

Farm Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network

FAVSNET Practice information handbook



FAVSNET is funded by

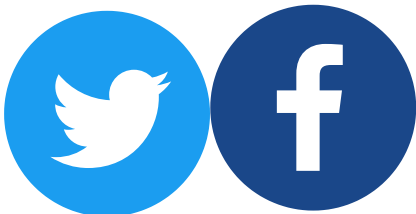


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1) What is FAVSNET?



FAVSNET stands for the Farm Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network.

FAVSNET aims to collect large volumes of information from farm animals that require vet attention from veterinary practices like this one. By working together, they are helping researchers better understand diseases in farm animals.

This national project started in 2022 and aims to help farm animals, and their farmer and veterinarian through research in priority areas in farm animal health and welfare.

FAVSNET's key aims are to:

- Monitor disease trends over time and highlight appropriate interventions
- Identify populations at risk and monitor treatments and outcomes
- Provide data resources for those working in farm animal health and welfare research
- Improve general public awareness of farm animal diseases and prevention
- Provide a route to clinical benchmarking for vets in farm animal practice

This veterinary practice has recognised the importance of supporting veterinary research and has joined FAVSNET. This means that farmers using this practice have the opportunity to get involved by contributing information about their animals.



2) What information does FAVSNET collect?

FAVSNET collects two types of information about farm animals each time they are seen by a veterinary surgeon for a consultation.



The main presenting complaint

At the end of each consultation or visit, veterinary surgeons will be asked a few questions about the main reason for the visit. The first question asks the veterinary surgeon to select the main reason for seeing the vet (called this the 'Main Presenting Complaint'). They do this using a simple mouse click on a window like the one shown below. If a farmer does not wish to take part, this is also the point at which veterinary surgeons and nurses can exclude all related information from the project by clicking the grey bar to opt-out as shown in the figure below. In addition to this window, depending on need, for example in response to disease concerns or an outbreak, a portion of consultations may have an optional short additional questionnaire.



What is the main reason for this visit?

Mastitis	Milk yield reduction	Lameness & Musculoskeletal	Gastroenteric	Diarrhoea
Reproduction	Routine fertility visit	Abortion & stillbirth	Neurological	Respiratory
Anorexia & hyporexia	Recumbency	Poor condition and wasting	Urinary	Skin disease
Other unhealthy / unknown	Found dead	Eye disease	Other healthy	REPORT AN ADVERSE DRUG REACTION Veterinary Medicines Directorate

Owner wishes to opt out or not eligible to give consent

Routine information

When the FAVSNET window has been completed, the following routine information, where it is already recorded, is sent to FAVSNET automatically without the need for the veterinary surgeon to input additional data; missing fields can remain blank.

- Species (e.g, cow, sheep, pig)
- Breed
- Date/year of birth
- Sex and castration status
- Tag number or other animal identifier
- Weight (weigh bridge, weight tape or estimated)/ body condition score
- Vaccination history
- The nature of the condition as described in the free text notes during your animal's treatment
- Any items purchased as part of the consultation, treatments given and drugs prescribed
- Insurance status
- The farm/farmers postcode, which is only used internally for disease mapping purposes, and never published
- The unique anonymised identification numbers assigned to just you and your animals

FAVSNET does not routinely collect names and/or ID's of veterinary staff, farmers or individual animals, house numbers/farm names, street names or towns; nor do they collect any financial information including the cost of treatment or how farmers pay for their animals' care. Occasionally a vet may write names, addresses or phone numbers in the clinical notes - these are mostly removed by University of Liverpool using a sophisticated deidentification tool; any rare ones that remain are never used for research.



3) Why is it important for me to take part?



Without the support of farmers like you and practices like this, this project would not be possible. By participating in FAVSNET, farmers and veterinary practices across the UK can give researchers and surveillance teams the information they need to help improve the health and welfare of farm animals.

4) How does FAVSNET help improve the health of the UK farm animal population?

The information collected by FAVSNET will build a picture of diseases experienced by farm animals and where they appear in the country.

This can also help us understand disease patterns and improve advice for management and treatment. For example, is it their age, or their breed, or perhaps where in the country they live that might contribute to why particular animals are affected by a certain disease?

