



The hidden impact of veterinary care: new insights from a global survey of veterinarians

- Animal owners may think they know what happens during a veterinary visit — but a new global survey of 1,000+ veterinarians across 51 countries shows there is far more going on than meets the eye.
- Among species-specific veterinarians surveyed, overlooked aspects included “spotting hidden health problems and pain” among pet veterinarians (87%) and equine veterinarians (60%), “food-chain safety” and “disease surveillance” among livestock veterinarians (65% and 62% respectively).
- Boehringer Ingelheim and its veterinary association partners are spotlighting these findings to help build greater understanding of the essential yet often unseen role of veterinary care.

Boehringer Ingelheim today published new global survey findings revealing the often-overlooked aspects of veterinary care that are essential in protecting animals, people, and society.

Drawing on responses from 1,046 qualifying veterinary professionals across 51 countries, the survey identified three of the most important yet underrecognized aspects of veterinary care:

- Uncovering hidden health problems and pain, identified by 87% of pet veterinarians and 60% of equine veterinarians
- Protecting food-chain safety, identified by 65% of livestock veterinarians
- Surveillance programs to limit spread of disease, identified by 62% of livestock veterinarians

The findings underscore the far-reaching role veterinary professions play in everyday life, from caring for pets in over half of households globallyⁱ to safeguarding the animals and animal-derived products that help feed 97% of the world’s population.^{ii,iii,iv}

“Every day, veterinarians make decisions that matter far beyond the consulting room – for the animals in their care, for the people who love them, and for the food systems and public health we depend on,” said Claire Fowler, Head of Global Strategic Marketing, Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health. “Through this Going Beyond survey, together with our partners, we are highlighting the value of something many of us in the animal health world have long felt to be true: the most critical parts of what veterinarians do are often the least visible.”

The expertise behind every quiet veterinary decision

That invisible expertise begins with years of training. Identifying health issues in animals and determining the course of action relies on a depth of knowledge that isn’t always immediately obvious. Qualifying as a veterinarian can take five to six years of university study, while specialist veterinarians may complete four or more additional years of advanced training, meaning decisions are informed by more than a decade of education and hands-on clinical experience.^v For cats and dogs, this expertise can be the difference between catching a condition like diabetes or chronic kidney disease early and missing it entirely.

As expectations around animal health and wellbeing rise among pet owners^{vi,vii,viii} veterinary judgement

plays an increasingly important role across every stage of care – from prevention and early diagnosis to managing complex conditions. Yet much of this work is invisible to animal owners, with 87% of pet veterinarians identifying “spotting hidden health problems” as the most important aspect of their role most likely to be overlooked.

“Diagnostic and treatment decisions are based on the veterinarians professional training and experience. This unnoticed layer of expertise ensures animals receive precise, efficient, and life-preserving care,” said Dr. Jim Berry, President of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association. “Helping pet owners understand the full scope of that expertise is key to building trust and partnership with their veterinary teams to support the long-term health of our animals.”

The hidden power of preventative veterinary care

Much of veterinary care is preventive by nature, with timely intervention and careful observation helping to address issues before they escalate and easing long-term emotional and financial strain on animal owners.

Yet when equine veterinarians were surveyed, they ranked “detecting hidden pain and subtle early disease signs” (60%) and “using a horse’s environment and clinical history to predict risk” (42%) as the most important but overlooked aspects of their role.

In practice, this includes tailored advice on a horse’s diet, dental and hoof care, vaccination, parasite control, and stable management, helping to reduce the risk of conditions such as colic, laminitis, and respiratory disease.

“Much of an equine veterinarian’s work goes unnoticed precisely because it is effective,” said Dr. Sarah M. Reuss, President of the American Association of Equine Practitioners and Equine Technical Manager at Boehringer Ingelheim. “Its impact is seen in problems identified early, avoided altogether, or managed before they escalate.”

The veterinary care protecting food systems and public health

Livestock veterinary care – which protects animals such as cattle, pigs, and poultry – has a direct and measurable impact on the food that people depend on every day, underpinning around 34% of the global food protein supply.^{ix}

It also matters for public health, as 60% of human infectious diseases are known to spread between animals and humans,^x and 70% of emerging diseases originate in animals.^{xi}

Yet, according to livestock veterinarians, the broader impact of their role often goes unrecognized. In the survey, most identified “protecting food-chain safety” as an aspect of their role most likely to be overlooked by the public (65%), followed closely by “surveillance to limit the spread of disease” (62%).

“Livestock veterinarians are guardians of our food supply and frontline defenders against the diseases that can cross from animals to people – yet this role is rarely visible to the public who depend on it most,” said Arcangelo Gentile, President of the World Association for Buiatrics. “Recognizing it is not just a matter of professional pride; it is essential if we are to attract, retain, and support the veterinary workforce that global food security and public health are increasingly reliant on.”

Supported by leading veterinary associations



About the Going Beyond campaign

Going Beyond is a campaign developed by Boehringer Ingelheim, in cooperation with the [World Small Animal Vet Association](#), the [World Association for Buiatrics](#), the [American Association of Equine Practitioners](#), the [American Association of Swine Veterinarians](#), and other leading organizations. [Launched for the first time for World Veterinary Day 2024](#), Going Beyond shines a light on the hidden power of veterinary care and the critical yet often unseen role of veterinary professionals. Through new survey insights and content featuring real veterinarians, Going Beyond aims to deepen understanding of veterinary care and why it matters – not only for animals, but also for people, communities and society as a whole – while helping veterinarians feel seen, appreciated and motivated to continue doing what they do best.

As part of the Going Beyond 2026 campaign, a survey conducted in March and April 2026 by Boehringer Ingelheim included 1,046 qualifying veterinarians from 51 countries.

Boehringer Ingelheim – Animal Health business

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Boehringer Ingelheim

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