

# WOAH Members' capacity to deal with animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters in Europe

Paolo Dalla Villa

18th January, 2024



World  
Organisation  
for Animal  
Health  
Founded as OIE

Organisation  
mondiale  
de la santé  
animale  
Fondée en tant qu'OIE

Organización  
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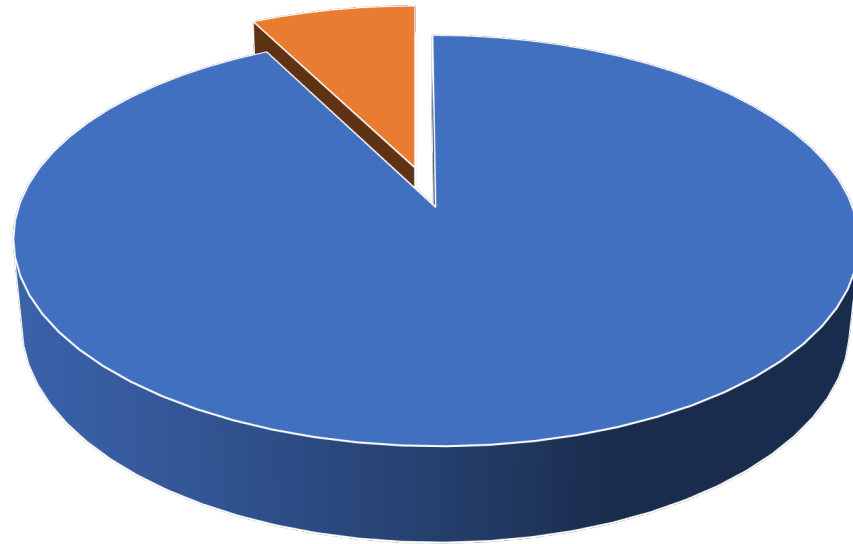
**A regional needs assessment exercise was conducted** in the frame 2021-2023 Action Plan, with the aim to:

- identify priorities and needs, including VS preparedness and capacity levels, geographical scope and possible disaster scenarios in Europe;
- plan the next WOAHA Platform activities on this topic.

Within this context, a survey on the levels of **“Veterinary Services’ preparedness for dealing with animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters”** has been distributed to the 53 WOAHA European Members during the second trimester of 2021, in collaboration with the LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY.



# An outstanding number of participants....

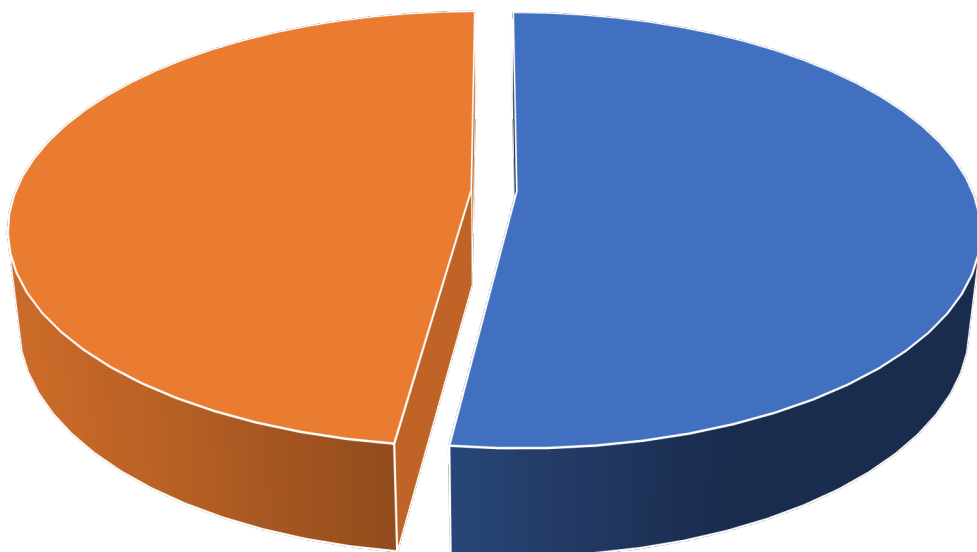


**92 %  
Completion of  
Survey**

■ Completed    ■ Not Completed



Q5 - Is **animal welfare in disaster** events incorporated into your national/regional/local **regulatory framework**?

