



# The Norwegian Food Safety Authority

Statens tilsyn for planter, fisk, dyr og næringsmidler

## **The Animal Welfare Authorities of Norway – how are we organized**

EHY Conference  
Helsinki 7 April 2022

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# Norway and EU

Not a member state,  
but part of the  
internal market  
through the  
Agreement on the  
European Economic Area  
**EEA**

Regulations on food safety,  
**animal welfare** and health  
and other veterinary matters  
fully integrated, but implementation  
through a national process.



# Short history of Mattilsynet

## **Established in 2004 by merging**

- The Animal Health Authority
- The Food Safety Authority
- The Norwegian Agriculture Inspection Service
- The Directorate of Fisheries (see-food division)
- The local Food Safety Authorities.

# Why one Food Safety Authority

- **Farm/fjord to fork**  
(including pet animals, ornamental plants, cosmetics, non-description drugs etc.)
- Modernized legislation
  - Food Safety Act (2003) Safe food, plant health, animal/fish health
  - **Animal Welfare Act (2009)**
  - Animal Health Personnel Act (2001)
  - Cosmetics Act (2005)
  - Plant Breeding Act (1993)
  - Livestock Breeding Act (1992)
- Restructured Ministry responsibilities:
  - M of Agriculture and food (administrative Ministry)
  - M of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
  - M of Health and Care Services
- Science based – independent expertise and risk assessment bodies
- Uniform and comprehensive.



