

## FSA engages industry on proposals for easing Official Veterinarian Shortage

As yesterday's [Public Accounts Committee report](#) identified, there is a critical shortage of vets in the UK linked to many factors, including Covid-19, EU Exit, increased demand for vets for Export Health Certification, and increases in pet ownership. Royal College of Veterinary Surgeon [figures](#) show that between 2019 and 2021 joiners to the UK veterinary profession fell by 26%, while 2020 saw the highest number of vets leaving UK practice in 10 years.

Official veterinarians play a critical role in delivering official controls. If official veterinarians could not be supplied consistently, abattoirs would be unable to operate, with significant consequences for the UK's £9 billion meat industry.

Junior Johnson, Director of Operations, said:

“Despite challenges in veterinary recruitment, the Food Standards Agency has maintained full and ongoing service delivery of official controls in abattoirs and there has been no interruption in service to date.

“Official veterinarians are however, in very short supply, and we are working with partners to find solutions to what is a systemic resourcing issue so that the FSA can continue to provide a reliable service to industry and uphold food safety, protect animal health and welfare, and enable businesses to sell food domestically and abroad.”

A letter outlining the proposed changes will be shared with abattoirs and cutting plants today. It invites feedback on how these proposed changes may impact their businesses. The insight gathered will be used to inform the FSA's decision making and to guide the next steps on the project.