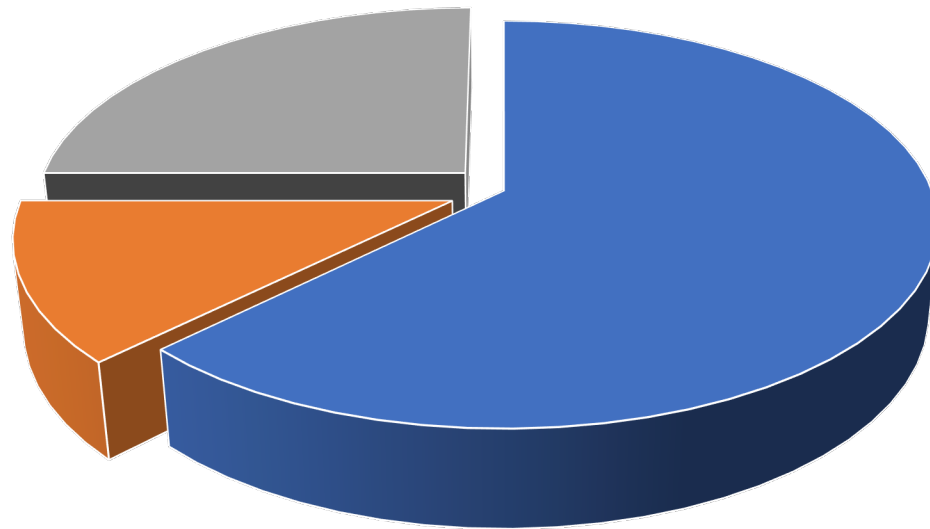


■ Yes ■ No

**52 %**  
**Incorporated**  
**Animal Welfare**



Q7 - Is there a **Competent Authority that has the legal responsibility** to manage animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters?

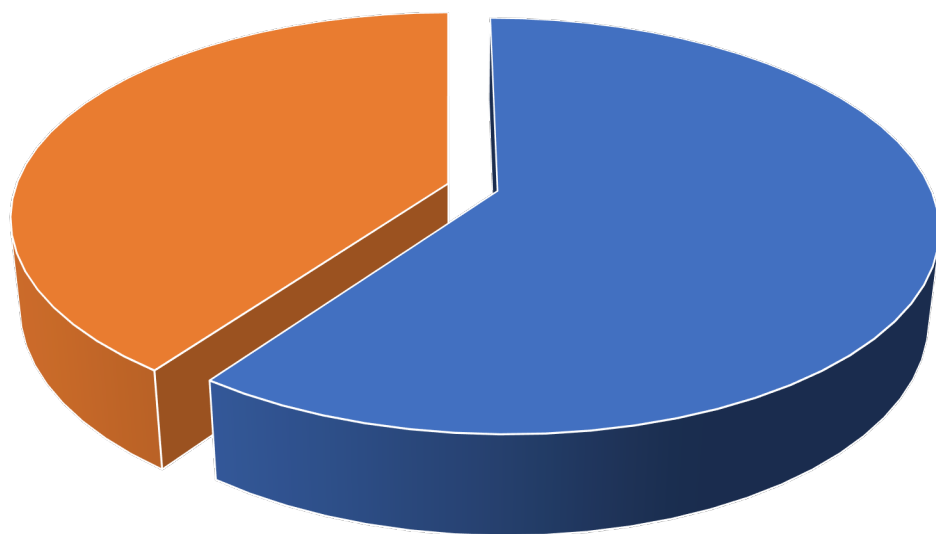


**62% Yes**  
**6% No**  
**25% Limited**

■ Yes ■ No ■ Limited



Q10 - Is **animal welfare in natural disaster events incorporated** in your National Disaster Management and Risk Reduction plan?



