Keeping the system running

Dr Māris Balodis

Delegate of Latvia

How Food and Veterinary Service of Latvia adapts under sustained pressure

World Organisation for Animal Health

The work does not stop when resources are tight



Expectations are growing faster than our capacity

CAPACITY

People, time and funding

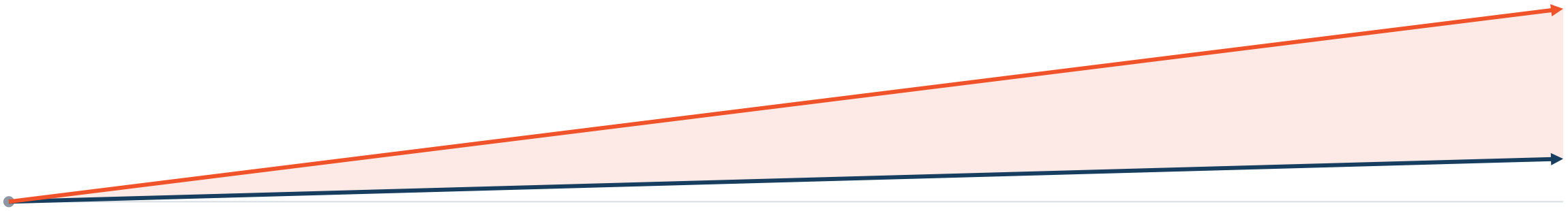
Resources grow more slowly

New responsibilities

More complex requirements

Higher public expectations

The widening gap requires earlier adaptation



Different challenges, one connected system

Long-term pressures on the Veterinary Service

A long-term capacity challenge — not only an emergency-response issue

Ageing workforce

Experience is growing, but replacement capacity is becoming more difficult

Recruitment difficulties

Attracting and retaining qualified staff is increasingly challenging

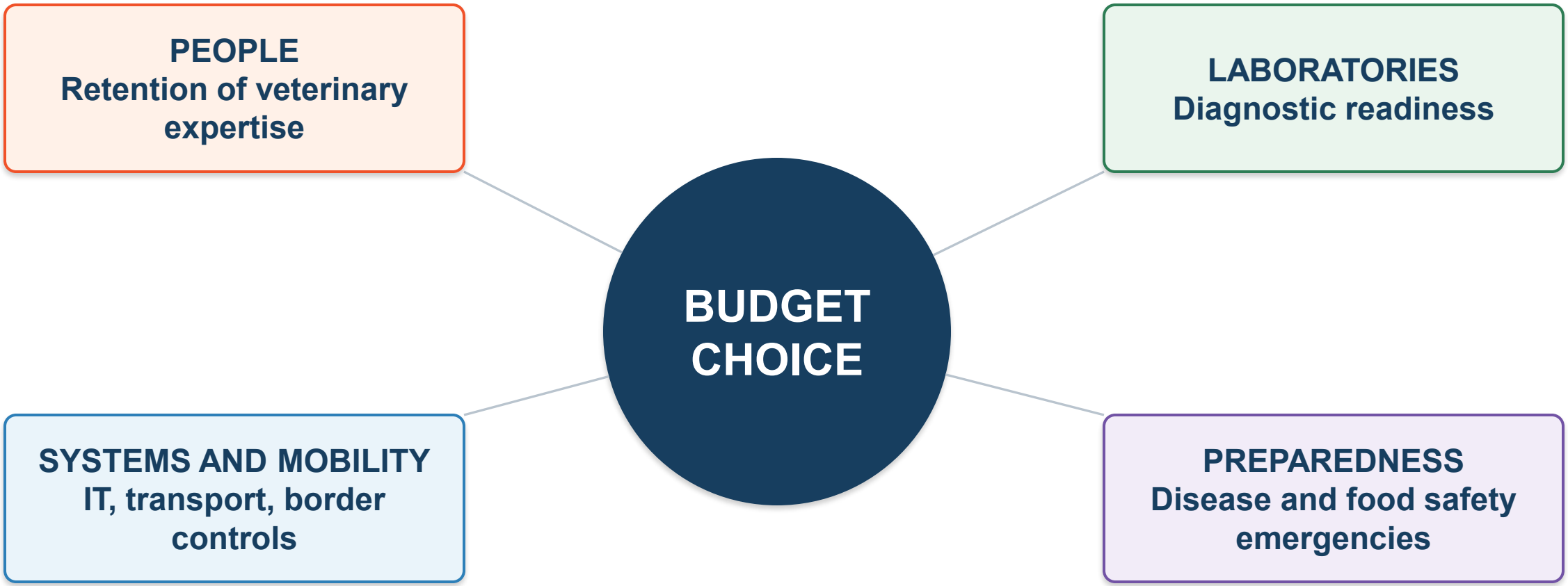
Limited resources

Financial and human resources must cover a broad and expanding mandate

Pressure to optimise

Disease outbreaks expose capacity constraints and increase pressure to use resources efficiently