Using the information collected, FAVSNET and FAVSNET-approved researchers will over time:

- Produce outputs that will help farmers and their vets better understand, prevent and control a range of diseases
- Identify new diseases early in their development
- Inform vets of diseases that are of particular concern in their local area



5) Can I be identified from the information collected?



FAVSNET does not request the names or IDs of farmers or farm animals, postal addresses, the names of vets or any financial/ insurance policy information. FAVSNET only routinely collects the full postcode which is important to identify the location of where disease is occurring in the UK. This full postcode will only be available to FAVSNET and FAVSNET-approved researchers and will never be published in any form.

For the vast majority of farms, the postcode is not unique, so individual location cannot be identified. However, there may be some postcodes with only one farm. Therefore, to further protect privacy, any publications from FAVSNET will not use the full postcode. Instead, FAVSNET will only indicate where diseases are occurring at a lower resolution such as the first half of the postcode. For example, FAVSNET's postcode is CH64 7TE, but we might only present it as being in the CH64 area. By not publishing at the level of the full postcode, it will never be possible for others to identify who has contributed to FAVSNET.

FAVSNET also collects the free text clinical notes. These are used variably by your vet to describe the reason for the farm animals requiring a visit, as well as any diagnoses and treatments given, and are extremely valuable to our research. Occasionally, identifiers like owner's and vet's names, phone numbers and addresses are also written in this free text

(for example 'please phone Mrs Smith on 0123 456789'). FAVSNET have therefore developed sophisticated software tools to automatically remove most of these parts of more personal information (this process is called 'deidentification'). Although this cannot be 100% accurate for example due to the variety of new names or telephone number formats, the deidentification tool is regularly updated as and when identifiers are located in the text. The small number that may remain will never be used in publications using FAVSNET data.

Some breeds are considered 'rare', and farmers of such breeds may be concerned about being identified. To address this, FAVSNET make all reasonable efforts when producing reports, to lower the reporting resolution for rare breeds, such that they cannot be identified.

6) FAVSNET and Data Protection

FAVSNET complies with the Data Protection Act 2018. Farmers and practitioners can request to see their data, and have it removed. The 'lawful basis' for the processing of data by FAVSNET is 'legitimate interest'. There is no other reasonable way to do what FAVSNET are doing, and the outputs are for the benefit of farmers and their farm animals.



7) How is the information collected by FAVSNET stored?



The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit.

Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University's research. Any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to FAVSNET (contact information is provided at the end of the handbook).

FAVSNET has a responsibility under the Data Protection Act 2018 to protect information about the veterinary surgeon, the farmer and farm animal. This is an important requirement of our ethical approval.

Data is encrypted in transit using secure http i.e. https. Once the data has been received at University of Liverpool it is stored in an SQL server database on secure servers managed by the University's Computer Services Department. Databases are behind the University of Liverpool firewall and can only be accessed internally by authorised users. In addition, to maintain a high level of security, information in its raw form is not allowed to be saved onto other portable devices such as laptop computers, portable external hard-drives or USB pens, unless it is encrypted. FAVSNET will store the data for a minimum of 10 years.

8) What do I have to do if I want to take part?

This veterinary practice has already decided to be part of FAVSNET, supporting important work being done to help improve farm animal health and welfare. Farmers using this practice and who are happy to be involved in FAVSNET do not have to do anything to take part; the information described in Section 2 will be collected automatically through the computer system by the veterinary surgeon while writing the clinical notes and interacting with the FAVSNET software.



9) What if I do not wish to take part?

Although the veterinary practice has decided to take part in FAVSNET there is no obligation for any farmer to take part in FAVSNET. If you do not wish to take part, please let your veterinary surgeon know before the end of their visit. All of the information relating to their consultation will be excluded from the project. Opting out of FAVSNET will have no impact on the care individual animals receive in this veterinary practice.

Farmers can also request for data to be removed from FAVSNET retrospectively by completing an opt-out form on the FAVSNET webpage (www.liverpool.ac.uk/FAVSNET/removing-your-farm-animal's-data). Veterinary practice staff can also complete this form on a farmer's behalf when requested.

All requests to remove data will be actioned, unless data has been included in an active research dataset or already published, in which case the data will be used for no further research.



10) How will the information be presented?



