

Consultation Paper: Draft NI Animal Health & Welfare Strategic Framework



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Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

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Overview

- 1.1 The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has prepared a draft strategic framework for animal health and welfare policy in Northern Ireland (NI), which is the subject of this consultation. The consultation document invites responses from stakeholders - including the farming and agri-food industry, keepers of both farmed animals and domestic pets, veterinary practitioners, animal welfare groups and other interested bodies and individuals - on proposals for a new approach to developing and delivering animal health and welfare policy.
- 1.2 Our Departmental purpose is to support *'a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone'*. Through promoting high standards of animal health and welfare, we underpin the reputation of our sustainable agri-food industry and its ability to prosper. By maintaining existing and developing new international export markets for high quality produce, our stakeholders contribute significantly to a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy. Animal health and welfare, however, also impacts more broadly on society in terms of the environment and public health, and regulatory provisions ensure that animal health and welfare is protected and that safe food is produced.
- 1.3 Following the 2016 Assembly election, a draft Programme for Government (PfG) was prepared, using an outcomes-based accountability model. UK exit from the EU is creating a dynamic trade and regulatory landscape, providing the impetus to develop a comprehensive, strategic approach to animal health and welfare, linked into the Outcomes Framework developed from the draft PfG.
- 1.4 Rather than developing an animal health and welfare strategy when a number of related strategies and plans have already been produced, a high-level framework is proposed. The aim of this framework is to provide a vision for animal health and welfare in NI, agreed and delivered by government and stakeholders working together, which shares the collaborative and co-design approach championed by the draft PfG.
- 1.5 A sub group of the Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholder Forum (AHWSF), comprising seven members representative of sectoral and industry interests, has been engaged alongside Departmental officials in taking forward this new approach to delivering animal health and welfare policy.
- 1.6 Developed from contextual analysis and sub group discussions, the proposed Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework will provide an overarching and integrated framework for animal health and welfare programmes and activities in NI; establish linkages to the Outcomes Framework; and provide a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on performance using the outcomes-based approach. The suggested lifespan of the Framework is 10 years.

1.7 A set of animal health and welfare outcomes for the Framework is proposed:

- We keep our animals healthy and treat them well.
- We have a competitive, innovative livestock industry that contributes to our economic prosperity.
- We protect public health and our food from animal-related disease.
- We take a sustainable approach to the farming of animals that respects the environment.
- We have animal health and welfare safeguards that are widely recognised and trusted.

Animal health and welfare outcomes will help determine what ‘success’ looks like and will be supported by high-level indicators to help us measure progress.

- 1.8 It is envisaged that the Framework will not replace strategies and plans that have already been prepared, or are being developed, to address particular policy concerns (such as bovine TB, contingency planning and Antimicrobial Resistance) or sectoral interests (including relevant parts of the Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland¹). Instead, the Framework will provide a mechanism for establishing, agreeing and amending priorities and actions, as well as helping to identify any gaps in animal health and welfare policy and delivery.
- 1.9 The Framework will involve a joined-up approach to planning, monitoring and reporting. The production of an annual delivery plan is proposed, which will identify the priorities and related actions for delivery in a particular year. The delivery plan will also outline areas for policy development and would remain a live document, with priorities and actions reviewed, replaced and updated as we learn about their effectiveness or as circumstances change.
- 1.10 It is proposed that, under the Framework, a set of key principles will guide the way stakeholders work together to develop and deliver policy - prevention is better than cure; the concept of ‘One Health’; partnership and collaborative working; accepting roles and responsibilities; considering costs and benefits; strong and reliable evidence; and effective communications.
- 1.11 In line with the collaborative and co-design approach of the Outcomes Framework, a structure or body involving stakeholders would be required to provide oversight for the implementation of the Framework and a mechanism to agree, monitor and review the annual delivery plan. This body will also provide DAERA with access to stakeholder advice and expertise.
- 1.12 Statutory impact assessments, which provide detail on the proposals in terms of their impact on stakeholders and the general public, have been undertaken and are set out in separate, attached papers.

¹ Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland, April 2018

Purpose of Consultation

- 1.13 We are seeking your views on our proposals for the NI Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework. We have set out a number of questions, as summarised in Section 3 of this paper, to help structure your response but we welcome any additional comments you may wish to provide.

Structure of the Consultation Paper

- 1.14 This Consultation Paper on the draft NI Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework is structured as follows:
- Section One presents the case for a new approach to delivering animal health and welfare policy in NI, setting out the background as to why animal health and welfare matters and the context within which policy is developed and delivered.
 - Section Two sets out our proposals for the new NI Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework and poses a series of questions relating to these proposals.
 - Section Three explains how you can respond to our consultation and provide your views on our proposals.

Section One

A New Framework Approach to
Delivering Animal Health and
Welfare Policy in NI:

The Background

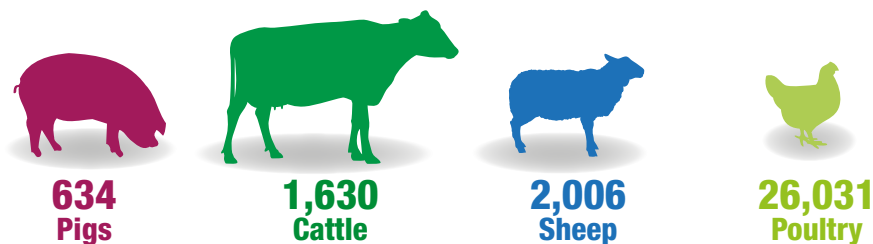


This section sets out the case for a new approach to delivering animal health and welfare policy in Northern Ireland (NI), setting out the background as to why animal health and welfare matters and the context within which policy is developed and delivered.

1.0 Why animal health and welfare matters

- 1.1 NI has almost 25,000 farms and, over the past 50 years, has changed from a mixed farming economy to one largely dependent on grazing livestock. The structure of the agriculture sector in NI is very different to that found in other parts of the UK, with cattle and sheep farms making up 80% of all farms², compared with 43% in England³.

Number of Livestock in NI ('000)



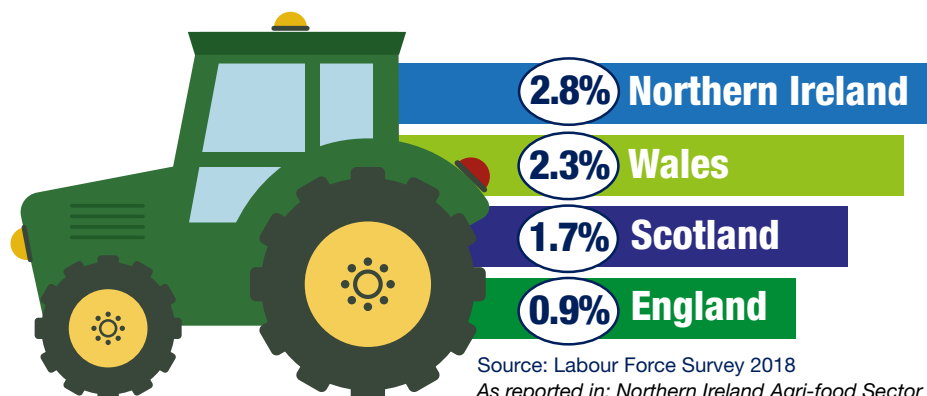
Source: Agricultural Census in NI 2018 (p.6)

The health and welfare status of NI's farmed animals is vital to the sustainability of the local livestock industry, the wider agri-food sector and the economy as a whole.

The contribution of the livestock industry to the NI economy

- 1.2 Primary agricultural production and processing are important economic activities within the NI context. There are almost 50,000 workers⁴ involved in primary agricultural production in NI. There is also a greater proportion of the working population here employed in agriculture compared to other parts of the UK.

Employment in Agriculture as a proportion of total Employment for each region of the UK



Source: Labour Force Survey 2018
As reported in: Northern Ireland Agri-food Sector
Key Statistics July 2019, DAERA, Table 2 (p.4)

² The Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland, Results for June 2018, DAERA 2019, Table4.3(p.40)

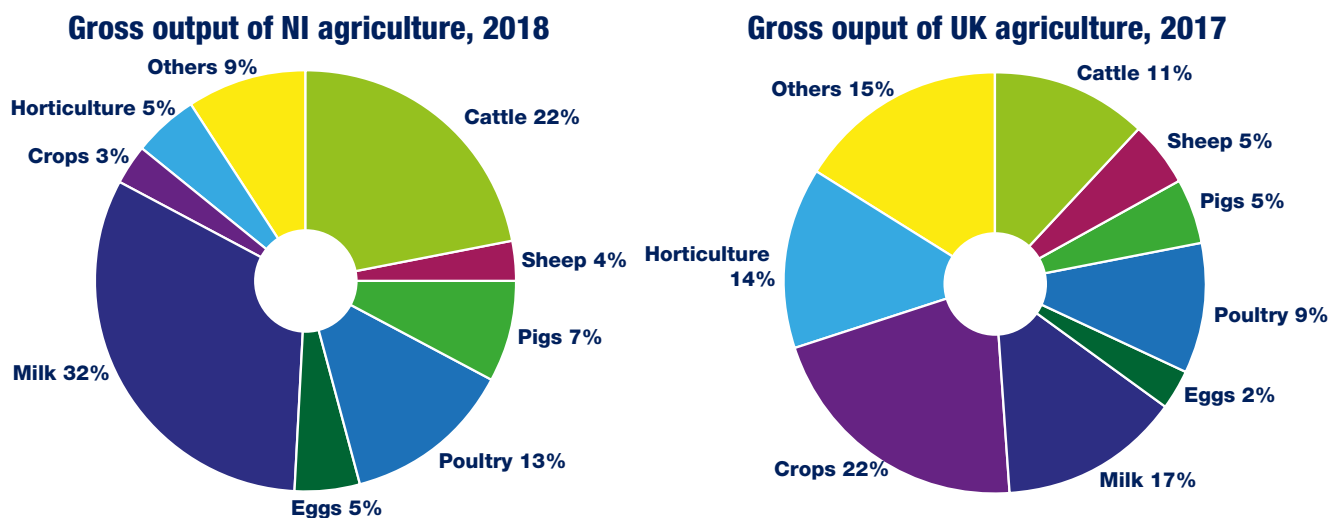
³ <https://www.gov.uk/governments/statistical-data-sets/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-2017>

⁴ This figure includes self-employed farmers, spouses, paid and unpaid employees and casual workers (Source: Agricultural Census in NI 2018).