Every budget choice has a real operational impact



People are the capacity of the Veterinary Service



Workforce profile and generational change

TOTAL STAFF	OFFICIAL VETERINARIANS	AVERAGE AGE
[569]	[119]	[52]

AGE PROFILE [530]

UNDER 35	35–49	50–59	60+
[52]	[146]	[174]	[158]

RETIREMENT FORECAST / VACANCIES: [23/39]

Complex rules must still lead to clear action

1

COMPLEX RULES
Growing legislation

›

2

PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT
Consistent and legally sound

›

3

CLEAR ACTION
Timely operational decisions

FUNCTIONS THAT MUST NOT FAIL

- Early detection
- Rapid response
- Food safety
- Border controls
- Certification
- Communication

Latvia’s approach: focus capacity where it matters most

1

PRIORITISE
Use risk to target controls

2

FOCUS
Reserve veterinary expertise

3

DELEGATE
Use capable partners

4

DIGITALISE
Reduce duplication

Capacity stays focused where public value and risk are greatest

Risk-based planning: focus resources where the risk is higher

Continuous move from uniform inspection intensity to targeted, data-driven and preventive surveillance

UNIFORM APPROACH

=

Similar inspection effort across establishments

Resources spread broadly

RISK-BASED APPROACH

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

Inspection intensity follows the risk profile of establishments

Higher-risk establishments receive priority

Risk analysis depends on integrated establishment data

Routine information becomes a practical tool for selecting establishments and triggering action. **National animal database essential**.

1. **Animal & event data**
2. **Disease testing & status**
3. **Raw milk laboratory results**
4. **Post-mortem findings**
5. **Movement restrictions & alerts**

RISK

ANALYSE

combine signals across the establishment

→ **PRIORITISE** high-risk establishments

→ **TARGET** official controls

→ **RESPOND** rapidly to risks / non-compliance

Automated “rapid” alerts support operational response

Better targeting, not simply fewer inspections

The objective is to use limited veterinary capacity where it provides the greatest value

1

LOW-RISK ESTABLISHMENTS

Lower administrative burden and fewer unnecessary on-site inspections

2

HIGH-RISK ESTABLISHMENTS

Earlier identification and more targeted official controls

3

VETERINARY SERVICE

More efficient use of staff and faster operational response

IMPORTANT INTERPRETATION

More detected non-compliance may reflect more effective risk selection — because inspections are increasingly directed towards establishments where problems are more likely.

Better targeting. Better use of resources. Better protection.

Specialised expertise remains essential

A broad mandate requires specialised official veterinarians

Authorization by defined areas of competence supports consistent and professionally grounded official controls

- **AH** — Animal health & disease control
- **AW** — Animal welfare
- **FOOD** — Primary production
- **FEED** — Feed safety
- **VMP** — Veterinary medicinal products
- **ABP** — Animal by-products

Defined competence → targeted training → consistent official veterinary surveillance

Preparedness starts long before a crisis

ASF: from emergency response to a long-term challenge

Latvia has managed African swine fever continuously since 2014



The system must be sustainable for years — not designed only for short-term crisis mode

Veterinary expertise stays focused on core responsibilities

Focus the Veterinary Service on its core responsibilities

Example: wild boar found dead

What happened in practice

FVS staff were involved not only in diagnostic sampling, but also in carcass collection and disposal

Reallocate tasks

Municipalities organise carcass collection and disposal, in cooperation with hunters or other stakeholders

FVS core role

Veterinary responsibility: collection of samples for laboratory testing

Right task • Right actor • Right use of veterinary expertise

Outsourcing expands capacity where the market can deliver

Outsource where specialised capacity exists

Example: disposal of animal by-products (ABPs)

BEFORE

- Mobile incinerator
- 24/7 operation of FVS staff
- Additional staff
- Tractors & equipment

