

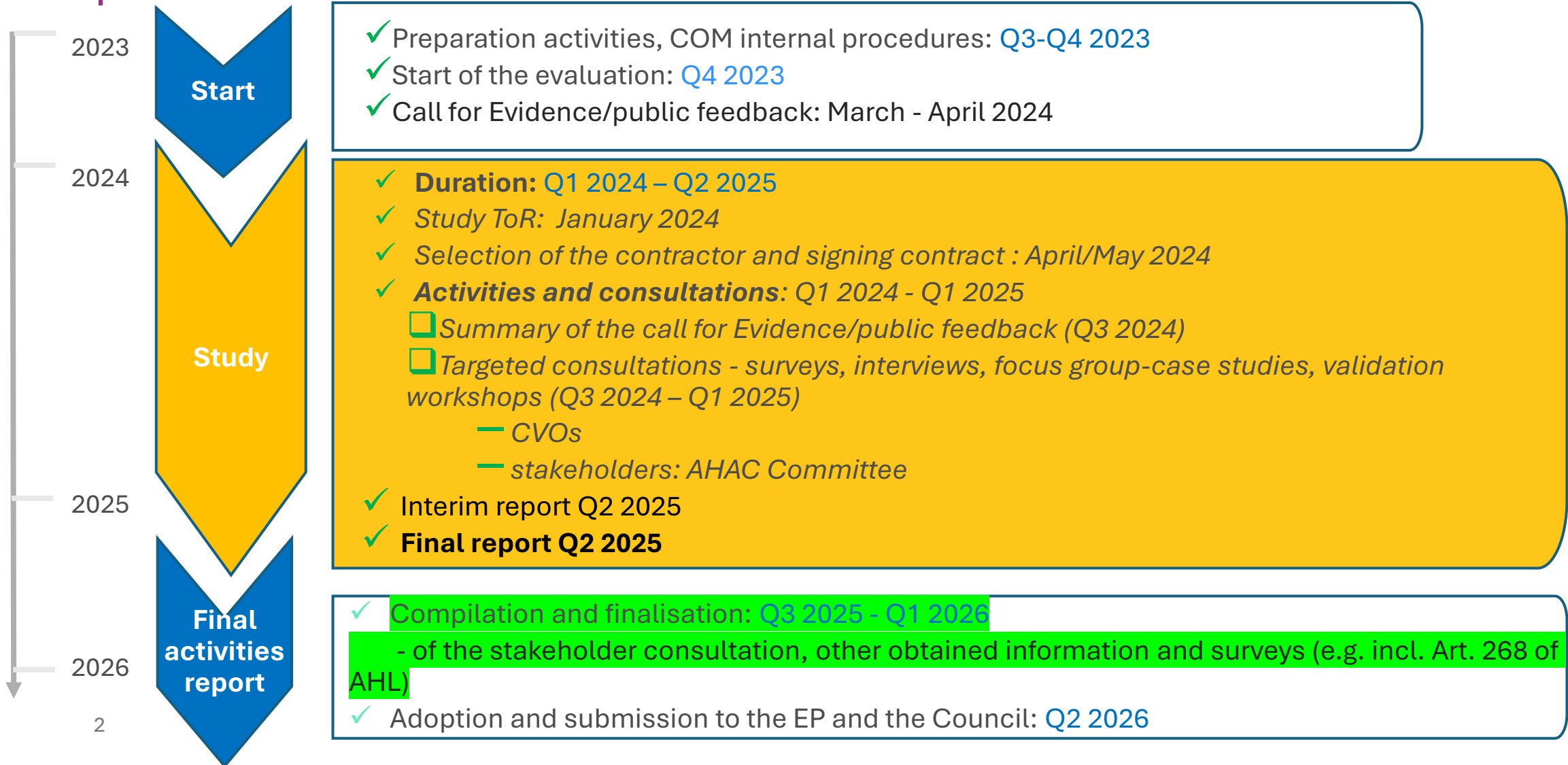


Evaluation of the Animal Health Law (AHL)

*Aquaculture Advisory Council
WORKING GROUP 1 “Finfish” Meeting
24 February 2026*

European Commission,
DG Health and Food Safety
Unit G2 – Animal Health

AHL evaluation process timeline



Objective : Ex-post evaluation of the Animal Health Law, including its adopted delegated

1. *Collection of quantitative and qualitative evidence on the performance and implementation of the Law.*
2. *Is it Fit for purpose? (performance assessment)*
3. *What are possible improvements? (monitoring obligations and simplification)*



Scope



Materials

AHL, including delegated acts

All kept animals, both terrestrial as well as aquatic animals kept for commercial purposes in addition to pet animals, including animals kept in laboratories and zoos.