**60% Yes, incorporated**  
40% No

■ Yes ■ No



Q11 - Please indicate the species/types of animals your National Disaster Management and Risk Reduction plan covers.



**Livestock 48 %**



**Zoo and Aquatic 21 %**



**Lab Animals 17 %**



**Companion Animal 35 %**



**Wildlife 19 %**



**Others 10 %**



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# Q12 - Do your Veterinary Services have **specific contingency plans** to prepare for and respond to animal welfare issues in different natural disasters?



**Flood**



**Fire**



**Earthquake**

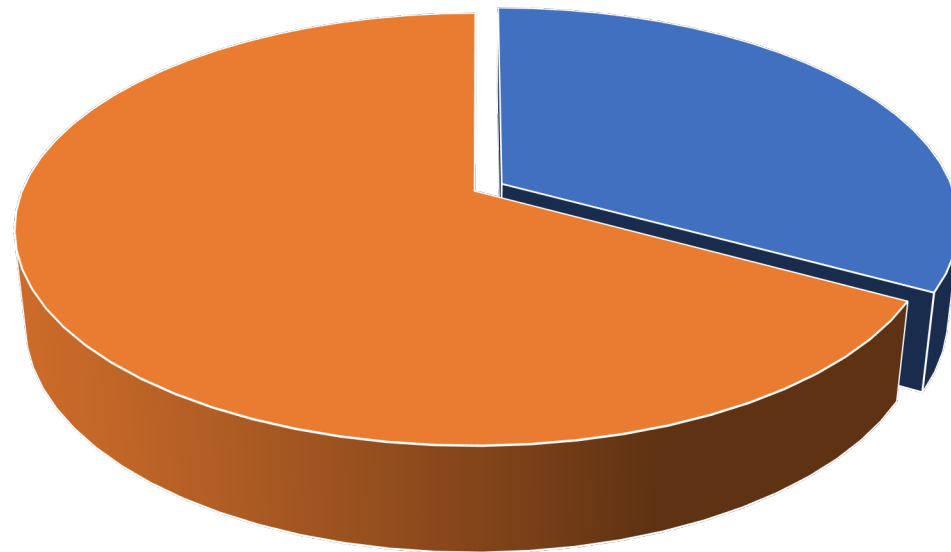


WOAH Platform  
on animal welfare  
for Europe





Q12 - Do your Veterinary Services have **specific Contingency Plans** to prepare for and respond to animal welfare issues in different natural disasters?



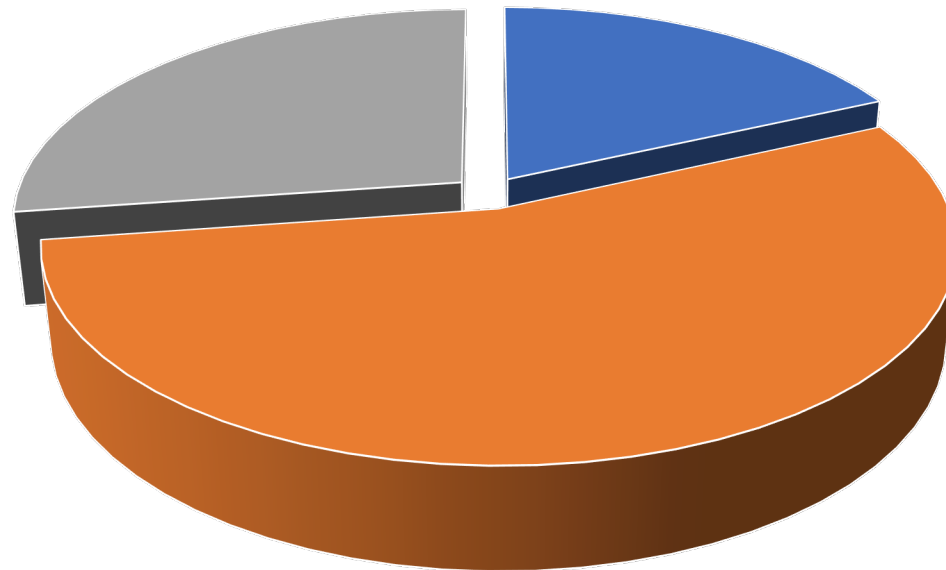
**33% Yes**

**67% No**

■ Yes ■ No



Q15 - Do your Veterinary Services **have Standard Operating Procedures** to prepare for and respond to animal welfare issues in natural disasters?