Some 16,000⁵ people in NI are also employed directly in the processing of meat and animal products.

- 1.3 Livestock and related products (including milk and eggs) comprise almost 84% of NI agricultural gross output, estimated at a value of £1.79 billion for 2018⁶. In the UK as a whole, however, livestock and related products contribute less than 50% to total agricultural gross output (2017).

Comparing Gross Output of NI Agriculture with UK



Source: The Statistical Review of NI Agriculture 2018 (p.2)

- 1.4 Some 40,000 cattle and over 560,000 sheep are exported live annually for further production or slaughter in other regions of the United Kingdom and to other countries such as the Republic of Ireland (RoI) and Spain. The value of live cattle and sheep sales from NI is worth £65 million to local farm businesses each year, of which almost £41 million relates to sheep sales to the RoI⁷ - in 2018, 47% of NI produced lambs were exported for slaughter there⁸. Poultry sales outside of NI also contribute significantly to our economy at a value of almost £42 million.

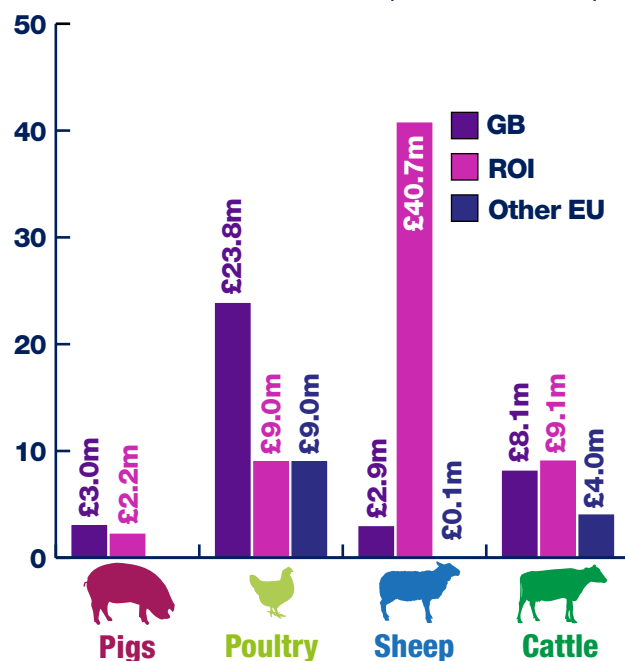
⁵ Size and Performance of the Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Sector, Subsector Statistics 2017 with provisional estimates for 2018', DAERA, July 2019; *employment figures for processing of meat and animal products relate to 7 out of the 10 subsectors in the food and drinks processing sector, namely Animal By-Products, Beef and Sheepmeat, Eggs, Fish, Milk and Milk Products, Pigmeat and Poultrymeat*

⁶ Statistical review of NI Agriculture 2018, DAERA (p.10)

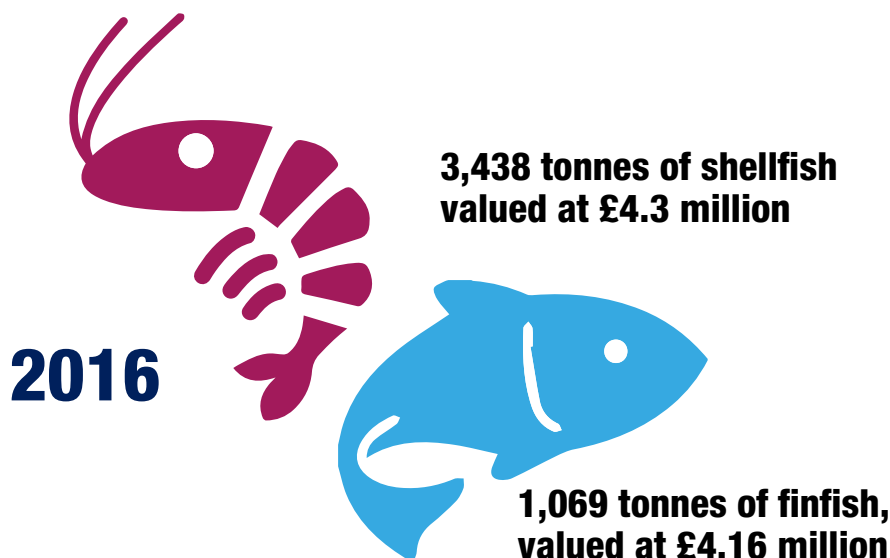
⁷ Statistical review of NI Agriculture 2018, DAERA (p.58)

⁸ Unpublished data, DAERA

External Sales of Live Animals from NI 2018 (Provisional)



- 1.5 The purchase of live pigs and cattle from the ROI to NI was valued in 2018 at £63.0 million and £25.5 million respectively⁹, with imported pigs (largely from the Republic) accounting for 27% of total pigs slaughtered in NI processing plants¹⁰.
- 1.6 Aquaculture also makes an important contribution to the NI agri-food sector.¹¹



- 1.7 The NI food and drinks processing sector, with a gross turnover of £4.8 billion in 2017, makes up 32.4% of all manufacturing sales, an increase from 2016 when it contributed 25% of sales. The sector is dominated by the sales of meat (including fish) and animal products, which accounted for £3.8 billion of gross turnover (79%) in 2017. Gross turnover of the food and drink processing sector increased by £462.5 million between

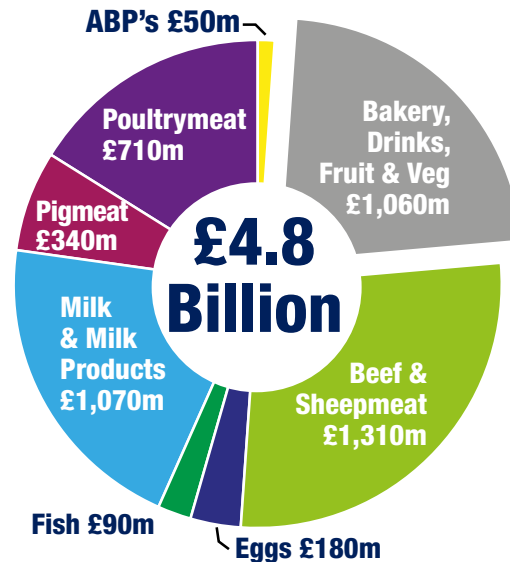
⁹ Unpublished data, DAERA

¹⁰ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/slaughtering-pigs-2003>

¹¹ Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland, DAERA, April 2018 (p 82)

2016 and 2017, with the beef/sheepmeat (+ £121.9 million) and milk/milk products (+ £191.4 million) subsectors experiencing the largest increases.

Gross Turnover of NI Food and Drinks Processing Sector 2017

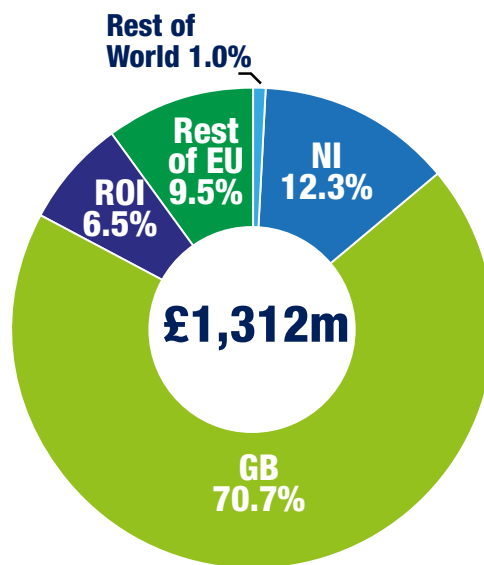


Source: Size & Performance of NI Food & Drinks Processing Sector - subsector statistics 2017

- 1.8 In 2017, the 'value added' by the food and drinks processing sector to the NI economy was estimated to be £904 million, to which the beef and sheepmeat (£172.1 million) and poultry meat (£201.2 million) subsectors made the largest contributions.
- 1.9 Sales of meat and animal products depend heavily on markets outside NI, with Great Britain (GB) continuing to provide the largest market and accounting for over 70% of NI beef and sheepmeat sales. The animal by-products, poultrymeat and fish subsectors are also reliant on markets outside NI.
- 1.10 The RoI and other EU countries are also significant market destinations for meat and animal products - sales in 2017 were valued at more than £790 million¹² - with UK exit from the EU potentially impacting NI producers in terms of future trade and market access.