Geographical

EU27 Member States (MS), but also European Economic Area (EEA) and candidate countries.



Time and cut-off date

2016 – 2023, with a focus on the period since 21 April 2021 till December 2023



Target groups

National Competent Authorities

International organisations, EU bodies, agencies and research organisations

Farmers and Operators

Veterinarians

NGOs & Consumers



Evaluation criteria

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value



Key Findings

Effectiveness

1. What are the **main challenges** in the implementation phase after April 2021?
2. To what extent has the AHL legislation **achieved** its general and specific **objectives**?
3. How do these results **compare** with the **initial expectations**?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the AHL, in particular in relation to specific provisions regarding **clearer responsibilities, priorities for EU intervention, and prevention**, including biosecurity and surveillance?
5. What are the main **shortcomings** that need to be addressed?
6. To what extent do the AHL's risk-based approaches **effectively prioritise resources** and actions based on the severity and likelihood of different threats?
7. Does the AHL enhance the **resilience of animal health systems**?
8. What were the **unexpected or unintended effects** which have occurred during implementation?

What are the main challenges in the implementation phase after April 2021?

Alignment of national legislation with the AHL is not yet complete, and progress is uneven across MS. This is explained by:

- The transition period was hampered by external and internal challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and delays in adopting necessary EU-level acts. Despite EU support measures, most Member States were not fully prepared by April 2021.
- The European Commission actively supported Member States during the transition to the AHL through a combination of transitional legal measures, targeted guidance, and capacity-building through the Better Training for Safer Food programme.
- Implementation has proven resource-intensive and legally complex, with stakeholders highlighting difficulties in interpreting the layered legal framework and unclear interactions with related legislation.
- The induced change in the underlying logic and institutional practice introduced by the AHL necessitates sustained investment in communication, training, and digital infrastructure to support full operationalisation and active stakeholder engagement.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent has the AHL legislation achieved its general and specific objectives?

AHL represents a major improvement from the previous reactive eradication model to a prevention-focused approach. However, the national-level implementation has lagged behind expectations, with many planned national legislative changes only partially in place.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

For the general objectives:

- Successfully consolidated multiple pieces of previous legislation into a single, simplified, and **clearer legal framework** which has improved clarity on roles and structured procedures.
- Since the AHL's entry into force, several Member States have achieved **new or expanded disease-free statuses** (e.g. BVD, IHN, VHS), showing tangible progress in disease control and eradication across the EU.
- **Tools** for prevention and preparedness (animal health visits, contingency plans and simulation exercises) have **strengthened early detection, biosecurity and response**, but their application and updating remain inconsistent across Member States
- **Tools** such as eradication programmes, disease-free status, and regionalisation/compartmentalisation, supported by updated contingency planning and simulation exercises, are seen as **effective in managing outbreaks and help to prevent national-level trade bans**. Nevertheless, enforcement and plan updates remain inconsistent across MS.
- Strengthened traceability provisions and regionalisation/compartmentalisation measures have **improved the ability to contain diseases and allow proportionate restrictions**, although some market disturbances have occurred
- Categorisation system and risk-based approach for surveillance, AH visits, movement controls, and vaccination strategies allows for **prioritisation of resources and proportional control measures**

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

For the specific objectives:

- The AHL has largely **simplified and clarified roles and responsibilities** across the animal health chain, but practical implementation is still complex. Stakeholders report difficulty navigating numerous delegated and implementing acts, and some perceive an uneven distribution of responsibilities.
- The AHL's categorisation system offers **flexibility and proportionate, science-based control measures for emerging diseases**. However, concerns remain over adaptability, timeliness of updates and overly prescriptive measures (e.g. vaccination restrictions), prompting calls for a more dynamic system that reflects evolving epidemiological and climate contexts.
- **Consistency with animal welfare and food safety:** While no legal contradictions have been identified, stakeholder views on alignment vary, highlight the need for better communication and risk-based oversight
- The AHL has **helped reduce the socio-economic impact of animal diseases** by improving awareness, preparedness and response. Regionalisation has enabled trade from unaffected areas, supporting a strong recovery in intra-EU trade and bolstering export capacity and trust in disease-free declarations, though its impact on the internal market is viewed as moderate.



Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

How do these results compare with the initial expectations?

The AHL provides a flexible and coherent legal framework that **enables Member States to tailor disease prevention and control measures to national contexts while maintaining alignment with EU legislation**. Its harmonised approach has **supported internal market stability** and reduced trade disruptions.

- The AHL marks a shift towards a proactive, risk-based and preventive approach, moving away from eradication as the primary strategy. This has enhanced preparedness, improved coordination across Member States, and strengthened outbreak response capacities.
- While the AHL framework is robust, alignment of national legislations has been more complex than expected, resulting in current delays and inconsistencies in implementation across Member States.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the AHL, in particular in relation to specific provisions, regarding clearer responsibilities, priorities for EU intervention, and prevention, including biosecurity and surveillance?

Clearer responsibilities: The AHL clarified legal responsibilities and increased stakeholder awareness, especially for veterinarians and authorities, but gaps remain in terms of engagement and communications, especially with farmers.

Priorities for EU Intervention: disease categorisation and regionalisation support EU-level risk-based interventions and trade continuity. Some stakeholders felt excluded from decision-making, and inconsistent implementation undermines the effectiveness of EU-level priorities.

Regionalisation measures under the AHL have proven effective in maintaining operations and trade in disease-free areas during outbreaks.

Prevention (Biosecurity and Surveillance): The AHL improved access to tools like vaccination and enhanced biosecurity and surveillance, notably in intensive sectors. Implementation is uneven across MSs and sectors; small farms face higher burdens, and tailored guidance is lacking (e.g. extensive outdoor systems)

The AHL has harmonised and modernised the EU's animal health legal framework, enabling the use of tools such as vaccination and harmonised eradication programmes. Positive examples include HPAI and BTV vaccination campaigns, which have supported disease control and safeguarding trade.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

What are the main shortcomings that need to be addressed?

Lack of clear guidance and support for farmers regarding biosecurity and disease detection protocols. Educational campaigns and training are inconsistently implemented across Member States.

While the AHL does not regulate financial support, **stakeholders consistently identified the absence of robust funding mechanisms**, both at the national and EU levels, as a major barrier to effective disease prevention and emergency response.

Stakeholders suggest that more **balanced cost-sharing mechanisms involving the broader value chain** (e.g. food industry, pharma) could enhance sustainability and encourage proactive prevention, improving overall implementation of the AHL



Answering
tomorrow's
challenges
today



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent do the AHL's risk-based approaches effectively prioritise resources and actions based on the severity and likelihood of different threats?

The AHL's risk-based approach **effectively allows for tailored disease control** to specific risks related to disease type, species, region, or farming system. By focusing on high-risk situations, it enables **more efficient resource use**. This approach **is widely supported by stakeholders** for its practicality, scientific foundation (notably from EFSA), and adaptability to national needs.

While the AHL's categorisation system was built to guide proportional responses, stakeholders raised **concerns that some widely present diseases like ASF and HPAI are no longer feasible to eradicate**, suggesting a need to shift from eradication to long-term management.

Stakeholders have called for more **frequent updates to disease categories** and increased flexibility, particularly for **vector-borne and emerging diseases** affected by climate change.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Does the AHL enhance transparency in decision-making processes related to animal health?

The AHL has fostered greater transparency and openness in decision-making; however, limitations remain in the deeper and more consistent involvement of stakeholders

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Does the AHL enhance the resilience of animal health systems?