AFTER

Specialised company – rendering plant

Sufficient capacity
Appropriate equipment
Operational competences

Result: FVS resources can remain focused on core veterinary responsibilities

Mednis reduces administration and improves surveillance data

Digitalisation: less administration, better data

Wild boar surveillance — integration of the «Mednis» **mobile application** since 2024

BEFORE 2024

1. Hunter + blood sample + paper form
2. Regional FVS office
3. Manual registration / compilation
4. Sample forwarded to laboratory
5. Time - consuming and labor - intensive administration of incentives

SINCE 2024

- ✓ Hunter registers animal once in «Mednis»
- ✓ Photo + GPS + age + sex
- ✓ Blood sample goes directly to laboratory
- ✓ Data available digitally to FVS, hunter

Shorter sample pathway • Faster results • No duplicate data entry • Processing reduced from weeks to hours

A practical model for sustainable Veterinary Services

Sustainable Veterinary Services

A practical approach to maintaining capacity under long-term pressure

1

PRIORITISE

Keep veterinary expertise focused on core responsibilities

2

DELEGATE / OUTSOURCE

Move non-core tasks to actors with the right mandate and capacity

3

DIGITALISE

Remove duplication, shorten workflows and improve data quality

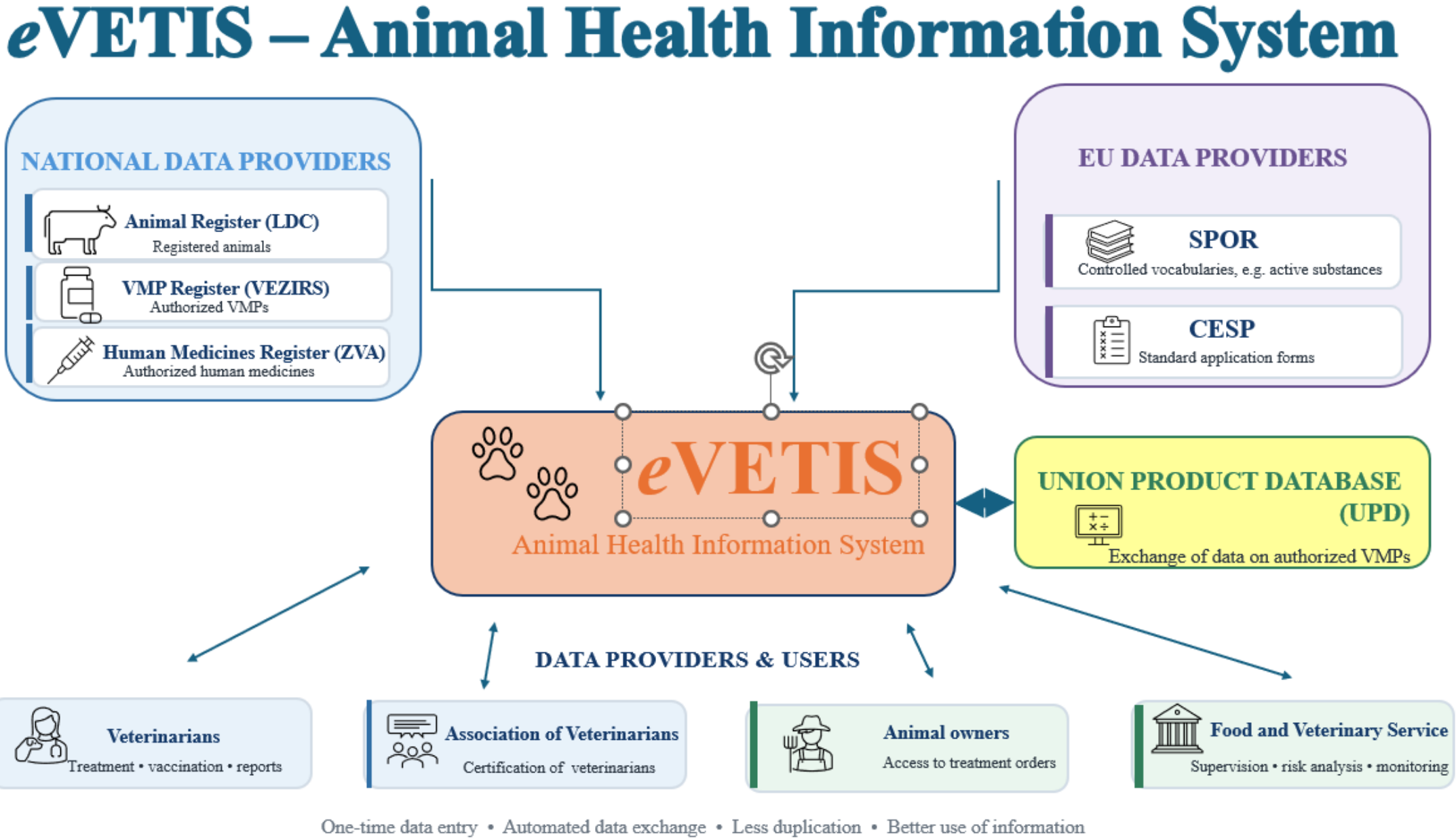
Sustainability requires us to rethink not only what we do, but also who should do it — and how digitalisation can help us do it better