# Our vision

A society where the food is safe  
and with good Animal Welfare

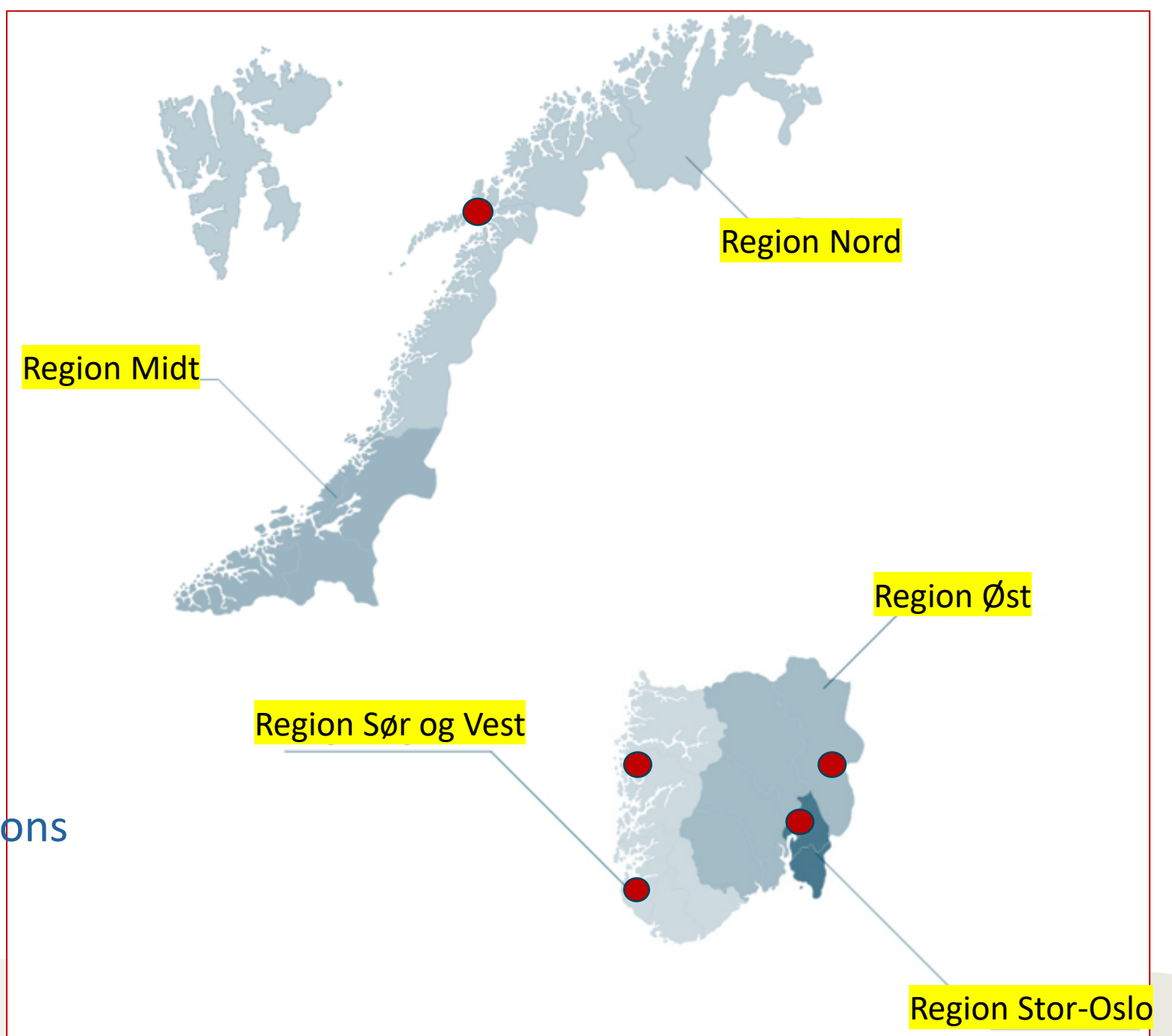


# Our organisation

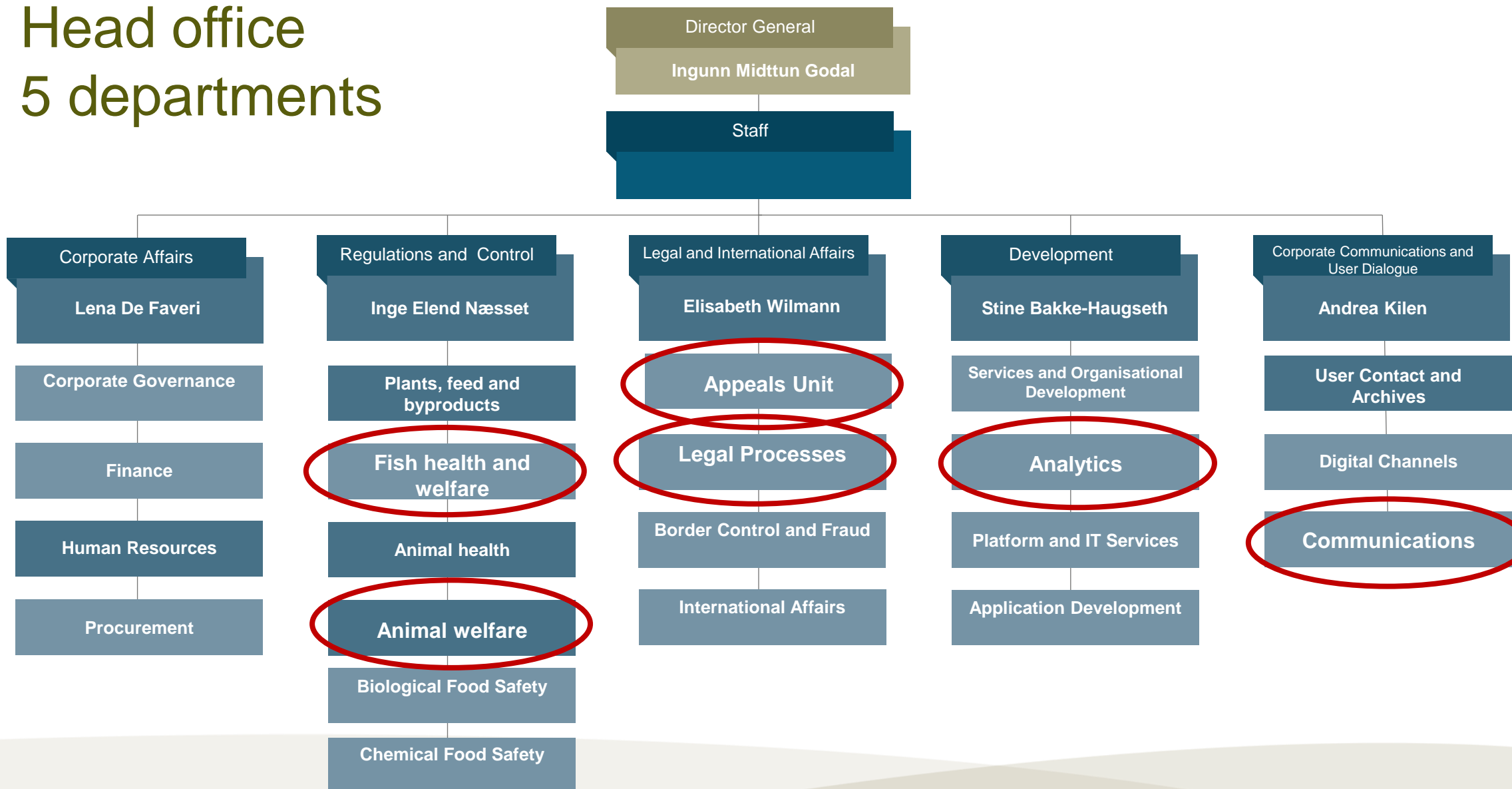
We are present  
throughout the country

**Head Office**  
in 5 locations

**5 Regions**  
with 5-7 departments  
often subdivided into 2-3 sections



# Head office 5 departments



# Our main responsibilities (AW)

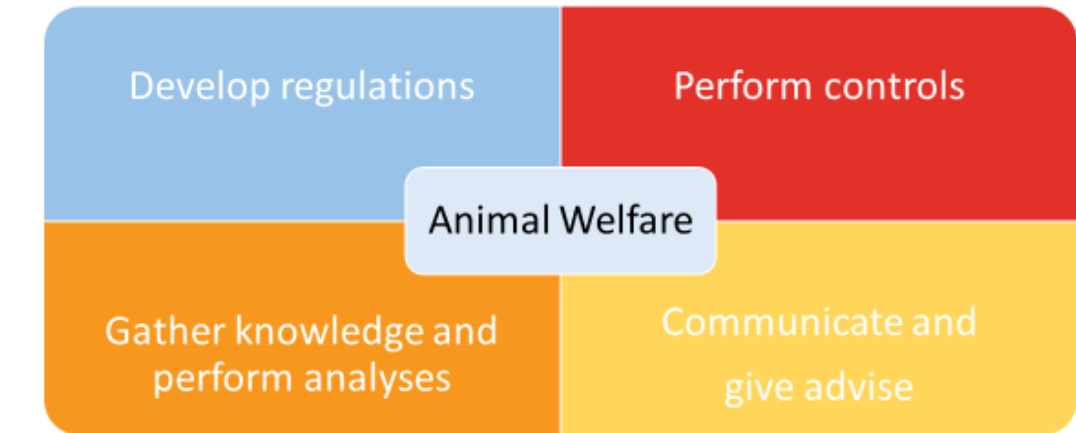
## Head office (level 2):

- Develop and propose new regulations (to be adopted by the Ministry)
- Interpret current regulations
- Develop guidelines for animal owners
- Establish directives and instruction for our staff
- Gather knowledge and perform analyses
- Develop plans for risk based controls
- Communicate
- Handle appeals on decisions issued by the regions

## Regions through local units (level 1):

- Perform controls and issue decisions
- Communicate with animal owners.

## Four core processes



# A short journey through the history of the Norwegian AW authorities

- **The District Veterinarians (DV), the Animal Protection Boards (APB), the Police and Mattilsynet (FSA)**
- **Animal Welfare Act of 1935:** Veterinarians obliged to euthanize sick animals to protect them from unnecessary suffering, if healing was not possible.  
The APBs belonged to the municipalities. Their main task was to give guidance on good AW. All veterinarians had the authority to supervise AW on farms and give advice but only the Police had the power of enforcement, and only on recommendation from the APB and the DV.
- **The Veterinary Act of 1948:** Veterinarians should protect the animals, work for their health and contribute to their production capacity
- **Animal Welfare Act of 1974:** The DVs had the authority to supervise AW, and the DV or another vet should be member of the APB
- **1995:** The APBs became governmental with the authority to issue decisions. The DV no longer a member, but responsible for their secretariat. DVs got the authority to approve stabling facilities for farm animals and perform necessary inspections to do so
- **The Animal Health Personnel Act of 2001:** ...animal health personnel practice their profession properly, thereby promoting good animal health, proper animal protection...
- **2004:** **Mattilsynet** was established, and the DVs became inspectors without any clinical practice  
Both the FSA and the APBs had the authority to perform inspections and issue decisions
- **Animal Welfare Act of 2009:** **Mattilsynet** alone has the authority to perform inspections and issue decisions. The APBs are part of the FSA and contribute with their layman perspective.