The AHL has **enhanced the EU's capacity to detect, contain, and respond to outbreaks** through structured mechanisms like zoning, regionalisation, and traceability. These tools allow for targeted restrictions rather than blanket bans, helping maintain internal market stability even during disease events.

Although concerns were raised about cross-border movement restrictions, particularly for non-commercial activities, no significant trade disruptions have been directly linked to the AHL. On the contrary, **the law has generally facilitated the safe movement of animals** and products by enabling disease control without halting commerce.

Stakeholders acknowledged the AHL's contributions to resilience but also highlighted its **limitations in swiftly addressing emerging diseases, especially under changing climate and ecological conditions.**



Answering
tomorrow's
challenges
today



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

What were the unexpected or unintended effects which have occurred during implementation?

The AHL implementation has required **substantial administrative effort and resources**. The process has been slower than anticipated, with ongoing challenges in aligning national laws and fully operationalising flexibility mechanisms granted to MS.

Tools such as **regionalisation are not always applied or recognised consistently between Member States**. This lack of coordination reduces the effectiveness of the AHL's safeguards for trade continuity during outbreaks and may weaken confidence in intra-EU animal health management systems.

Efficiency

- 1. Has the implementation of the AHL generated incremental costs and benefits for different stakeholders? Are the costs proportionate to the benefits of the AHL?*
- 2. Were the costs and benefits distributed as expected and of the magnitude expected? Are there significant differences between Member States?*
- 3. Are there additional regulatory burdens and/or savings stemming from the implementation of the AHL? What elements of the legislation generate administrative burden and/or are overly complex?*
- 4. Have any inefficiencies been identified? How do these impact different stakeholders?*

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Has the implementation of the AHL generated incremental costs and benefits for different stakeholders? Are the costs proportionate to the benefits of the AHL?

General Comments:

Scientific literature broadly agrees that the AHL marks a paradigm shift toward a risk-based, preventive approach, with **long-term benefits expected to outweigh costs**. This transition **requires empirical validation over time**. Epidemiological and economic modelling are promising tools to estimate the impacts of control strategies but depend on robust datasets and long observation periods, and therefore lie outside the immediate scope of this study.

The current implementation level across Member States (MSs) does not allow for a precise assessment of incremental costs, except in a few cases. Consequently, the study focuses primarily on perceived costs and benefits as reported by key stakeholder groups.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Has the implementation of the AHL generated incremental costs and benefits for different stakeholders? Are the costs proportionate to the benefits of the AHL?

Findings from desk-based research show that preventive, cross-sector approaches improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness. By focusing on prevention and collaboration across sectors, the AHL optimises resources, avoids redundant efforts, and enhances overall health outcomes while lowering long-term costs. In particular, biosecurity measures are low-cost for high-value animals, but emergency responses, like culling during outbreaks, result in significant financial burdens.

Compliance costs vary based on production scale and animal type. Small-scale farmers and those in aquaculture face higher burdens. Key cost drivers include biosecurity investments, veterinary visits, record-keeping, and compliance training.

Quantifying the benefits of preventive actions is inherently difficult, and this is a limitation in the analysis.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Perceived Costs



Smaller farms are more affected than large, intensive operations. (biosecurity measures, veterinary services, training requirements)



Indirect costs include training and digital tools.
Workforce shortages



Increased administrative workload due to the transition period
Challenges in digitalisation and adapting systems to support AHL compliance.

Perceived Benefits

Mixed or limited benefits so far at the level of operators.

Some acknowledge clearer market rules and reduced disease risks.

Perceived limited changes

Improved disease prioritization
Clearer regulatory framework
Stronger biosecurity enforcement
Greater EU-level harmonisation

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Were the costs and benefits distributed as expected and of the magnitude expected? Are there significant differences between Member States?

Costs and benefits of AHL implementation **vary widely between EU countries**, depending on national resources, existing animal health systems, and legislative readiness. Some invested early in extra staff and IT systems to handle new requirements, while others struggled with limited resources leading to uneven progress. The AHL has led to a redistribution of responsibilities, placing **more accountability on industry stakeholders**.