¹² Size and Performance of the Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Sector, Subsector Statistics 2017 with provisional estimates for 2018', DAERA, July 2019; Table 10b Destinations and values of subsector sales, 2017; figures relate to 7 out of the 10 subsectors, namely Animal By-Products, Beef and Sheepmeat, Eggs, Fish, Milk and Milk Products, Pigmeat and Poultrymeat but exclude Bakeries, Drinks and Fruit/Vegetables

Destination of Beef and Sheepmeat Sales 2017



Source: Size and Performance of NI Food & Drinks Processing Sector - subsector statistics 2017 (p.13)

- 1.11 The strong correlation between animal health and welfare is widely recognised - animals that are kept to high welfare standards are more healthy and productive. Safeguarding the health and welfare of animals is, however, about much more than economic output. Society has a responsibility to ensure that animals are properly cared for. As well as impacting on animals, their keepers and the livestock industry, animal health and welfare issues are of wider public concern.

Impact of animal health and welfare issues on the economy

- 1.12 According to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), over 20% of animal production losses are linked to animal diseases¹³. At farm level, healthy animals increase productivity and reduce inefficiencies including mortality rates and veterinary costs, making farms more profitable. At an industry level, a healthy livestock population requires less intervention to tackle disease and provides enhanced opportunities for trade and market access.
- 1.13 Measures to control and eradicate endemic disease can have major and costly consequences for the economy, the environment and society as a whole. Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) has proved a challenging problem for the NI livestock industry. Substantial costs have been incurred attempting to eradicate the disease - annual public expenditure on the bTB Eradication Programme is currently around £40m. It is estimated that Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) costs industry here in the region of £24m each year¹⁴. An industry-led BVD eradication scheme has been operating since 2013, which became compulsory in March 2016 with the introduction of legislation by the Department.

¹³ Animal Health: A multi-faceted challenge, OIE August 2015

¹⁴ Cost to industry was estimated prior to the commencement of the NI BVD eradication programme as provided by Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI).

- 1.14 The potential impact of a major animal disease outbreak can be considerable. It is estimated that the 2001 Foot and Mouth outbreak cost the UK economy (agriculture, the food industry and the public purse) £3.1 billion directly, with losses to supply industries and tourism resulting in indirect additional costs of a similar level¹⁵. Many sporting, community and public events were also affected causing significant inconvenience for the general public. An independent review produced by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in 2002¹⁶ considered the impact of the Foot and Mouth outbreak in NI and estimated the direct cost here at over £24 million.

Impact of animal health and welfare on public health

- 1.15 Animal disease can pose a significant threat to public health. Many human infectious diseases are caused by zoonotic pathogens and are transmitted to humans from animals or wildlife through direct contact (such as rabies) or vectors (avian influenza). According to the OIE, 60% of pathogens that affect humans are of animal origin¹⁷. Zoonoses can result in high fatality rates and have the potential to cause major epidemic outbreaks, with very considerable impacts on the economy and wider society.
- 1.16 Disease and infection can also be transmitted to the general population through the food chain from infected meat and meat products. Resulting lost consumer confidence in food production can have long-term economic consequences for the agri-food sector, as was the case following the well-publicised health scares relating to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and salmonella in eggs.
- 1.17 Government, supported by industry, has systems in place to prevent disease outbreak and to ensure that diseases are rapidly detected if an incursion occurs, including horizon-scanning, checks at ports, routine surveillance inspections and testing. Exercises in contingency planning and preparedness are undertaken routinely to ensure that the impact of any disease outbreak is minimised.

Impact of animal health and welfare on the environment

- 1.18 Agriculture is recognised as a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, mainly methane and nitrous oxide from grazing livestock and fertiliser, which in turn are linked to climate change and potentially harmful consequences for the environment and human health. In 2017, agriculture was the largest sector in terms of NI emissions (27%) and, due to the greater relative importance of agriculture to the NI economy, accounted for a higher proportion of greenhouse gas emissions compared with other parts of the UK¹⁸. Poor cattle health and diseases such as BVD lead to production inefficiencies and increased greenhouse gas emissions from livestock.

¹⁵ Economic costs of the foot and mouth disease outbreak in the United Kingdom in 2001, OIE 2002

¹⁶ Independent Review of Foot and Mouth Disease in Northern Ireland, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) June 2002

¹⁷ Animal Health: A multi-faceted challenge, OIE August 2015

¹⁸ Northern Ireland greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2017 statistical bulletin, published by DAERA 11 June 2019

- 1.19 Ammonia is an air pollutant arising mainly from agricultural practices. The agriculture sector accounted for the majority of ammonia emissions in NI in 2017¹⁹. Of the ammonia emissions from agriculture, 92% came from livestock. Since 2001, ammonia emissions from livestock in NI have increased by 7.4%. Good animal husbandry and farm management practices can help reduce environmental pressures from livestock farming.
- 1.20 Animal waste and animal by-products (ABPs) are potential environmental pollutants and are heavily regulated to ensure their safe disposal. The efficiency and value of production can be enhanced through the processing or rendering of ABPs into food products, fertiliser or fuel. Agri-food processing companies in NI are increasingly investing in new technology such as anaerobic digestors and waste management to improve environmental performance.

Impact of animal health and welfare issues on wider society

- 1.21 The 'One Health' approach, endorsed by the European Commission (EC), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the OIE, focuses on zoonotic disease control, food safety and vulnerability to disease as a result of climate change. 'One Health' recognises that there is a direct link between the health of people, animals and the environment in which they live. It involves designing and implementing programmes and policies in which multiple sectors collaborate to reduce health risks and achieve better public health outcomes.
- 1.22 There is increasing recognition that 'prevention is better than cure' - healthy animals require less veterinary intervention which in turn reduces costs for the keeper. The unnecessary use of antibiotics, leading to Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), and the reduced effectiveness of medicines in combating disease, is a growing concern for animal as well as public health policy and is also linked to the 'One Health' concept.
- 1.23 Consumers are demanding not only good quality and value, but safer, traceable and ethical food products. Food companies and retailers are responding to this demand by way of product specification requirements and quality assurance schemes. High standards of animal health and welfare are recognised as presenting a marketing opportunity for producers.

¹⁹ Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report, DAERA May 2019 p.29

2.0 Delivering animal health and welfare policy in NI - the strategic and policy context

- 2.1 NI's animal health and welfare system has a strong international reputation, underpinning trade and external sales in animal and related products. Government, industry and other stakeholders work in close collaboration to deliver disease control programmes and health assurance schemes that contribute to achieving and maintaining these high standards, which in turn deliver a range of broader environmental and societal benefits.

Strategic Direction

The Outcomes Framework

- 2.2 The draft Programme for Government (PfG), prepared for the mandate following the 2016 Assembly election, had set out the strategic direction for the work of the NI Executive and introduced the concept of outcomes-based accountability. This has resulted in the development of a framework of 12 outcomes - the Outcomes Framework²⁰ - consulted on and refined during 2016-2017, with the overall stated objective of ***'Improving well-being for all - by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth'***.
- 2.3 The Outcomes Framework reflects population conditions in 12 key areas of economic and societal wellbeing that people said mattered most to them. Taken together, these outcomes provide a direction for the work of departments which fully reflects and respects the strategic direction set by the former Executive, has wide political support and is welcomed by people in every sector - public, private and community/voluntary²¹.
- 2.4 Of the 12 outcomes, 5 are considered to be of particular relevance to animal health and welfare in terms of the economy and investment, environment, and public health and safety:

 <p>Outcome 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive regionally balanced economy</p>	 <p>Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives</p>	 <p>Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other</p>
 <p>Outcome 2: We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment</p>	 <p>Outcome 10: We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest</p>	

²⁰ Programme for Government - Working Draft, The Executive Office, January 2018

²¹ Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018-19, The Executive Office, June 2018

