



National report

Legislation on veterinary services

Public veterinary services are under reformation as the legislation is updated. New legislation (285/2023) will annul law 16.10.2009/765. The new law will enter into force on January 1st 2026. Public veterinary services will now be defined in further detail and focus on triage and acute care for all animals. Basic health care is provided for all production animals and in some regions also for companion animals.

The main objective of the new law is to ensure that municipal veterinary services meet both regional needs and the requirements of other legislation (animal welfare and animal health). The new legislation has brought up a need for a definition of basic veterinary care, discover ways to combine private and public veterinary services and map out services only provided by private practices. Private veterinary practices can be found especially in the larger cities, but remarkable regional variations exist.

The new law allows municipalities to charge additional service costs, like veterinarians' salaries, but the fees must remain reasonable. This may strain municipal finances. The Finnish Veterinary Association (FVA) is concerned about veterinarian well-being and labor availability, as the law may limit their duties, potentially affecting job satisfaction and attractiveness.

Animal Welfare Act

Renewed Animal Welfare Act (693/2023) came into effect in January 2024. Requirements on different animal species will be specified by decrees that are currently being drafted. One main goal of this law is to ensure suitable circumstances for the animals to satisfy their essential behavioral needs.

According to the law piglets and reindeer must now receive nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs when castrated and local anesthesia is mandatory in piglet castration from the beginning of year 2027. Surgical castration of piglets will be banned in 2035. Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has launched a preparatory work aimed at reassessing the ban on the surgical castration of piglets. FVA considers the opening of the law under consideration to be a setback for animal welfare. FVA among other stakeholders believe that now is the time to prepare for the change - not to reverse it.

Status on animal diseases in Finland

The animal disease situation in Finland is stable, but preparedness for animal disease situations is important. Finland is still declared free from all the same diseases as before. For avian influenza and foot-and-mouth disease, the situation in Europe is serious and Finland cannot wait for the situation to develop. Communication between veterinarians and producers is important, but equally important is communication to the public.

Prevention measures against rabies were increased and now all dogs, cats and ferrets arriving from Russia or Belarus are required a rabies antibody measurement in addition to vaccinations. This requirement also applies to animals originating from the EU that have visited Russia or Belarus and are returning to EU area.



African swine flu (ASF) has continued spreading in neighboring regions, but prevention measures seem to be successful as the disease has not yet been found in Finland.

Several cases of leptospirosis were reported in dogs last fall. Leptospirosis has been found in just a few dogs a year in Finland in the last decades and until recently it was considered to affect mainly dogs travelling abroad. It is now suspected that at least some of the new infections are domestic.