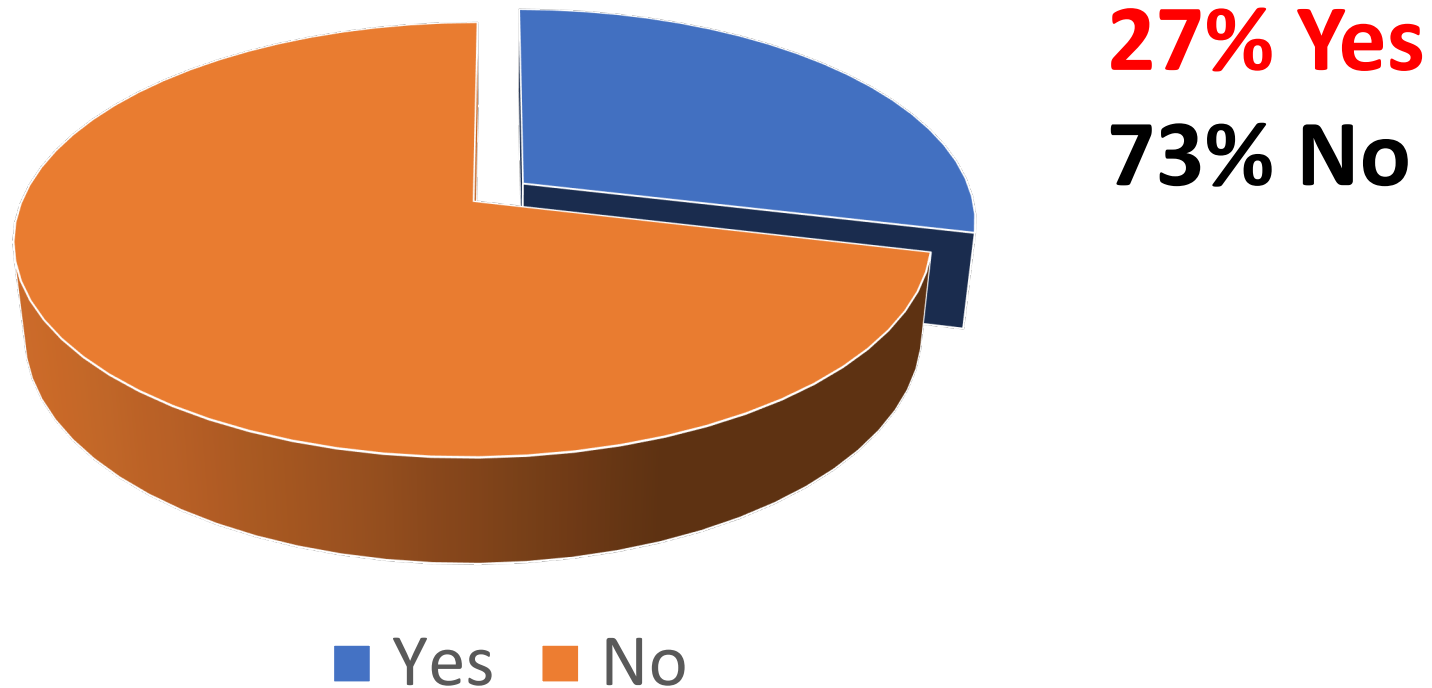


■ Yes ■ No ■ Limited

<b>Yes</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Limited</b>	<b>30%</b>