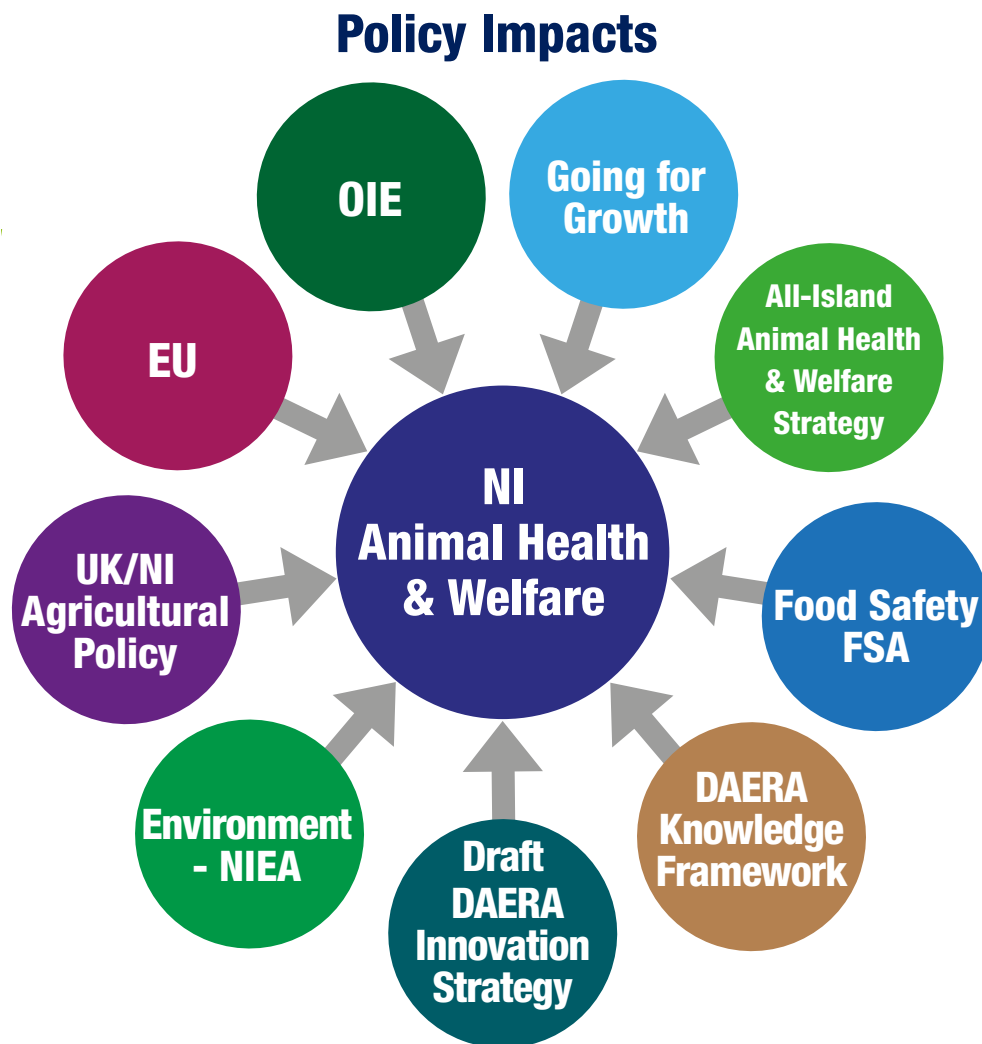
- 2.5 These outcomes represent a long-term vision for society and their relevance will extend beyond Assembly mandates. They are supported by a wide range of indicators, which represent clear statements for change, against which progress can be evaluated.
- 2.6 The NI Budget 2019-20 (announced in February 2019) recognises the financial constraints facing departments, and reinforces the need for departments and the wider public sector to work collaboratively to achieve outcomes for all.

The role of DAERA

- 2.7 Responsibility for animal health and welfare policy and strategic direction in NI rests with DAERA. DAERA's purpose is to support '*a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone*'. Animal health and welfare policy plays a primary role in contributing to the achievement of the DAERA purpose.
- 2.8 The DAERA purpose recognises that a balance between environmental sustainability and the continued economic growth of the farming, fishing, and wider food industries is central to achieving a prosperous society. DAERA works with industry and other stakeholders to promote innovative ways of producing and distributing high quality goods, produced to the highest and safest standards.
- 2.9 DAERA policy recognises the importance of helping the agri-food industry address the economic challenges it will face in the coming decades, including a shifting trading landscape with tough competition, and increasing consumer and environmental demands and expectations. As affirmed by the DAERA Knowledge Strategy and work currently underway on the draft DAERA Innovation Strategy, adaptability is vital to sustainability and growth, with innovation needed to stimulate and support the industry.
- 2.10 DAERA is the 'Competent Authority' responsible for implementing EU and domestic animal health and welfare legislation and has budgetary responsibility for public funds allocated to animal health and welfare activities. The role of the Department includes inspecting, auditing and verifying animal health and welfare standards in order to ensure, and reassure, the public and customers of the integrity, safety and quality of local food production.
- 2.11 DAERA has introduced and has been developing a number of animal health and welfare strategies and action plans to address the prevention or management of particular diseases (such as bTB), contingency planning in the event of an epizootic outbreak (including FMD and ASF), sectoral interests (including relevant parts of the draft Marine Plan for NI) and other aspects of animal health and welfare related policy areas (for example, surveillance and AMR).

Regulatory Context

- 2.12 Compliance with regulatory requirements is necessary in order to demonstrate disease freedom, appropriate standards of animal welfare and quality assurance for trade purposes. The current regulatory framework arises largely from EU legislation and international obligations (including OIE standards). The EU (Withdrawal Act 2018) will convert the relevant EU law, as it stands on the day of exit, into domestic law and will preserve laws made in NI (and the rest of the UK) to implement EU obligations.



Policy Context

- 2.13 Animal health and welfare in NI is influenced by animal health and welfare policy and standards set at an international and EU level, as well as by broader UK and NI agricultural, environmental and food safety policy.

Policy Impacts

OIE World Organisation for Animal Health	The OIE is the WTO reference organisation for standards relating to animal health and zoonoses; it aims to assure the sanitary safety of international trade in terrestrial animals and aquatic animals, and their products. The OIE supports its member countries and helps them strengthen and improve the structure of their national animal health systems in line with intergovernmental standards. The OIE recognises that prevention and control of animal diseases constitutes a 'Public Good' and, along with FAO and the WHO, has endorsed the 'One Health' concept, recognising that human health is intrinsically linked to animal health and the environment.
EU policy on animal health	EU animal health policy seeks to ensure a smooth and safe internal EU market, facilitating introduction into the EU of live animals and products of animal origin, by legislative and non-legislative measures. The Animal Health Strategy for the European Union 2007-2013 (still valid) aims to reduce the incidence of potentially devastating animal diseases, to minimise the impact of outbreaks and to protect food safety and public health. It adopts the motto 'prevention is better than cure'. The Strategy has resulted in the introduction of the new EU Animal Health Law, applicable from 2021, which provides for a single policy and legal framework for animal health.
Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework	The UK Government (Defra) launched a consultation in February 2018, Health and Harmony, setting out its proposals for the future of food, farming and the environment after UK exit from the EU. As agricultural policy is a devolved matter, DAERA ran a stakeholder engagement exercise, from August 2018 to October 2018, on a future agriculture policy framework for NI. This aimed to help shape the debate on future agriculture support arrangements following exit from the EU, after which the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) will no longer apply. Proposals include focusing on the long-term objectives of increased productivity, improved resilience, environmental sustainability and supply chain functionality.
The All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy	The island of Ireland is considered a distinct epidemiological unit and, in recognition of this, an All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy was commissioned in 2001 by the North-South Ministerial Council. The Strategy committed both jurisdictions to focusing on high standards of animal health and welfare, improved public health and an effective capacity to deal with emergency situations. Historically, both parts of the island have enjoyed a high animal health and welfare status but face common challenges, including persistent animal health problems, the potential for a major disease outbreak and increasing vulnerability to disease arising from climate change and the growing international movement of people and products.

Going for Growth	The Agri-Food Strategy Board published <i>Going for Growth in 2013</i> , which sets out a vision to ‘ <i>grow a sustainable, profitable and integrated agri-food supply chain, focused on delivering the needs of the market</i> ’. It aims to deliver ambitious growth targets, including a 60% increase in sales, 75% increase in external sales and 15,000 additional jobs. In 2014, the NI Executive committed to working in partnership with the agri-food industry to help deliver recommendations. DAERA has taken the lead on a range of key actions, including the publication of the long term strategy for bTB eradication and securing recognition that NI is an area of negligible risk for BSE, and continues to meet with industry and government partners to support export growth.
Food Safety - Food Standards Agency (FSA)	The FSA is a non-ministerial government department working across England, Wales and NI to protect public health and consumers’ wider interests in food, and has responsibility for the main body of feed and food safety law in those jurisdictions. The FSA’s strategic outcomes for NI are set out in <i>Food we Can Trust - Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland, Strategic Plan 2015-20</i> . The FSA works closely with DAERA, which delivers official controls in the areas of meat, dairy, egg and primary production hygiene on its behalf. Food standards and official controls are largely determined at EU level.
Environment – Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)	The NIEA is an Executive Agency within DAERA with the primary purpose of protecting and enhancing NI’s environment, and in doing so, delivering health and well-being benefits and supporting economic growth. Current policy aimed at reducing greenhouse gases, reducing ammonia, addressing waste (for example, from ABPs and manure) and protecting the natural environment is based largely on EU requirements. DAERA is working closely with stakeholders to achieve sustained and tangible reductions in ammonia emissions, whilst supporting a sustainable and prosperous agri-food sector.
DAERA Knowledge Framework	Published in January 2019, the Knowledge Framework aims to ensure that individuals, organisations and businesses within the agri-food industry have access to high quality, relevant and accessible education, training and technology exchange to improve productivity, resilience, environmental performance and sustainability. The Framework acts as the point of reference against which all of DAERA’s current and future knowledge interventions can be tested and anchored. Animal health and welfare education, training and technology exchange are key elements of the Department’s knowledge provision.
Draft DAERA Innovation Strategy	As part of DAERA’s Science Transformation Programme, a draft Science Strategic Framework is being developed, which will set out high level, long-term principles to ensure that the science provided, managed and used by DAERA is innovative, collaborative and transformative. The Framework will underpin a number of key operational strategies, including an Innovation Strategy. The draft DAERA Innovation Strategy, currently being prepared for public consultation, will focus on creating an enabling environment to support innovation. Emerging cross-cutting themes include Big Data, the Bioeconomy and Artificial intelligence.

