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British Veterinary Association to explore aquaculture, wants to 'futureproof' the sector

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Association urges vets to consider aquaculture careers

The British Veterinary Association has called for more research into the health and welfare needs of farmed fish and is urging veterinarians to consider jobs in the sector.

The new **[BVA policy position on UK sustainable finfish aquaculture](http://www.bva.co.uk/aquaculture)** (<http://www.bva.co.uk/aquaculture>), which follows its 2019 position on **[UK sustainable animal agriculture](https://www.bva.co.uk/take-action/our-policies/uk-sustainable-animal-agriculture/)** (<https://www.bva.co.uk/take-action/our-policies/uk-sustainable-animal-agriculture/>), sets out its vision for sustainable development and fish welfare for the sector.

The position was developed by a panel of experts who focused on finfish, like salmon and trout, and made recommendations on health and welfare, the impact of aquaculture on the environment and biodiversity, and the veterinary profession's involvement in the sector.

BVA said that during their education, vets receive training in caring for small animals and farmed species, but most will graduate with little experience or understanding of how to care for fish and will need additional qualifications to work in aquaculture. This has resulted in a shortage of vets with the



The British Veterinary Association will research the health and welfare needs of farmed fish and is urging vets to consider jobs in the sector. Photo courtesy of the British Veterinary Association.

expertise to advise the sector.

A promotional banner for the Responsible Seafood Summit. On the left is a logo featuring a stylized eye with a fish shape inside, next to the text "Responsible Seafood SUMMIT". To the right, it says "SAINT JOHN NEW BRUNSWICK CANADA OCTOBER 2-5 2023". A red button with the word "REGISTER" is prominent. The background is dark teal with a faint world map and several red airplane icons. The Global Seafood Alliance logo is in the top right corner.

<https://events.globalseafood.org/responsible-seafood-summit>

BVA believes vets should encourage more students to consider working with fish as part of their career paths. Existing vets are also urged to expand their knowledge of the sector and fish welfare and consider how taking on a role in aquaculture could enhance their careers.

“Aquaculture represents a significant proportion of the UK’s food production but more understanding and research is needed into fish health and welfare and the wider environmental impacts of this industry,” said BVA Senior VP Justine Shotton. “There is scope for the veterinary profession to play a

more significant part in aquaculture and we hope to encourage students and vets already in practice to consider exploring related roles during their careers. We hope this position provides some clarity on what could be done to futureproof and enhance the sector.”

Aquaculture is one of the UK’s key strategic food production sectors, particularly in Scotland where salmon farming provides essential jobs in remote and rural communities. Read the BVA’s full aquaculture policy position at [bva.co.uk/aquaculture](https://www.bva.co.uk/aquaculture) (<http://www.bva.co.uk/aquaculture>).

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