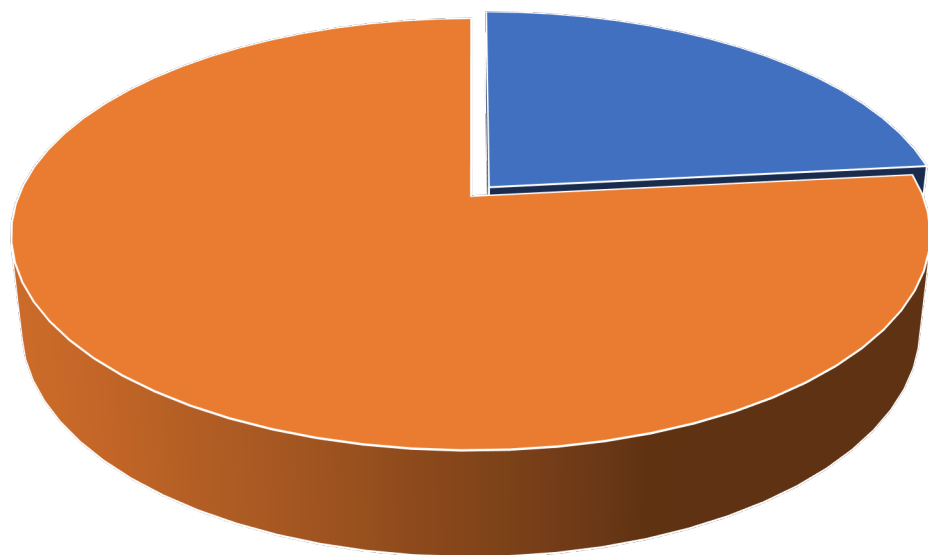


Q16 - Do your **Veterinary Services train for animal welfare emergencies** during natural disasters?





Q18 - Have your **Veterinary Services conducted simulation exercises** for animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters?



**15% Yes**

**85% No**

■ Yes ■ No



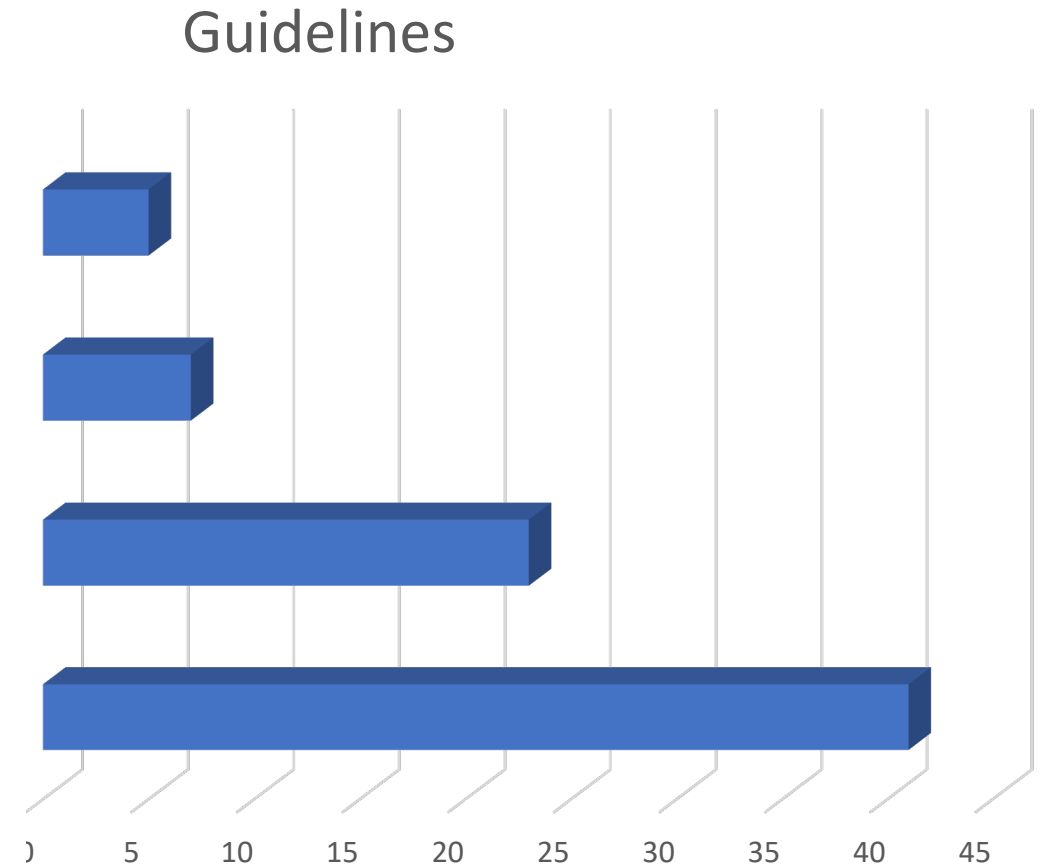
# Q27 - What existing international guidelines on animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters are you aware of?