Member States with previously weaker animal health systems see more benefit from the AHL. In contrast, Member States with robust pre-existing systems experience fewer marginal benefits but face additional administrative requirements.

The implementation of AHL requirements varies across the EU , as Member States started from different levels of ability and used different approaches to include them in their national systems

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Are there additional regulatory burdens and/or savings stemming from the implementation of the AHL? What elements of the legislation generate administrative burden and/or are overly complex?

Stakeholders reported that the need to navigate **multiple new EU regulations with which they are not yet familiar, and sometimes the need to understand the links with national legislations**, creates administrative **complexity** and, in some instances, extra paperwork.

The available **flexibility** to provide derogation or to base requirements on risk assessment granted by AHL is currently **underused by NCAs**.

A critical sentiment, especially from hobbyists and small farmers, is that the administrative measures of the AHL do not always scale to the level of risk or the size of operation.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Have any inefficiencies been identified? How do these impact different stakeholders?

The AHL broadened requirements to **include many previously unregistered animal keepers** (such as hobby breeders), and NCAs struggled to identify and register all these small keepers promptly. Many hobbyists were initially unaware of the new registration duties, making enforcement patchy and **resource-intensive in the early phase of rollout**.

Farmers question the cost-benefit balance of new obligations. They acknowledge that many AHL-related tasks (vet care, disease monitoring) were already standard practice, but new elements have introduced extra costs. For example, mandatory Animal Health veterinary visits require time and money and some feel these added costs have not yet delivered clear improvements in animal health.

Stakeholders report **long processing times for the electronic health certificates** needed to move animals across borders.

Veterinarians face a higher administrative workload. This increase in administrative tasks is seen as an inefficient use of a specialised workforce's time, potentially pulling veterinarians away from essential animal health work

Stakeholder perceptions may be influenced by transitional difficulties, as the benefits of AHL measures are not yet fully realised.

Coherence

1. To what extent is the legislation **coherent within itself**? Have the different elements of the legislation operated together to achieve all the objectives of the legislation coherently?
2. Is this legislation coherent with **other related EU pieces of legislation and policies**?
3. To what extent has the implementation of the AHL put in place a coherent animal health policy **within the EU and in the territory of the Member States**? Did the implementation of the AHL reveal any incoherent elements internally or externally, in particular with national animal health measures and systems?
4. To what extent does the AHL **facilitate international collaboration** on animal health to address global challenges and promote harmonisation of standards?
5. To what extent does the AHL promote **cooperation with relevant international organisations**, the exchange of information and joint response measures?
6. To what extent does the intervention comply with the **'do no significant harm'** principle?
7. To what extent is the intervention coherent with the **EU sustainable development goals**? How does the AHL relate to and contribute to strategic policy objectives, among others **One Health, Green Deal, a Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas and the sustainable competitiveness of the agri-food sector**? In particular, does the AHL strengthen the integration of a One Health approach that recognises the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health?

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent is the legislation coherent within itself? Have the different elements of the legislation operated together to achieve all the objectives of the legislation coherently?

The AHL demonstrates **a high degree of internal coherence**, as confirmed by a triangulated analysis of surveys, interviews, and case studies; observed inconsistencies are minor and do not compromise its structural or conceptual integrity.

The **AHL and its delegated and implementing acts generally operate together coherently**, with recent amendments improving alignment, though targeted refinements (e.g. clearer definitions) are needed to further enhance clarity and effectiveness.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Is this legislation coherent with other related EU pieces of legislation and policies?

Strong alignment between the AHL and EU food safety legislation, particularly in areas such as disease prevention, biosecurity, and antimicrobial reduction.

Stakeholders mentioned that future development with animal welfare legislation, notably the Animal Transport Regulation, would need to be aligned with the AHL.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent has the implementation of the AHL put in place a coherent animal health policy within the EU and in the territory of the Member States? Did the implementation of the AHL reveal any incoherent elements internally or externally, in particular with national animal health measures and systems?

Most Member States are still in the process of aligning national frameworks with the AHL's provisions, **indicating that full coherence has not yet been achieved**. Its implementation across EU Member States has been uneven due to differing national legal systems, institutional capacities, and starting points. Some countries required minimal adjustments to their national systems, while others needed substantial legal changes, reflecting their diverse starting points and institutional contexts.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent does the AHL facilitate international collaboration on animal health to address global challenges and promote harmonisation of standards?