Information collected by FAVSNET is deidentified and analysed by FAVSNET and FAVSNET-approved researchers. These researchers will prepare scientific papers for the veterinary profession and wider scientific community, and also communicate findings to the general public through the social media pages (Facebook and Twitter - @FAVSNET) as well as other media where appropriate.

Some of the research completed by FAVSNET will also be used to generate income which is used to support the longevity of the project, thereby helping to ensure farm animals can continue to benefit from this research for as long as possible. You will be able to see examples of this research through the FAVSNET website www.liverpool.ac.uk/FAVSNET/.

11) How can information be seen?

The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit.



Everybody will be able to see anonymised summaries and open access publications of the information we collect on the FAVSNET website: www.liverpool.ac.uk/FAVSNET/. These will include charts and graphs that allow you to see what is happening in the UK. Individual veterinary practices, staff, farmers and farm animals will never be identifiable. FAVSNET will develop these outputs over time into a comprehensive picture of farm animal diseases across the UK.

Veterinary practices will be given access to a personalised online secure site called the FAVSNET portal which allows them to explore the information they have provided to FAVSNET. This helps veterinary surgeons and nurses better understand the diseases seen in their practice and how they can help their farm animals and owners. For example, a key feature of the FAVSNET portal will allow veterinary practices to compare, or benchmark, their antibiotic use; responsible use of antibiotics is an important issue in both veterinary and human medicine.

12) Who will have access to the data FAVSNET collects?



Researchers in the core FAVSNET team based at University of Liverpool may sometimes need to use the raw data as collected for example, when responding to suspect disease outbreaks and time is of the essence. All other researchers can apply to gain access to the deidentified data only, which involves being bound by the terms of a Data User Agreement to protect the use of the data. All published data will be in summary form and anonymised. All data access is through secure login and / or encrypted data transfer.

All researchers wishing to use FAVSNET data for their research, regardless of their affiliation, need to apply to the FAVSNET Data Access and Publication Panel (DAPP). This is a review process assessing the nature of the research to be done and identifying whether the findings would be beneficial to the veterinary profession, farm animals and their owners. This is an important consideration of our ethical approval granted by the University of Liverpool. The DAPP also ensures that individuals cannot be identified from any publication.

13) How is FAVSNET funded?



FAVSNET was initially funded as a pilot in partnership with Iechyd Da veterinary consortium and the Wales Veterinary Surveillance Centre through Arwain DGC. In the future some of the work completed by FAVSNET may be used to generate income for example with pharmaceutical companies who might want to better understand how their products are being used by vets in practice. These data are provided as anonymised summary reports - companies are never sent raw data or free text fields, even in their deidentified form. An updated list of our funders can be seen on our website. All income, regardless of its source, is used to support the longevity of the project, so that the veterinary profession and farm animals can continue to benefit for as long as possible.

14) Who manages FAVSNET?



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FAVSNET is managed by academics and researchers based at the University of Liverpool.



15) Has data collection been approved?



Yes. FAVSNET has ethical approval (RETH001082) from the University of Liverpool which is routinely reviewed every three years. Through our ethical approval, FAVSNET has a duty to protect the information collected under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Benchmarking and clinical data research provides a tangible benefit to UK veterinary practice.

In recognition of this, the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme awards points to practices that contribute clinical data to FAVSNET.

We hope this gives all concerned, including participating veterinary surgeons, nurses and owners, the necessary confidence to take part in FAVSNET.

16) What do I do if I want to complain?



If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let FAVSNET know by contacting. Please contact us at the FAVSNET office and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office at ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make. The ethical approval reference number for FAVSNET is RETH01082.

The University strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.

17) How can I find out more about FAVSNET?



Visit our website for more information about the work we do:

www.liverpool.ac.uk/FAVSNET/

You can also download an electronic copy of this booklet here too.

You can contact us by:

Telephoning us: 0151 795 6080

Emailing us: FAVSNET@liverpool.ac.uk

Writing to us: FAVSNET, University of Liverpool, Leahurst Campus, Chester High Road, Neston, Cheshire CH64 7TE

Following us on Facebook: @FAVSNET

Following us on Twitter: @FAVSNET

Thanks for taking the time to read this booklet and finding out more about FAVSNET.



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