

Ways to create an Animal Health and Welfare Plan

There are many tools and templates which businesses can utilise to complete a plan. There is a range of online tools such as the [HerdPlan](#) which has been funded by the Scottish Government, that provide structure and required aspects. Existing plans made using the Sheep and Suckler Cow Animal Health Planning system (SAHPS) remain valid, but should be reviewed and updated annually as needed.

In date (with annual review) health and welfare plans held as part of quality assurance schemes (for example Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), Red Tractor, Soil Association, Scottish Organic Producers Association (SOPA), supermarket contracts or milk contracts are all valid and will be accepted as part of the WFP.

Contacts

Soil Association advice and support

Contact our Farming and Land Use Team: 0131 370 8150

Email: contact@soilassociation.org

Find out more at [Planning for Change: A Whole Farm Approach](#)

Full scheme guidance: [Whole Farm Plan full guidance](#)

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WFP PLANS AND AUDITS

- SOIL
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- ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE
- INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

Planning 4 Change

Monitoring Animal Health and Welfare for Whole Farm Planning

From May 2025, new requirements for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) mean that farmers and crofters who manage any number of cattle, sheep, goats, deer, alpacas, llamas, pigs or over 350 poultry on their farm or croft should conduct an Animal Health and Welfare Plan by 2028, and update it every year.



Why monitor animal health and welfare?

A focus on positive health status and preventative measures to limit health problems, the ethical responsibility of providing a good life for all farmed animals as well as recognition of the long-term productivity and product quality benefits from high standards of animal health and welfare, should be central to a whole farm plan. This should also be closely linked to objectives around pest and disease management, soil and pasture health, resilience and productivity, and reducing inputs which can reduce emissions and boost profitability.

The right animal in the right place

Designing a system around having the right animal(s) in the right place for the right job can make maintaining high health and welfare a much easier task. Select breeds that are suited to your land type and production system – e.g. native breeds which can be outwintered on robust, resilient grazing and breeds that thrive on forage-based diets rather than needing supplementary feeding to finish. Breeding for resilience can also improve the overall herd or flock health, by removing animals which e.g. consistently have poor feet or birthing complications.

If you are organic, your existing Livestock Management Plan meets the AHWP requirement



Breeding records

Must include the number of breeding livestock for each species:

- Must include the target numbers for offspring born
- Must include an estimation of the actual number of offspring born. Some farming systems (such as extensive hill flocks) may make it difficult to give the exact number of livestock born, these businesses should provide estimates to the best of their ability ideally based on scanning % and rearing %
- Must include comments on these figures and any potential reasons the business did/did not meet these predicted targets. There are many reasons out with a farmer or crofter's control that will mean the actual number of livestock born may be less than they set out in their targets. It is still valuable for them to consider why this might be happening as there may be things they can address in the future.

The format of AHW plans is intended to be flexible. It is intended to build on the minimum statutory requirements for animal health and welfare that are already defined through cross compliance, with the long-term goal of normalising a holistic approach to health and welfare planning across the industry.

At a minimum, plans must include all of the following:

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|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farm and vet contact details | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Livestock health management calendar |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Details of the types and numbers of each species of livestock on the farm/croft | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Euthanasia policy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Details of breeding stock and livestock born | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fallen stock management details |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disease risk assessment & management plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Veterinary input in last 12 months. |

The full list of required minimum standards is shown in Whole Farm Plan full guidance.

Disease risk assessments

Must consider the most common disease risks on their farm or croft:

- Must demonstrate it has considered the risk level, prevention of the risk and management of the risk.
- Must include details of incoming livestock (purchased and returning)
- Must include risks of other animals (e.g. neighbouring livestock, wildlife, farm dogs, general public's dogs) if applicable
- Must include risk of people – e.g. family/staff and any incoming visitors
- Must include buildings – both general livestock housing and sick livestock areas/hospital pens
- Must include equipment – both the business's equipment and the equipment of others
- Must include any disease risk related to manure and slurry spreading if applicable
- Must include any disease risk related to quarantine pasture if applicable.

Full guidance can be found online at:

[www.ruralpayments.org/
topics/all-schemes/
whole-farm-plan](http://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/whole-farm-plan)