The AHL is **broadly recognised as a valuable and technically robust framework aligned with international standards**, notably WOAHA, facilitating harmonisation in areas like trade, disease prevention, and antimicrobial resistance.

While it has influenced neighbouring regions and export-focused sectors, concerns about trade barriers persist (due to varied uptake by third countries.)

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent does the AHL promote cooperation with relevant international organisations, the exchange of information and joint response measures?

The **AHL supports international cooperation indirectly** by aligning with the EU's external engagement strategy, enabling active participation in standard-setting bodies such as WOAHA.

Cooperation with third countries is significantly **driven by trade interests**, as compliance with AHL rules is a prerequisite for market access to the EU.

The AHL has improved **the transparency and sharing of scientific and technical information**, notably via EFSA, and has facilitated joint responses to transboundary animal health threats.

While cooperation on disease surveillance is evident (e.g. HPAI, ASF), **full integration between EU and WOAHA information systems (ADIS and WAHIS) is still pending**, requiring further progress.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent does the intervention comply with the 'do no significant harm' principle?

While the AHL does not inherently cause environmental harm, **its interaction with EU biodiversity and circular economy objectives is limited.**

The AHL supports disease prevention in wildlife, contributing to biodiversity protection, but measures like mass culling for disease control can conflict with conservation and rewilding efforts.

Practical challenges in wildlife disease surveillance highlight the need for better integration with environmental policies.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent does the AHL promote cooperation with relevant international organisations, the exchange of information and joint response measures?

The AHL has strengthened the EU's role in international standard-setting bodies, particularly WOAHA, and improved global information exchange on transboundary animal diseases. This is largely driven by commercial imperatives and active EU participation in relevant fora.

The AHL's contribution to international cooperation is largely indirect and often secondary to broader EU external policy and trade objectives. Additional efforts to promote awareness and provide technical support could help reinforce the visibility and application of the AHL among international stakeholders.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent does the intervention comply with the 'do no significant harm' principle?

While the AHL does not inherently cause environmental harm, its interaction with EU biodiversity and circular economy objectives is limited.

The AHL supports disease prevention in wildlife, contributing to biodiversity protection, but measures like mass culling for disease control can conflict with conservation and rewilding efforts.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent is the intervention coherent with the EU sustainable development goals? How does the AHL relate to and contribute to strategic policy objectives, among others One Health, Green Deal, a Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas and the sustainable competitiveness of the agri-food sector? In particular, does the AHL strengthen the integration of a One Health approach that recognises the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health?

The AHL demonstrates **strong conceptual coherence** with key EU strategies, notably the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy, and the One Health approach

Civil society, academia, and animal health actors largely view the AHL as supporting EU sustainability goals, while veterinarians, national authorities, and industry stakeholders highlight limited practical impact due **to persistent implementation challenges** and uneven application across Member States.

The AHL embeds One Health principles at the legislative level and supports risk-based disease management, but its practical integration, especially of environmental health and multidisciplinary collaboration, remains underdeveloped.

Relevance

1. *Is the AHL fit and relevant to current and emerging needs regarding Animal health?*
2. *To what extent is the AHL able to adapt and adequately reply to evolving threats and challenges in animal health?*
3. *Are there issues that arose after the adoption of the Regulation that would require further attention in view of the objectives pursued?*

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Is the AHL fit and relevant to current and emerging needs regarding Animal health?

The AHL is **fit and relevant to current and emerging needs** regarding Animal health. The categorisation of diseases is seen as an improvement

For the quickly spreading **vector-borne disease**, such as BT, the **room to adapt** to local circumstances resulted in control measures (i.e. vaccination policies) that **differed between MS leading to challenges in trade and transport between MS.**

Despite the wealth of training provided by the BTSF programme, the relevant sector representatives and business operators are not well reached by NCAs in disseminating the acquired knowledge to relevant stakeholders, leading to **suboptimal awareness of sector obligations.**

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Key limitations

The implementation of animal health visits by veterinarians are not detailed in the AHL, IAs or DAs, which inherits a risk of unequal fulfilment in MS, that may lead to uneven emphasis on disease prevention on farm practices with risks for a higher disease burden or an unnecessary burden for specific group of farmers.