**Livestock Emergency Guidelines Standards (LEGS)**

**FAO Good Emergency Management Practices (GEMP)**

**WOAH Simulation Exercise**

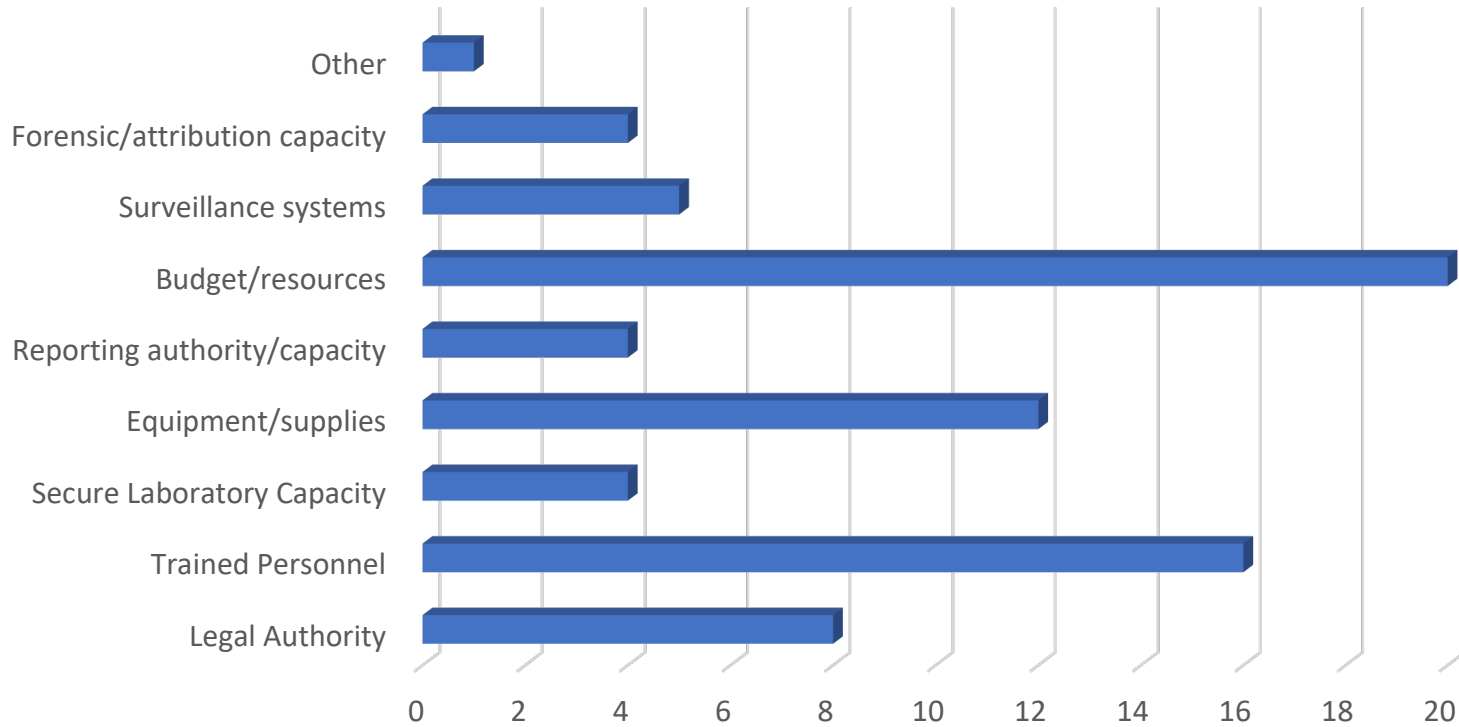
**WOAH Disaster Management & Risk Reduction Guidelines**