3.0 Approaches to delivering animal health and welfare in other jurisdictions and internationally

Great Britain

- 3.1 Following the devolution of animal health budgets in GB in 2011, separate approaches to animal health and welfare strategy have been developed by each administration, tailored to their own specific needs.
- 3.2 The Wales Assembly introduced its 'Animal Health and Welfare Framework - Achieving High Standards Together' in 2014, which focuses on delivering shared outcomes. Implementation of the Framework is supported by the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group, whose responsibilities include considering the delivery of outcomes and priorities and the continuous review of progress.
- 3.3 The Animal Health and Welfare Board for England was established in 2011 as *'the principal source of departmental advice'* to Defra ministers on strategic animal health and welfare matters. Defra has developed proposals for a new agriculture policy for England, which includes proposals for animal health and welfare, following a consultation exercise in early 2018²². A number of these proposals were subsequently contained within the UK Agriculture Bill (September 2018).
- 3.4 In Scotland, the 'Animal Health and Welfare in the Livestock Industry: Strategy 2016 to 2021' sets out the priorities of the Scottish Government. The Scotland Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholder Group has been established to advise on how actions arising from the Strategy are implemented.

Republic of Ireland

- 3.5 The 'National Farmed Health Strategy 2017-2022: A framework for collective action by stakeholders' sets out wide ranging actions and outcomes / indicators for the RoI. An Animal Health Strategy Review Body has been established to support strategy implementation there.

Internationally

- 3.6 There are a number of international examples of frameworks and strategies (such as those in Switzerland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) that have been prepared to support the development and delivery of animal health and welfare policy. Similar to the approach taken in the UK and the RoI, these focus largely on improving animal health, tackling disease and enhancing trade opportunities.
- 3.7 There is, however, considerable divergence in terms of the sharing of roles and responsibilities between government and industry in the delivery of animal health and welfare policy. Various models of governance and oversight have been adopted in different countries. These range from formal mechanisms that provide an advisory,

²² Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit, February 2018

communications and review function (such as the Wales Framework Group and the NFAHW Council of Canada) and those that include responsibilities for budget prioritisation and funding of policies (for example, AHWB for England), to independent not-for-profit companies (such as AHA in Australia and OSPRI in New Zealand) which have responsibility for the delivery of national programmes and raise much of their funding from industry.

3.8 A review of models of governance and oversight for the development and delivery of animal health and welfare policy elsewhere have identified the importance of a number of recurrent themes:

- Collaboration and partnership-working;
- Sharing of responsibility between government and other stakeholders;
- Accountability and measuring performance.

4.0 Relationship with other administrations and main trading partners

- 4.1 DAERA works closely with the other administrations (England, Scotland and Wales) to develop animal health and welfare policy, ensuring a coordinated approach to tackling disease, and participates in UK-wide exercises to rehearse the response to a major disease outbreak. As the island of Ireland is considered a distinct epidemiological unit, DAERA also works closely with DAFM in the RoI, particularly with regard to preparedness and contingency planning in the event of an epizootic outbreak.
- 4.2 Many of the rules relating to surveillance, disease control, welfare standards, certification of animal and related products and trade have been set at EU level and are applied UK-wide. This has generally resulted in a common approach to addressing animal health and welfare issues within the UK and in other EU countries.
- 4.3 As exit from the EU approaches, the devolved administrations and the UK government are working together to determine where common frameworks to maintain UK-wide approaches need to be established in areas currently governed by EU law but that are otherwise devolved.
- 4.4 The NI livestock industry relies heavily on the export of live animals and animal products. It is important that our approach is coordinated with our main trading partners, particularly in view of the challenges that may arise following the departure of the UK from the EU.

5.0 The need for a new approach to delivering animal health and welfare policy in NI

- 5.1 At present, there is no overall framework or strategy in place for animal health and welfare in NI. It is, therefore, timely within the context of the Outcomes Framework and exit from the EU that a new approach is developed.
- 5.2 A stakeholder sub group, comprising seven members representative of sectoral and industry interests in animal health and welfare, was established to work alongside DAERA officials in the development of proposals. The sub group met for the first time in January 2018. See Annex B for the list of sub group members.
- 5.3 Contextual analysis and sub group discussions have led us to conclude that a new approach is needed in order to:
- provide an overarching and integrated framework for animal health and welfare programmes and activities in NI;
 - set out a vision for animal health and welfare in NI, agreed and delivered by government and stakeholders working together;
 - establish linkages with the Outcomes Framework;
 - develop a strong evidence base to support the challenges and opportunities, particularly in relation to trade, arising as result of exit from the EU;
 - support wider agri-food and economic strategies for NI that link to trade and growth;
 - support the concept of 'One Health' which recognises that animal health and livestock management impact significantly on public health and environmental sustainability;
 - ensure public monies are allocated strategically and efficiently and provide a strong evidence base to underpin bids for public funding allocations;
 - provide a mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and reporting that supports the decision-making process;
 - improve stakeholder engagement and build upon partnerships and collaborative working arrangements.

Consultation Question 1:

Do you agree that a new approach to developing and delivering animal health and welfare policy in NI is needed?

Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

Section Two

A New Framework Approach to
Delivering Animal Health and
Welfare Policy in NI:

Our Proposals



This section sets out our proposals for a new approach to animal health and welfare policy in Northern Ireland (NI), summarised as follows:

- the implementation of a long-term framework, with a lifespan of ten years, for animal health and welfare, agreed and delivered by government and stakeholders working together;
- the adoption of an outcomes-based accountability model;
- the identification of animal health and welfare outcomes, to help determine what ‘success’ looks like and to provide direction for animal health and welfare policy, aiming to encourage a stronger focus on impact rather than delivery;
- the introduction of an annual cycle of planning, monitoring and reporting; and
- the establishment of a new structure to facilitate stakeholder engagement and oversight of delivery of the framework.

This section also sets out our proposals for:

- the scope of the framework; and
- key principles to guide the way stakeholders work together to develop and deliver policy.

Questions relating to the proposals are set out and we invite your response to them and any other feedback you may wish to offer.

1.0 A proposed long-term framework approach

- 1.1 It is suggested that, rather than developing an animal health and welfare strategy when a number of related strategies and plans have already been produced, a high-level framework is required. In line with the Outcomes Framework, it is proposed that this strategic framework should focus on the delivery of agreed outcomes, partnership working, measuring performance and monitoring progress. It is not recommended that the animal health and welfare framework document should set out priorities and actions but rather should provide a mechanism for establishing, agreeing and amending them.
- 1.2 It is proposed that a framework document will be prepared which will:
- consider animal health and welfare policy in the context of long-term societal outcomes for NI;
 - project a vision for animal health and welfare in NI as described through a set of long-term animal health and welfare outcomes, supported by indicators to help measure progress;
 - set out guiding principles to underpin the way in which stakeholders and government work together to deliver the framework;
 - guide the policy-making process by focusing on the development and utilisation of a strong evidence base to identify priorities and actions for delivery;
 - help identify linkages and synergies between programmes and actions in order to ensure a coordinated and cohesive approach to implementation;
 - ensure appropriate structures are in place to facilitate stakeholder engagement, and collaboration and co-design of animal health and welfare policy; and
 - establish a framework for monitoring, reporting and evaluation to measure progress, hold delivery partners accountable and ensure responsiveness to changing or emerging circumstances.
- 1.3 Following meetings with the stakeholder sub group, the title '**The Northern Ireland Animal Health & Welfare Strategic Framework**' (AHWSF) was agreed. The sub group also suggested that the framework document should be short, concise and easily understood.

Aim of the proposed NI Animal Health & Welfare Strategic Framework

- 1.4 *To set out a vision and framework for animal health and welfare in Northern Ireland, agreed and delivered by government and stakeholders working together.*

Lifespan

- 1.5 It is proposed that the Framework will be delivered over 10 years and will be subject to formal annual monitoring, reporting and review to ensure that:
- it is responsive to and takes account of contextual changes and policy developments (including new and emerging diseases and the outworking of exit from the EU); and
 - the performance of actions being delivered under the Framework are continually measured to ensure their contribution to broader societal outcomes.

Consultation Question 2:

Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a long-term framework approach, with a lifespan of ten years, for developing and delivering animal health and welfare policy in NI?

Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

2.0 Adopting an Outcomes-Based Accountability model

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Framework will adopt an outcomes-based accountability (OBA) methodology as used in the Outcomes Framework.
- 2.2 The basic tenet of the OBA approach is determining whether the activities we are undertaking are making a difference. It has been adopted widely with the aim of producing measurable change and moving organisations away from a focus on 'process' towards making better outcomes the primary objective.
- 2.3 The outcomes model starts by defining desired ends and involves working backwards to identify deliverable means of achieving those ends. It poses the question: *What would success look like?* OBA uses an evidence base to identify priorities and involves a coordinated and systematic approach to monitoring, measuring the impact of activities and progress towards achieving agreed outcomes.
- 2.4 Outcomes-based accountability makes a fundamental distinction between conditions of well-being at a societal level, which no single stakeholder or level of government can deliver alone, and performance measuring which considers how well government and non-governmental services are delivered.
- 2.5 The OBA approach sets out a series of questions to help identify priorities and actions:
 - What is the problem or issue and what is its impact - *the baseline position?*
 - How has this problem or issue arisen - *the story behind the baseline?*
 - Who can help us do better - *who are the delivery partners?*
 - Is there sound evidence for a particular approach - *what works best?*
 - What actions are being prioritised, who is responsible for their delivery and what is the delivery timetable - *what are we going to do?*
 - Is appropriate data being collected or is additional evidence required to measure:
 - ▶ How much did we do?
 - ▶ How well did we do it?
 - ▶ Is anyone better off?
- 2.6 Outcomes represent conditions we want to create in the long-term. Indicators are what we want to impact on or change and help determine whether we are making progress towards the achievement of the outcomes.