The implementation of biosecurity measures are not detailed in the AHL, IAs or DAs, which inherits a risk of unequal fulfilment in MS, that may lead to enhanced risks of disease outbreaks or an unnecessary burden for specific group of farmers.

There is no distinction in the AHL, IAs or DAs between varying animal production systems (i.e. organic, intensive, small-holder farm, industrial enterprises) which challenges the implementation of risk based prevention measures

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent is the AHL able to adapt and adequately reply to evolving threats and challenges in animal health?

The AHL is, to a large extent, **able to adapt and adequately reply to evolving threats and challenges** in animal health by using a harmonised approach.

The AHL **can address new disease threats** with uniform minimum requirements for diseases listed in categories A and B, or with more flexibility for disease prevention and control measures in EU MS for diseases listed in categories C, D, and E.

Separate EU legislation exists to manage diseases such as Salmonella and TSEs. Consequently, these diseases did not undergo the same process of listing, categorisation, and subsequent prevention and control measures as outlined by the AHL. **To simplify compliance and implementation, it would be beneficial to create a unified legal framework encompassing all farm-impacting diseases, including Salmonella and TSEs.**

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Key limitations

Depending on the categorisation, **flexibility** for disease prevention and control measures for diseases listed in categories C, D, and E **can lead to a heterogeneous distribution of mitigation measures**, which are beneficial for controlling the disease in the Member States but can impact intra-EU trade

The AHL has **limited options to uniform prevention and monitoring activities for new emerging diseases**, in wildlife, including zoonoses, but complementary activities at EU and MS level MS to address these issues are ongoing.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

Are there issues that arose after the adoption of the Regulation that would require further attention in view of the objectives pursued?

For the **quickly spreading vector-borne disease**, such as BT, the room to adapt to local circumstances resulted in **different approaches between Member States that led to trade obstructions.**

COVID-19 in mink and BT in ruminants were two issues that arose after adoption of the Regulation, that were addressed in the EU MS affected. MS learned to work with the AHL in this challenging situation. To a large extent the AHL including DA an IA worked according to expectations.

Improved biosecurity in pig farms leads to less endemic disease and less antibiotic usage in those farms, which requires further attention for prevention on cattle (veal) and poultry farming.

Key limitations:

The initial notification process in ADIS requires comprehensive information, which may be burdensome in urgent situations.



Answering
tomorrow's
challenges
today



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



EU added value

1. *To what extent has AHL added value compared to what could have been reasonably achieved by Member States acting alone*
2. *To what extent did this intervention strike a balance between action at EU level and national action? Is it proportionate?*
3. *What adaptations could increase the additionality of EU-level action?*

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent has AHL added value compared to what could have been reasonably achieved by Member States acting alone

Clear evidence that the same results would not have been achieved by national animal health measures and systems alone.

To what extent did this intervention strike a balance between action at EU level and national action? Is it proportionate?

The AHL **has provided a balance between action at the EU level and national action** by providing different categories of diseases (Lists A-E) , which differ in the required uniformity of interventions at the EU and national levels.

However, for diseases categorised under lists C-E, **when the spread and occurrence of the diseases change**, such as with BT in ruminants, or avian influenza in mammals **further EU intervention might improve uniformity** in disease prevention and control measures.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent has AHL added value compared to what could have been reasonably achieved by Member States acting alone?

The AHL has contributed to improved coordination of animal disease prevention and control measures within the EU.

The AHL has added value: harmonized rules for preventing and controlling critical List A and B animal diseases across the EU, resulting in overall efficiency gains, a level playing field, and improved intra-EU trade.

Key limitations:

Lack of detail in prescribing the requirements for animal health visits and biosecurity in the AHL, DA and IA leaves the implementation of these elements at the discretion of the MS and has led to difference in advancement of these measures across EU MS.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

To what extent did this intervention strike a balance between action at EU level and national action? Is it proportionate?