Working together gives us greater capacity



Partners are in place before a crisis

eVETIS connects national, EU and professional data sources



eVETIS supports veterinarians and the Veterinary Service

eVETIS – Benefits for key users

One system. Multiple benefits.

BENEFITS FOR VETERINARIANS

More time for animal health

- Less manual data entry
- Easy access to treatment orders
- Accessible treatment history
- Integration with practice management systems
- Reduced administrative burden

BENEFITS FOR THE FVS

Stronger control. Healthier animals.

- Risk-based inspections
- Better antimicrobial stewardship
- Vaccination monitoring
- Monitoring of withdrawal periods

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Expanding possibilities

- Veterinary e-prescriptions
- Virtual medicine warehouse
- Real-time information on VMP availability

eVETIS
Animal Health Information System

Better data. Better decisions.
Better animal health.

SERTIS simplifies certification from application to decision

SERTIS – Veterinary Certificate Information System

From application to certificate – few simple steps

1 Creating a new certificate application

From submission to certificate issuance – in four steps

1. **New application**
   Submitted by a natural or legal person via FVS e-services system.
2. **Application submitted and registered in the system**
   The application is successfully submitted and registered in SERTIS.
3. **Application assigned to an official veterinarian**
   The application is assigned to a specific official veterinarian for processing.
4. **Veterinary certificate issued and application closed**
   The veterinary certificate is issued and the application is closed in the system.

2 Veterinary certificate issuance process

From application review to final decision

1. **Application received in SERTIS**
   The application is received in the SERTIS system.
2. **Review and decision**
   The official veterinarian reviews the application and attached documents and decides whether to issue the veterinary certificate or to refuse its issuance.

- **Issue certificate**
  3. **Certificate issued and application closed**
     The veterinary certificate is issued, the application is closed in SERTIS and the issued certificate copy is attached as file. The applicant can view this attached file at any time by logging in to the FVS e-services system.
- **Refuse certificate**
  4. **Issuance refused**
     The official veterinarian indicates the reason for refusal in SERTIS and requests the applicant to correct the application or submit a new application.

Resubmit with corrections

5. **Corrections submitted**
   After receiving the corrections and reviewing them, a decision is made to issue the veterinary certificate, and the process continues as in step 3.

Export statistics | Monitoring compliance with certification requirements | Safe trade and market access | Reliable and transparent processes | **Export development – new opportunities for businesses.**

SERTIS as a monitoring and control tool

Beyond veterinary certification, SERTIS supports oversight, safe trade and export development



EXPORT DEVELOPMENT → more efficient procedures → new opportunities for businesses

A transparent benchmark for financing Veterinary Services

WOAH LEADERSHIP: continue the discussion and define clear criteria

1

ECONOMIC CAPACITY

GDP
Agriculture's share of GDP

2

SECTOR SCALE

Livestock value
Animal populations
Disease exposure

3

PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

Food system and exports
Border duties
Emergency readiness

A transparent benchmark, adaptable to each national context

Five practical principles for keeping the system running

1. **PROTECT** essential functions
2. **DIRECT** resources to risk
3. **INVEST** in people
4. **CLARIFY** workable rules
5. **PARTNER** before a crisis

Adapt before the capacity to deliver is lost

Keeping the system running

KEEPING THE SYSTEM RUNNING

Protect the functions society depends on.

Adapt before capacity is lost.

QUESTION FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

Which essential function in your Veterinary Authority is under the greatest pressure today?

What would make the biggest difference in protecting it?

Thank you !



Food and Veterinary Service of Latvia

www.pvd.gov.lv

X : @pvd_gov_lv

Facebook: @PVDienests

YouTube: @PVDfilmas

World Organisation for Animal Health