- 2.7 It is proposed that the Framework document will set out outcomes to help determine what 'success' looks like and to provide direction for animal health and welfare policy, supported by indicators to help measure progress towards achieving these outcomes.

Consultation Question 3:

It is proposed that this Framework will adopt the outcomes-based approach.

What benefits or challenges do you feel would result from this approach?

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 Although it is proposed that the Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework should be concerned mainly with farmed livestock, it would extend to other animals including companion animals and wildlife where there is a potential impact on human health or on the health of farmed animals.
- 3.2 It is suggested that the scope of the Framework should include the following:
- **Farmed animals**
Livestock including beef and dairy cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry (including egg production) and all other animals reared for food, breeding or other animal products (such as fleece and hides).
 - **Companion animals**
Dogs, cats, horses and other animals (including exotic species) kept by people as companions.
 - **Animals used for work, sport, recreation or display**
Non-farmed animals kept in zoos, by circuses, pet shops and for display such as ornamental fowl, as well as animals bred for sporting and other recreational pursuits, including game animals and birds initially reared in captivity, which may pose a risk of transmitting disease to farmed animals or humans, or to and from wildlife.
 - **Wildlife**
Including wild birds and other wild animals where there is a risk of disease transmission to farmed animals or humans and where the health and welfare of wildlife may be affected by animal disease control practices.
 - **Aquaculture**
The hatching and rearing of fish and shellfish, not only for food but also for sale in the ornamental trade and for eventual release into stocked fisheries.
- 3.3 Recognising the relationship between animal health and welfare and food safety, public health and environmental sustainability, it is proposed that the Framework should also include:
- Animal feed and veterinary medicines where animal and human health may be impacted;
 - Animal by-products and waste where there may be consequences for animal and human health, and the environment.
- 3.4 It is not intended that the scope of the Framework extend to bees - they fall within the remit of plant health policy - nor that it would address angling, shooting for sport, hunting, or the use of animals in research, although it is recognised that circumstances may arise where linkages with animals affected by these activities may need to be considered.

Consultation Question 4:

Do you agree with the proposed scope of the Framework?

Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

4.0 Animal Health & Welfare Outcomes and Indicators

Animal Health and Welfare (AHW) Outcomes

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework will set out outcomes that represent a long-term vision for animal health and welfare in NI.
- 4.2 The following AHW outcomes have been drafted and express, as statements, the impact we hope to achieve as a result of our policy, programmes and activities, developed and delivered by stakeholders working together in partnership:
- We keep our animals healthy and treat them well.
 - We have a competitive, innovative livestock industry that contributes to our economic prosperity.
 - We protect public health and our food from animal-related disease.
 - We take a sustainable approach to the farming of animals that respects the environment.
 - We have animal health and welfare safeguards that are widely recognised and trusted.

Animal Health & Welfare (AHW) Indicators

- 4.3 AHW outcomes are intended to provide direction for our work and aim to encourage a stronger focus on impact, rather than delivery. The outcomes are supported by a set of AHW indicators, against which progress can be evaluated. The indicators identify what we propose to measure, although data development may be required for some indicators in order to establish a baseline and how we measure progress.
- 4.4 In general, each of the AHW indicators will contribute to the achievement of the five AHW outcomes. Where possible, the AHW indicators will also provide linkages to the population indicators that have been established in the Outcomes Framework, helping to determine progress at a broader, societal level.
- 4.5 Indicators may be reviewed, updated or amended during the lifetime of the Framework, and replaced by more appropriate indicators if necessary. The proposed indicators are set out in the table overleaf, with further detail provided in Annex C.

Consultation Question 5:

- (i) Do you think that the 5 proposed AHW outcomes work as a set? Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
- (ii) For each individual outcome, please let us know whether it should be included (kept), excluded (removed) or amended. Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
- (iii) For each individual indicator, please let us know whether it should be included (kept), excluded (removed) or amended. Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

How do we measure success?

The Outcomes Framework *see p.15*

We prosper through a strong, competitive regionally balanced economy (Outcome 1).

We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment (Outcome 2).

We enjoy long, healthy, active lives (Outcome 4).

We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other (Outcome 7).

We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest (Outcome 10).

Proposed AHW Outcomes

- We keep our animals healthy and treat them well.
- We have a competitive, innovative livestock industry that contributes to our economic prosperity.
- We protect public health and our food from animal-related disease.
- We take a sustainable approach to the farming of animals that respects the environment.
- We have animal health and welfare safeguards that are widely recognised and trusted.

Proposed AHW Indicators

- Livestock mortality
- Incidence of enzootic disease
- Freedom from epizootic and notifiable zoonotic disease
- Antibiotic usage
- Compliance with animal welfare legislation
- Controls for animal identification, registration and movement
- Emergency preparedness

This list is not exhaustive

5.0 Guiding Principles

- 5.1 It is proposed that, under the Framework, a set of key principles should guide the way stakeholders work together to develop and deliver policy.
- 5.2 Guiding principles are as follows:
- **‘Prevention is better than cure’** aims to change the focus from response to management, benefitting keepers, industry and government by reducing the cost of disease impacts and increasing productivity, as well as improving animal well-being. Preventing the spread of endemic and zoonotic disease and improving health and welfare are achieved through animal health planning, high welfare standards, biosecurity, surveillance, contingency planning and responsible use of veterinary medicines.
 - **‘One Health’** recognises that the health of people, animals and the environment are directly linked and that collaborative approaches are required to address risks originating at their interface. It has particular relevance in zoonotic disease control, food safety, reducing anti-microbial resistance and greenhouse gas emissions.
 - **Partnership and Collaborative-working**, based on trust and transparency, is fundamental to implementing an outcomes-based approach to public policy. This requires government and other stakeholders to work together to deliver agreed animal health and welfare outcomes, with mechanisms put in place to enable effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement.
 - **Accepting Roles and Responsibilities** recognises that, although government plays an essential role in preventing disease and responding to outbreaks as well as protecting public health and animal welfare, responsibility for animal health and welfare lies primarily with keepers who are best placed to deal with many disease risks and welfare issues. For effective partnership, clarity is required in terms of the roles and responsibilities of keepers, industry, private vets and government.
 - **Considering costs and benefits** requires that, as well as understanding the costs and benefits of government intervention, there should be a balance between the cost to the taxpayer of such intervention and the extent to which keepers may be held responsible for the cost of animal health and welfare. Understanding the link between good husbandry practices and proactive health management will help prevent disease and improve productivity.
 - **Strong and reliable evidence** is essential to support effective decision-making. The outcomes-based model requires collecting, recording and managing relevant, reliable and timely data to help establish a baseline position, identify priorities and target resources. Measuring and reporting on performance and progress helps determine whether actions are making a difference and whether changes are required.
 - **Effective communications** are required in the development and implementation of programmes and in the delivery of key messages to the wider public (for instance, when there is a disease outbreak or a food safety issue). Information should be clear and easily understood, consistent and timely, and shared appropriately. This principle is also underpinned by effective stakeholder engagement.

Consultation Question 6:

(i) Do you think the proposed guiding principles work as a set?

Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

(ii) For each individual principle, please let us know whether it should be included (kept), excluded (removed) or amended. Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

6.0 Implementation - annual planning, monitoring and reporting cycle

Annual Delivery Plan

- 6.1 It is proposed that an agreed Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework **Annual Delivery Plan** will be produced, setting out the priorities and related actions for delivery in that year.
- 6.2 A number of strategies and action plans have been prepared by DAERA, or are being developed, to address particular policy concerns or sectoral interests. It is suggested that relevant actions already set out under these strategies should be incorporated into the delivery plan, as appropriate. Some priorities (such as bTB eradication) will remain in place over a number of years and it is anticipated that these will appear in successive delivery plans, whilst others could be delivered in a shorter timeframe.
- 6.3 The proposed Framework planning and reporting structure provides a joined-up approach allowing synergies to be achieved - biosecurity for example is a common concern across a number of programmes - and potential policy gaps to be more readily identified.
- 6.4 The proposed delivery plan will also set out areas for policy development and would remain a live document, with priorities and actions reviewed, replaced and updated as we learn about their effectiveness or as circumstances change.

Measuring Performance

- 6.5 It is proposed that the OBA approach will be used to measure whether actions or programmes undertaken as part of the annual delivery plan have contributed to the achievement of outcomes as intended and will involve consideration of the three basic OBA performance-related questions:
 - How much did we do?
 - How well did we do it?
 - Is anyone better off?
- 6.6 A simple report card could be used to capture performance measurements which would provide a basis for formal reporting.

Monitoring and Reporting

- 6.7 It is proposed that a formal review of the progression of the delivery plan will be undertaken mid-year and at the year-end. These reviews can consider how the performance measures have been impacted as a result of actions taken and will feed into Departmental and NICS reporting cycles. The reviews will also inform the selection of priorities and actions for the following year's delivery plan.