The AHL has provided a balance between coordination at EU level and national action by providing different categories of diseases (Lists A-E) , that differ in required uniformity of interventions at EU and national level.

The balance between actions at EU level and national level are overall proportionate, but can be challenged notably for diseases categorised under lists C-E, when multiple MS are faced with outbreaks and implement different control strategies. In such cases more EU intervention might improve uniformity in disease prevention and control measures.

The harmonized framework to control outbreaks for cat A and B diseases with AHL and its DA and IA ensures a uniform approach between MS. For category C-E diseases and non-listed diseases MS have substantial to take into account local circumstances.

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Coherence

Relevance

EU added value

What adaptations could increase the additionality of EU-level action?

Clear, structured guidance from EU towards more streamlined national, regional and local uniformity in approaches for disease prevention and control for public and private stakeholders would enhance understanding and accessibility of the regulatory measures and support compliance

EU support for tailored, sector-specific guidance improves regulatory clarity and can increase additionality of EU-level action

National, regional and local standards may vary in content to accommodate regional variation, but should lead to a more consistent level of risk-prevention in MS

Sharing good practice in biosecurity requirements and strategic use of the veterinary workforce would strengthen implementation capacity in EU MS.



Answering
tomorrow's
challenges
today



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



Study team recommendations

EU level recommendation

Repeat this evaluation exercise when sufficient data becomes available

Prioritise the implementation of controls (audits) to ensure that national authorities are meeting their legal obligations under the AHL

Monitoring progress based on solid indicators, such as those ones in the intervention logic

National level recommendation

Establishment of a cooperation framework at the national level developing training for national stakeholders e.g. risk-based assessment, navigating AHL legal frameworks, biosecurity.

Regional platforms: regular exchange between regions within a MS and EU counterparts.

Enhancing national-level surveillance networks and ensuring alignment with EU-level indicators to maintain a level playing field across Member States

Evaluation of the Animal Health Law – web page

PAGE CONTENTS

- About the Animal Health Law
- General Q&As
- Information material**
- Evaluation of the Animal Health Law
- Related links

Evaluation of the Animal Health Law

According to Article 282, the Commission must evaluate [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#) together with the delegated acts and submit the evaluation results in a report to the European Parliament and the Council by 22 April 2026.

This comprehensive evaluation aims to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and proportionate, coherency and EU added value of the AHL (the basic Regulation) and the delegated acts adopted on its basis. It is an essential process to assess that the legal framework delivers the necessary tools for the competent authorities, operators, and other stakeholders to effectively prevent and control animal diseases within the EU single market.

The evaluation will also determine whether the framework is easy to understand and apply building confidence in animals and their products in the single market. Potential for simplification and proportionality of benefits and costs will be looked at with particular attention.

More information could be found on the ["have your say"-page](#).

In March 2024, the Commission launched a [Call for Evidence](#), receiving feedback from **942 stakeholders** across the EU, which forms the basis for ongoing discussions on how to improve the Animal Health Law and is summarised in the [Factual summary of the call for evidence of the evaluation of the Animal Health Law](#). More information on the recent evaluation process, consultation can be found on the ["have your say"-page](#).

The summary report of this consultation, which highlights key stakeholder feedback was discussed by the [Animal Health Advisory Committee](#) during its meeting on **5 September 2024**. **The minutes of this meeting**, including the key points and outcomes from the meeting can be found [Animal Health Advisory Committee page](#).

To support the evaluation process, an Evaluation Study was launched in May 2026. The study is coordinated by a consortium led by Ecorys and involves a targeted consultation with key stakeholders, including:

- National competent authorities
- Members of the Animal Health Advisory Committee

This consultation will use mix of surveys, focus groups, case studies and interviews to gather comprehensive input from stakeholders in the EU and non-EU countries. For further details on the study and consultation activities, please contact the evaluation team directly at evaluationAHL@ecorys.com.

NEXT steps

- The assessment of commissions on the findings is ongoing.
- The draft WSD and final report are to be submitted to the Council and European Parliament by April 2026.



THANK YOU !!!!