutic approaches, we can contribute to reducing the need for antibiotics.

The second goal I want to highlight is reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions. This is actually at the core of the Commission's plans. Healthy animals are the prerequisite for sustainable and carbon-efficient livestock production, which positions animal health as a crucial link between sustainability and productivity.

### **How can industry collaboration accelerate sustainability across the value chain?**

Claudia Stuckmann-Invernizzi: In my view the challenges that we are facing are of such complexity that no single part of the food chain can solve them alone. This is why we are so happy to participate in this conference, where we have the chance to interact with all partners of the food chain and concerned stakeholders.

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Listening to each other, understanding and accepting that everyone involved has specific challenges and interests is the first part. But Zoetis also engages in specific projects, for example with farmers, dairy companies, slaughterhouses, retailers and academic institutions. These projects can help to advance the adoption of more sustainable farming practices.

Working together we can advance the level of veterinary care, enhance the sustainability of the food chain, and bring greater value to society!

### **While you outline a positive future for the livestock-sector in Europe and other parts of the world – how can developing countries also benefit from increased animal health?**

Rob Kelly: Increased animal health benefits livestock farmers around the world. We are also very active in bringing innovations to emerging markets and creating solutions tailored to each geography's specific needs.

When it comes to developing countries, we first need to meet some basic demands. For example, we have increased the availability of veterinary medicines, created sustainable diagnostic networks, and provided training and education to farmers in sub-Saharan Africa through the Zoetis African Livestock Productivity and Health Advancement (A.L.P.H.A.)

initiative, which is co-funded by a grant of over \$14 million by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Through these activities, we positively impact farmers' livelihoods in Nigeria, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania and help them provide a safe food supply.

Improved animal health structures can contribute to sustainable economic development everywhere, and they are important for a global One Health approach.

### What are the cost implications of introducing sustainable processes and who should bear these costs?

Rob Kelly: Improving sustainability in livestock farming and aquaculture will indeed be costly. We cannot expect farmers to bear those costs all at once and all alone – especially with the low and volatile prices for agricultural commodities that we are experiencing.

This is where the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and the Common Agricultural Policy can play an important part. The

European Commission has announced that eco-schemes, which are basically funding mechanisms to advance the goals set-out in the strategy, will also be used for precision agriculture and livestock-farming.

The costs associated with transitioning to more sustainable practices in animal health pay off! Let me give you an example. Zoetis offers a sensor-based system for improved heat-detection the early detection of disease in dairy cattle. The costs for the technical equipment usually amortise themselves after around a year though decreased costs for disease. Ultimately the whole value chain can also benefit from more sustainable livestock-farming.

For livestock producers, we help improve the health of their animals and the productivity of their operations. And importantly, in both cases, we help our customers become more sustainable socially, economically and environmentally. Finally, mitigating climate change and agriculture to be part of functioning ecosystems is so valuable that we cannot even put a price tag on it!

## Hear more from Rob and Claudia



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