Evidence-base

- 6.8 The outcomes-based approach requires the collection and use of relevant and reliable data. Gaps in the data may exist or new improved data may be required to assist in the decision-making process (referred to as the '*data development agenda*').

Consultation Question 7:

Do you agree with the proposal for an annual planning, monitoring and reporting cycle?

Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

7.0 Oversight and Stakeholder Engagement

- 7.1 Progress on delivering animal health and welfare priorities and outcomes will only be achieved through collaboration and co-design involving government and other stakeholders. A structure for governance and stakeholder engagement is required to facilitate meaningful stakeholder engagement and to oversee the implementation of the Framework. It is proposed that a partnership body should be established to support governance, comprising government and non-government stakeholder representation.

Purpose and Role of the Partnership Body

- 7.2 The purpose of the proposed **NI Animal Health & Welfare Strategic Framework Partnership** is to support and oversee the implementation of the NI Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework and to build effective working relationships between government and other stakeholders. It is proposed that the Partnership will fulfil an advisory and consultative role but will not have a decision-making function nor have responsibility for the allocation of resources.
- 7.3 It is suggested that the role of the Partnership should be to:
- contribute to animal health and welfare planning and priority setting with the aim of delivering shared animal health and welfare outcomes;
 - consider existing or emerging issues, opportunities and threats that may impact on the achievement of animal health and welfare outcomes;
 - liaise with industry, expert groups and public bodies to access advice and information to help inform decision-making;
 - support the Framework's delivery planning process and oversee the monitoring, review and reporting on the annual delivery plan;
 - identify areas for data development and improving the evidence base;
 - provide advice, disseminate information and communicate key messages on issues relating to the development of animal health and welfare policy, strategies, programmes and initiatives;
 - liaise with sectoral and non-sectoral stakeholder sub groups to share information and to take account of their views and concerns in the implementation of the Strategic Framework; and
 - champion the aim and shared outcomes of the Strategic Framework among wider stakeholders and the general public.
- 7.4 The work of the proposed Partnership in helping to develop and deliver policy would be guided by the set of principles laid out in the Framework.

Membership of the Partnership

- 7.5 It is proposed that the Partnership will have a maximum of six members, two from DAERA Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG) and four non-government stakeholders.
- 7.6 It is envisaged that non-government stakeholders on the Partnership should serve in an individual capacity, as non-executive members, and would not represent the interests of any particular group, organisation or sector. They could be drawn from industry, academia or veterinary bodies and should bring knowledge and broad experience of animal health and welfare issues to the Partnership. It is proposed that the non-government stakeholders will be selected by the Minister for a fixed term through a public appointment process. The Minister will also appoint one of the four non-government stakeholders to be the Chair of the Partnership.
- 7.7 In the absence of a Minister, it is unlikely that the Department would be able to bring forward the public appointment process. In the interim, the Department may consider asking the sub group of the Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholders' Forum advising on the Framework to contribute to the development of the first annual delivery plan. This would have the benefit of serving as a pilot in advance of the formal establishment of the Partnership.
- 7.8 The government officials on the Partnership will be the NI Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) and the Director of AHW policy and they will serve as ex-officio members. Other DAERA VSAHG officials and representatives from other parts of DAERA (such as Science and Innovation and CAFRE), or other government bodies such as the FSA, could be requested to attend particular Partnership meetings in an advisory capacity.

Resources available to the Partnership

- 7.9 It is anticipated that the Partnership will not have a delegated budget. If, however, it is considered that a specific piece of work or research would help support the delivery of the Framework or the working of the Partnership, it is envisaged that the Partnership could seek financial support from DAERA and / or industry or other stakeholders.
- 7.10 It is suggested that an annual Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholders' Conference could be facilitated by the Partnership (see para 7.13). It is anticipated that funding for this could be provided by DAERA and / or industry or other stakeholders.
- 7.11 It is proposed that the Secretariat for Partnership meetings should be provided by DAERA VSAHG. This role would extend to:
- assisting in the preparation of the annual delivery plan, progress reports and the end-year review;
 - providing the secretariat for the annual Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholders' Conference;
 - maintaining the evidential base and collation of monitoring data; and
 - coordinating communications and information dissemination.

Meetings of the Partnership

- 7.12 It is envisaged that the Partnership should meet formally four times a year, and meetings would align with the planning, monitoring and review cycles for delivery of the Framework. Additional ad hoc meetings could also be agreed by the Partnership.

Facilitating Stakeholder Engagement

- 7.13 It is proposed that an Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholders' Conference will be held annually, providing an important meeting place for stakeholders to engage and share information on animal health and welfare activities. More importantly, the Conference would provide the Partnership with the opportunity to update stakeholders on the delivery of the Framework and annual delivery plan, and to consider key issues and priorities for inclusion in the next year's delivery plan.
- 7.14 At present, a quarterly Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholders' Forum is the main conduit for sharing information between the Department and other stakeholders. A review of the Forum has recently taken place. It is envisaged that an improved Forum will remain an important means of enabling discussions to take place in a formal way and complement the work of the proposed conference.
- 7.15 In addition, it is envisaged that the Partnership will liaise directly with a number of sectoral stakeholder sub groups or representative bodies (cattle, sheep, poultry, pigs, aquaculture, etc). These groups will be managed by the relevant sector, providing links and a channel of communication into their own specific stakeholder groups and co-ordinating views on strategic policy issues relevant to the sector.
- 7.16 Non-sectoral expert groups could also be established by the Partnership to take forward particular themes or initiatives, which may include biosecurity, AMR and trade.

Consultation Question 8:

Do you agree with the proposals, including the interim proposal, for the oversight of Framework delivery and the proposed approach to stakeholder engagement?

Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

Section Three

A New Framework Approach to
Delivering Animal Health and
Welfare Policy In NI:

Capturing Your Views



We would welcome your views on the proposals for the NI Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework as contained within this paper. This section explains how you can respond to our consultation and provide your views on our proposals.

1.0 Capturing stakeholder views - How to Respond

- 1.1 The paper sets out a number of questions, as listed below, to help you respond to our proposals. We would, however, welcome any additional comments you may wish to provide.

Consultation Questions

1. Do you agree that a new approach to developing and delivering animal health and welfare policy in NI is needed? Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
2. Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a long-term framework approach, with a lifespan of ten years, for developing and delivering animal health and welfare policy in NI? Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
3. It is proposed that this Framework will adopt the outcomes-based approach. What benefits or challenges do you feel would result from this approach?
4. Do you agree with the proposed scope of the Framework? Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
5. (i) Do you think that the 5 proposed AHW outcomes work as a set? Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
- (ii) For each individual outcome, please let us know whether it should be included (kept), excluded (removed) or amended. Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
- (iii) For each individual indicator, please let us know whether it should be included (kept), excluded (removed) or amended. Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
6. (i) Do you think that the proposed guiding principles work as a set? Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
- (ii) For each individual principle, please let us know whether it should be included (kept), excluded (removed) or amended. Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.
7. Do you agree with the proposal for an annual planning, monitoring and reporting cycle? Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

8. Do you agree with the proposals, including the interim proposal, for the oversight of Framework delivery and the proposed approach to stakeholder engagement? Please provide any comments you would wish to make to support your response.

- 1.2 You can view and respond to this consultation online at the Northern Ireland Hub - Citizen Space at:

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/daera-animal-health-and-welfare-policy-division/ni-animal-health-and-welfare-strategic-framework>

- 1.3 If you are unable to respond to the consultation online, written responses will also be accepted and should be sent to:

AHS & TSE Branch
Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (NI)
Ballykelly House
111 Ballykelly Road
Limavady
BT49 9HP

- 1.4 Copies of the consultation can be made available on request or in alternative formats.

Tel: 028 7744 2104

Deadline for responses

- 1.5 The closing date for responses is 30 September 2019. Please ensure your response is submitted by that date.

2.0 Statutory Impact Assessments

- 2.1 Statutory impact assessments, which provide detail on the proposals in terms of their impact on industry/stakeholders and the general public, are also included in this consultation package.

3.0 Publication of Responses

- 3.1 The Department will publish a summary of responses following the closing date for receipt of views. Your response, and all other responses to this publication, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of responses and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this publication. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in e-mail responses will not be treated as such a request.

