



World Organisation  
for Animal Health

# Addressing animal health emergencies through the lens of gender

Daniel Donachie and Alicia Gallardo Lagno

The Animal Echo

<https://theanimalecho.woah.org/en/addressing-animal-health-emergencies-through-the-lens-of-gender/>

# Context

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- Animal health emergencies are increasingly frequent and complex, requiring Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services to respond effectively.

Emergencies can impact men and women differently:

- with women often undertaking key animal caregiving roles and managing administrative tasks
- men are more likely to hold decision-making power and leadership responsibilities.



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- Gender-centred perspectives in animal health emergency management are often overlooked and misunderstood, primarily due to a lack of data disaggregated by sex, as well as the general lack of women's visibility in these activities.
  - The article presents gender-inclusive strategies to strengthen animal health systems, with a focus on empowering women.

# Participation with equity

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- Women play a crucial role in animal production worldwide, engaging in various activities that range from husbandry to product processing and marketing, particularly in small-scale production systems and rural communities.
- Women undertake critical, yet often under-recognised, roles in managing animal health emergencies, from animal caregiving to administering treatments for animals.
- Some studies have demonstrated how women's lack of access to information on diseases and their management, as well as to appropriate training in animal health, can contribute negatively to safeguarding natural resources

# Tailored gender-sensitive policies

- Designing and implementing strategies to address the unique challenges and contributions of men and women **ensures equitable access to resources**, training and decision-making processes during emergencies.



# Challenging gender norms to enhance collaboration

- Cultural norms often reinforce gender roles and stereotypes that hinder collective action in emergencies.
- For instance, men are less likely to seek mental health support during emergencies due to societal norms discouraging emotional expression and reaching out for help.

# Inclusive leadership enhances resilience

- Just as they address gender gaps in leadership, efforts must go beyond merely increasing female participation in capacity-building and to create an environment where women can engage whilst still being able to balance their work-home responsibilities effectively.



# Bridging gaps in capacity- building

- A gender-equitable approach to capacity-building for emergency management ensures that women have equal access to capacity-building programmes and resources.
- Just as they address gender gaps in leadership, efforts must go beyond merely increasing female participation in capacity-building and to create an environment where women can engage whilst still being able to balance their work-home responsibilities effectively.

# Key recommendations

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- collecting data on women's roles in emergency response to provide evidence for the development of policies;
- developing gender-sensitive policies that consider cultural and social contexts;
- promoting inclusive leadership by addressing the barriers that impact women;
- ensuring equitable access for women to capacity building opportunities.