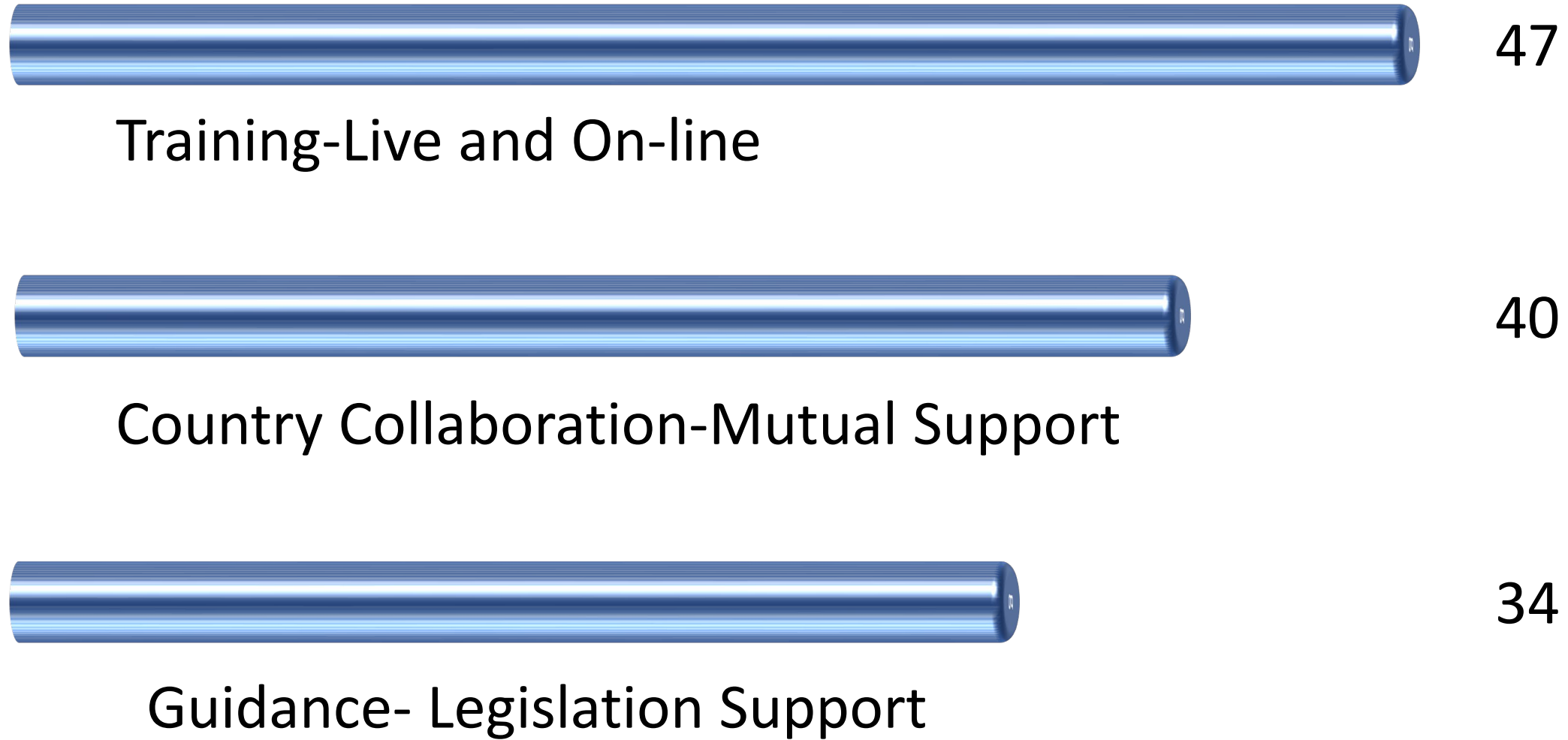


# Q40 - What are the major gaps or shortages in animal welfare in disaster preparedness and response?

## Gaps Identified



- 1. Budget**
- 2. Trained personnel**
- 3. Equipment/supplies**
- 4. Legal authority**