- 3.2 Section 8(e) of the Data Protection Act 2018 permits processing of personal data when necessary for an activity that supports or promotes democratic engagement. Information provided by respondents to this consultation exercise will be held and used for the purposes of the administration of this current exercise and subsequently disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation.
- 3.3 The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation exercise. The Department cannot automatically consider, as confidential, information supplied to it in response to a stakeholder engagement exercise. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation exercise, including information about your identity, should be made public or be treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public, please include an explanation in your response.
- 3.4 This means that information provided by you in response to this consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:
- The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
 - The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature; and
 - Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.
- 3.5 For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see website at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>)

ANNEX A

Abbreviations/Acronyms

ABPs	Animal By-products
AFBI	Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute
AHWSF	Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholder Forum
AHA	Animal Health Australia
AHWBE	Animal Health and Welfare Board for England
AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
APHIS	Animal and Public Health Information System database
ASF	African Swine Fever
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
bTB	Bovine Tuberculosis
CAFRE	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise, DAERA
BVD	Bovine Viral Diarrhoea
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Marine (RoI)
Defra	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
FSA	Food Standards Agency
GB	Great Britain
NFAHW	National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council of Canada
NI	Northern Ireland
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NIFAIS	Northern Ireland Food Animal Information System
OBA	Outcomes-based Accountability
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OSPRI	Partnership between industry and government in New Zealand managing national animal health programmes
PfG	Programme for Government
RoI	Republic of Ireland
RUMA	Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance
UK	United Kingdom
VSAHG	Veterinary Service Animal Health Group, DAERA
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

ANNEX B

Stakeholder Sub Group of Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholder Forum

Organisation	Name
Holstein UK	John Martin
National Sheep Association (NSA)	Edward Adamson
NI Poultry Federation	Margaret Hardy
NI Pork and Bacon Forum	Deirdre McIvor
Ulster Farmers Union (UFU)	Geoff Thompson
Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (USPCA)	Tim Kirby
North of Ireland Veterinary Association (NIVA)	Aurelie Moralis

ANNEX C

Proposed Animal Health & Welfare (AHW) Indicators

Indicators: What we propose to measure	How we propose to measure progress	Links to The Outcomes Framework and broader DAERA policy objectives
Livestock mortality	Livestock mortality can help measure the health and welfare status of the national herd/flock/fish stock. Factors include young animal mortality rates and the impact of livestock management and breeding practices on mortality. DAERA holds substantial data relating to animal mortality (on APHIS/NIFAIS), whilst AFBI gathers data relating to surveillance and post-mortem testing of animals. Data development may be required to establish appropriate baselines for measuring livestock mortality and the collation of relevant data.	Progress on AHW Indicators will contribute to the achievement of broader DAERA policy objectives, and societal outcomes as established in the Outcomes Framework. For example: Outcome 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy By keeping our animals healthy and treating them well, and having safeguards in place that are widely recognised and trusted, we ensure our livestock industry is competitive and trades successfully, contributing to our economic prosperity. The Outcomes Framework identifies 'External Sales' as a measure under Outcome 1. DAERA collates sub sector data relating to the size and performance of the NI food and drinks processing sector (including estimates of the value of sales, value added, profitability and exports). Seven of the sector's ten constituent sub sectors relate to the livestock industry - Animal By-Products, Beef and Sheepmeat, Eggs, Fish, Milk and Milk Products, Piguemeat and Poultrymeat.
Incidence of enzootic disease	DAERA works with industry to deliver on-going disease management and eradication programmes, involving the treatment or removal of unhealthy or 'at risk' animals. Examples of cattle schemes include the bTB eradication programme and the BVD Eradication Scheme. Extensive data is already available with regard to incidence rates for enzootic disease such as bTB and BVD in cattle, but data development may be required for other diseases and livestock sectors.	
Freedom from epizootic and notifiable zoonotic disease	In compliance with EU obligations and OIE disease control codes, DAERA has responsibility for activities (such as surveillance, portal interventions and veterinary certification) which contribute to the prevention, detection and eradication of epizootic diseases e.g. Bluetongue virus, Classical Swine Fever, Foot & Mouth, epizootic avian influenza and notifiable aquatic disease), as well as other notifiable zoonotic diseases such as Brucellosis and TSEs (e.g.	By adopting knowledge-based and innovative approaches, as supported by the DAERA Knowledge Framework and DAERA draft Innovation Strategy, we contribute to economic prosperity. 'Rate of Innovation Activity' is a measure under Outcome 1 of the Outcomes Framework.

	<p>Scrapie and BSE). Extensive data is collected by DAERA as required under EU legislation for surveillance purposes and to provide assurance of disease-free status. Industry also plays a key role in disease surveillance and the production of safe food. Data collected by producers, processors, food business operators and private veterinary practitioners contributes to surveillance data collated by DAERA.</p>	<p>Outcome 2: We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment</p> <p>By keeping our animals healthy and treating them well, and having safeguards in place that are widely recognised and trusted, we ensure a sustainable approach to the farming of animals that respects the environment. The Outcomes Framework identifies greenhouse gas emissions as a measure under Outcome 2. Agriculture is the largest greenhouse gas emitting sector in NI with emissions affected by the number of livestock and animal health. Animal health and livestock management practices contribute to DAERA's policy objectives on reducing carbon emissions.</p> <p>Agriculture accounts for the majority of ammonia emissions in NI, with 92% of agricultural emissions attributed to livestock. Animal health and livestock management practices also contribute to DAERA's policy objectives on reducing ammonia emissions.</p> <p>Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives</p> <p>By keeping our animals healthy and treating them well, and having safeguards in place that are widely recognised and trusted, we protect public health and our food from animal-related diseases. Measures that demonstrate freedom from epizootic and notifiable zoonotic disease (such as surveillance activities), antibiotic usage, IRM controls and emergency preparedness will contribute to Outcome 4 of the Outcomes Framework.</p>
Antibiotic usage	<p>The UK government has committed to introducing targets for the reduction of antibiotic use in livestock and fish farmed for food, and has produced a 20-Year Vision to 2040 to address AMR. This Vision will be supported by a 5-Year UK National Action Plan, for which targets are currently being developed in line with RUMA objectives. DAERA is undertaking data development to establish baseline antimicrobial use and AMR in each of the NI livestock sectors and to identify the level of antimicrobials used per animal species, and is working with the livestock industry to refine and implement NI sector-specific targets.</p>	
Compliance with animal welfare legislation	<p>In compliance with standards laid down in legislation, DAERA undertakes a programme of inspections and sampling to safeguard farmed animal welfare. Checks are carried out at farm premises, markets, slaughterhouses and on animal transportation, and enforcement action is taken where necessary. DAERA gathers data relating to farmed animal welfare inspections; levels of non-compliance are categorised by EU legislation. DAERA also collates data (e.g. on complaints received; prosecutions taken) relating to the welfare of non-farmed animals such as domestic</p>	

	pets and horses (enforced by Councils) and wildlife crime and other criminal activity such as dog fighting (enforced by the PSNI).	Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other By keeping our animals healthy and treating them well, and having safeguards in place that are widely recognised and trusted, we contribute to a safer community. Animal health and welfare is protected through regulatory schemes and legislative compliance.
Controls for animal identification, registration and movement (IRM)	Rules for identifying and registering animals vary according to species and cover the need to use ear tags, herd registers, flock registers and movements documents. DAERA collects data relating to compliance with IRM requirements. DAERA's Information System databases (APHIS/NIFAIS) provide the primary repository for information on animals and their keepers, and have a critical role in delivering statutory IRM responsibilities. It is essential that the information held on our systems is accurate and timely, ensuring traceability of all livestock to aid disease control, and to provide public health and trade assurances to local and international product markets.	Outcome 10: We have created a place where people, want to live and work, to visit and invest. By keeping our animals healthy and treating them well, by having a competitive, innovative livestock industry that contributes to our economic prosperity, and by taking a sustainable approach to the farming of animals that respects the environment, animal health and welfare impacts on wider society, particularly with regard to 'One Health', and contributes to broader NI environmental and rural development policy objectives.
Emergency preparedness	Contingency planning ensures that safeguards are in place to coordinate an effective response to an epizootic disease outbreak in NI. DAERA has a Generic Contingency Plan for controlling, eradicating and recovering from an outbreak of epizootic disease and has development control strategies in place for diseases such as African Horse Sickness, African Swine Fever, Aujeszky's Disease, Bluetongue, Classical Swine Fever, Foot & Mouth Disease and Avian Influenza. DAERA delivers a programme of annual contingency exercises designed to rehearse and test emergency preparedness, which follow a 3 year rolling cycle covering ruminant, pig and avian disease. The effectiveness of these exercises is measured and audited.	

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Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

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Consultation Questions

1. Q. Do you agree that a new approach to developing and delivering animal health and welfare policy in NI is needed?
A. Mid Ulster District Council agrees that a new approach to developing and delivering animal health and welfare policy in Northern Ireland is needed.
2. Q. Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a long-term framework approach, with a lifespan of ten years, for developing and delivering animal health and welfare policy in NI?
A. Mid Ulster District Council would agree with this proposal.
3. Q. It is proposed that this Framework will adopt the outcomes-based approach. What benefits or challenges do you feel would result from this approach?
A. Mid Ulster District Council agrees with the outcomes based approach. Any performance measuring targets selected should not increase the regulatory burden on the Council, and where possible should be taken from current Statutory returns.
4. Q. Do you agree with the proposed scope of the Framework?
A. Mid Ulster District Council would agree with the scope of the framework.
5. Q. Do you think that the five proposed AHW outcomes work as a set?
A. Mid Ulster District Council is content that the AHW outcomes work as a set and that each should be retained.
6. Q. Do you think that the proposed guiding principles work as a set?
A. Mid Ulster District Council is content that the guiding principles work as a set.
7. Q. Do you agree with the proposal for an annual planning, monitoring and reporting cycle?
A. Mid Ulster District Council agrees with the proposal for an annual planning, monitoring and reporting cycle. However, such requirements should not increase the regulatory burden currently placed on the Council. All reporting etc. should be taken from statutory returns already submitted by the Council in this regard.
8. Q. Do you agree with the proposals, including the interim proposal, for the oversight of Framework delivery and the proposed approach to stakeholder engagement?
A. Mid Ulster District Council agrees with the proposal for the oversight of framework delivery and the proposed approach to stakeholder engagement.