



# LEVERAGING ANIMAL HEALTH IN CLIMATE STRATEGIES: A PATHWAY FOR ACHIEVING NDCS

## CASE FOR ACTION

**Animal agriculture is on the front lines of climate change.** Livestock systems are both a source of emissions and acutely vulnerable to climate-related shocks, including growing numbers of disease outbreaks. Livestock provide nutrition, livelihoods, and economic value, particularly in low-and-middle income countries, that is threatened by climate change.

**Current climate strategies often overlook a powerful and practical tool for addressing**

**livestock sector's footprint: animal health.** Only 3% of second-round NDCs include animal health as a mitigation and/or adaptation tool, and only 0.01–0.02% of global climate finance is directed to livestock health.<sup>1,2</sup>

**This omission leaves a critical gap in efforts to reduce emissions and enhance resilience.**

Integrating animal health into national climate action is essential to close the mitigation gap while delivering food security and economic stability.

## PROVEN SOLUTION FOR NDCS

**Animal health is a critical but underused lever for reducing emissions** that when combined with related innovations in areas like genetics and rumen manipulation can reduce livestock emissions by an estimated 23%, according to FAO.<sup>3</sup> Interventions like vaccination, parasite control, and diagnostics are established and deliver rapid impact.

**Importantly, these solutions are also scalable and provide co-benefits.** Many countries already operate national disease control programs and veterinary health systems. The opportunity lies in connecting national animal health activities with climate goals. This makes animal health a “no-regrets” investment that delivers co-benefits for adaptation, food security, and livelihoods, often using systems that are already in place.

**Current climate plans fall short of global targets, and animal health can help change that.** This shortfall, called the “mitigation gap”, is the gap

between planned actions and the emissions cuts needed. In agriculture, that gap is 60% with livestock emissions reductions representing the second largest missing piece.<sup>4</sup> Better integration of animal health could help close this gap while delivering benefits for farmers, animals, and economies.

**A new guide outlines a step-by-step approach for leveraging animal health in NDCs and climate strategies to reduce livestock emissions. It is from HealthforAnimals and Action for Animal Health, featuring a contribution by the Environmental Defense Fund.**



Read below for a summary and download the full report using the QR code.

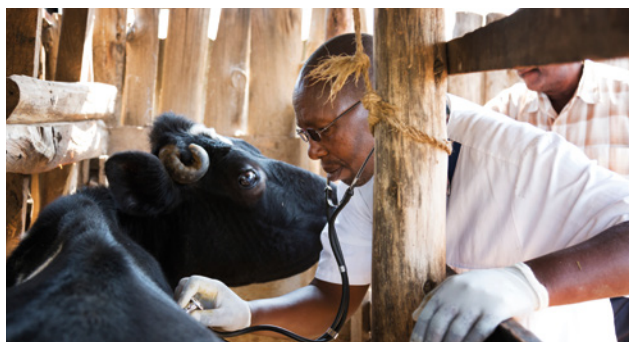
# HOW TO DELIVER ON CLIMATE STRATEGIES THROUGH ANIMAL HEALTH

*The full step-by-step Guide can be found at [HealthforAnimals.org/Guide](https://HealthforAnimals.org/Guide) or by scanning the QR code on page 1.*

Delivering on national climate strategies through improved livestock health requires thoughtful planning and action. HealthforAnimals and Action for Animal Health have developed a step-by-step guide centered around three pillars for success: integration, execution, and measurement. This work aims to leverage existing programs and infrastructure that countries already have in place, which means climate action can be delivered without significant new outlays.

**The first step is to integrate animal health into climate strategies** by recognizing its role in national agricultural and climate priorities. This involves using established and emerging frameworks to build a country-specific understanding of how disease affects productivity and emissions. The Guide from HealthforAnimals and Action for Animal Health provides clear policy actions including:

- **Assessing the livestock sector's role** in the national economy, food systems, and greenhouse gas profile
- **Analyzing baseline emissions** from livestock production, including total emissions and emissions intensity
- **Estimating the impact of animal disease** on productivity losses and associated emissions
- **Mapping existing veterinary infrastructure**, services, and policies that influence livestock health
- **Modeling future risks and scenarios** for animal health under different climate change trajectories (e.g., 1.5°C, 2°C, 3°C)
- **Engaging value chain actors** and identifying barriers to uptake of interventions, including regulatory, financial, and behavioral constraints



**FAO calls animal health ‘one of the key action points to reduce livestock GHGs’ and should be integrated into NDCs.<sup>3</sup>**

**The second step is to move from strategy to execution.** Many countries already operate national vaccination campaigns, disease control programs, and veterinary extension systems. These efforts can be adapted and expanded to explicitly support climate goals. The Guide from HealthforAnimals and Action for Animal Health provides policy actions that countries can undertake including:

- **Building capacity** across public and private veterinary systems, including workforce training and infrastructure
- **Developing technical expertise** at the intersection of animal health and climate policy
- **Engaging development partners and donors** to secure funding and technical support
- **Establishing Official Control Programs (OCPs)** for high-priority endemic or transboundary diseases
- **Supporting industry-led programs** and public-private partnerships that extend reach and build producer trust
- **Leveraging scientific networks** to guide decision-making and ensure interventions are evidence-based
- **Strengthening data systems** to improve coordination, innovation, and monitoring



**The third step is to measure, report and verify impact** to demonstrate progress and, where needed, unlock climate finance. Key actions to establishing a robust MRV system that are outlined in the Guide from HealthforAnimals Action for Animal Health include:

- **Linking interventions to measurable indicators** aligned with NDCs and national plans
- **Implementing robust data stewardship** to track and manage program outputs
- **Scheduling evaluations and reporting cycles** to meet international standards
- **Developing livestock emissions inventories** using IPCC guidance and national data
- **Building verification capacity** within veterinary services to ensure accuracy and transparency

**Implementing these steps can help nations to leverage a tool – animal health – that will reduce livestock emissions in a meaningful, measurable manner, while delivering the co-benefits of increased farm productivity, better animal welfare, and improved public health.**

## TURNING POTENTIAL INTO ACTION

Many countries already operate animal disease control programs and veterinary outreach systems. These provide a strong foundation that can be adapted to also support climate goals, which enables countries to unlock measurable emissions reductions, boost resilience, and deliver progress on their NDCs.

This guide provides a clear, step-by-step approach to help countries align animal health with national climate strategies. It outlines practical actions and reporting tools that can help turn existing veterinary infrastructure into a climate solution.

As the Environmental Defense Fund writes in the foreword,



*“Animal health is not peripheral to addressing climate change. It is central to answering the call for solutions that provide multiple wins.”*

Leveraging animal health as a climate solution creates a unique opportunity to deliver on global goals through practical action and shared commitment.

**HealthforAnimals and Action for Animal Health are available for consultation with anyone seeking to implement this guide. Contact us at [info@healthforanimals.org](mailto:info@healthforanimals.org) or download the report at [HealthforAnimals.org/Guide](https://HealthforAnimals.org/Guide)**