## ***TAKE HOME MESSAGE***

The finalization of the 2021-203 Action Plan's activities on disaster management should be seen as **a starting point for the widest implementation of the WOAHA Guidelines on Disaster Management and Risk Reduction** in the region.

Other initiatives of this kind will follow, but **Veterinary Services should maintain a proactive attitude toward contingency planning with an all-hazard, "One-Health" oriented approach** and be prepared where communities and animals have fewer resources to be prepared for, respond to, and recover from different types of disasters.



# Thank you

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## Original Research

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**SDMPH**  
SOCIETY FOR DISASTER MEDICINE & PUBLIC HEALTH

## World Organisation for Animal Health Members' Capacity to Deal With Animal Welfare Emergencies During Natural Disasters in Europe

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### Abstract

**Objective:** Little is known about individual European countries or regional capacity to respond to animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters; therefore, it is important to establish baseline information (eg, types of disasters, training) to enable more focused and data-driven actionable support for future disasters.

**Methods:** A 55-question survey was distributed by an email link to the 53 World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) European Region Members plus 1 observer country.

**Results:** Forty-nine countries (91%, n = 54) responded to the survey. Fifty-one percent (25/49) indicated they incorporated animal welfare into their national disaster regulatory framework, whereas 59% (29/49) indicated animal welfare was incorporated in the Veterinary Service National Disaster Management and Risk Reduction Plan. Thirty-nine percent (19/49) indicated they had "no" or "limited" legal authority to manage animal emergencies in natural disasters. Floods, forest fires, and snowstorm/extreme cold were the 3 most commonly reported disasters over the last 10 years with 79% (27/34) reporting Veterinary Services was involved in managing these disasters.

**Conclusion:** The survey results indicated a wide range in the capacity of WOAH European Member Countries to respond to animal welfare in natural disasters, highlighting the gaps and potential areas of improvement in this arena.

Disasters have had significant impacts on human health along with animal health, economies, trade, environment, and societies, which have resulted in animals and animal-related issues becoming an increasingly important part of disaster management and risk reduction planning. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Annual Report 2019<sup>1</sup> estimated the global economic losses from natural hazards at US \$232 billion in 2019, highlighting the animal component of disasters by citing Australia's October 2019 to March 2020 bushfires that killed an estimated 1.25 billion animals. In recognizing the critical importance of resilience in agriculture, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) analyzed the post-disaster needs assessments undertaken in the aftermath of medium-to-large-scale disasters in Africa, Asia, and Latin America over the decade from 2003–2013. Livestock were the second most affected subsector after crops, accounting for US \$11 billion, or 36% of all damage and losses.<sup>2</sup> In 2021, the Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) reported a total of US \$40 billion in economic costs caused by the 2012 Germany flood.<sup>3</sup>

World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), founded as The Office International des Epizooties (OIE), has maintained its basic mission of "protecting animals, preserving our future" since its founding in 1924. It is the primary international agency addressing animal and animal-related issues. Both the government and the public have the expectation that the national Veterinary Services of each country will be prepared for and able to respond to a wide range of disaster scenarios, at the regional, national, and local levels while addressing animal welfare concerns. The focus on animal welfare has multiple benefits, including the promotion of the physical and behavioral health of animals; supporting the humane values of compassion and caring across stakeholder domains; safeguarding the physical health of human survivors and responders; supporting disaster response effectiveness; supporting effective recovery on a physical, social, economic, environmental, and emotional basis; and maintaining public confidence and support of the government.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, animal health is inextricably linked with human health under the One Health umbrella. In disasters, there are many links between the two components. Protecting the safety