# Power through The Animal Welfare Act

**Our power to perform controls and make decisions is laid down in  
The Animal Welfare Act**

- The Food Safety Authority carries out **controls** and may issue **decisions** necessary to ensure compliance with the Act
- The control authority shall be given **unhindered access** where there is reason to believe that animals are held or other activity covered by the Act takes place
- Any person who is subject to control shall provide **necessary assistance** and equipment
- Any person who has duties under the Act shall, on request, provide **necessary information**, documentation etc.

# Enforcement

## To protect animals:

- Take temporary custody of animals, or ensure that the animals receive the necessary supervision and care
- Cull, rehome or sell animals
- Withdraw permits, approvals or authorizations (e.g. run an abattoir, transport animals)
- Ban persons from activities under the AW Act  
(In connection with criminal proceedings, the court may impose a ban)
- The Authority may implement action itself when necessary

**To enforce compliance:** Enforcement damages (one off or running)

**Sanctions:** Non-compliance fee

**Punishment** (report to the Police – court case)

Intentional or grossly negligent violation of the requirements is punishable with **fines** or **imprisonment** for **max 1 year** - serious violations **max 3 years**.

# Animal Welfare Staff

- All our AW inspectors are qualified veterinarians (supported by the APBs)
- Lawyers and communication experts also play a vital role in handling and communicating about serious cases
- All cases where serious enforcement measures are relevant, are discussed by a regional “Pri 1 board” to secure high management quality and legal protection of the animal owner
- The AW Unit at the Head Office has 6 veterinarians, 1 lawyer and 1 ethologist – now expanding with 1 lawyer, 1 vet and 1 graduate agronomist (production animals).

# The Animal Protection Boards

- A long history as important actors in the public protection of AW
- From 2010: The FSA establishes animal protection boards to satisfy the layman principle in the animal welfare work
- The APBs are part of the FSA, but not employees
- Each regional department has 1 or more APB with 3-5 members
- Appointed for 4 years at a time; candidates suggested by the local municipalities, AW-organizations, farmers' organizations and organizations for sport- and pet animals
- The APBs have no authority to perform independent inspections or issue decisions but should cooperate with and give their advice to the FSA's AW staff.

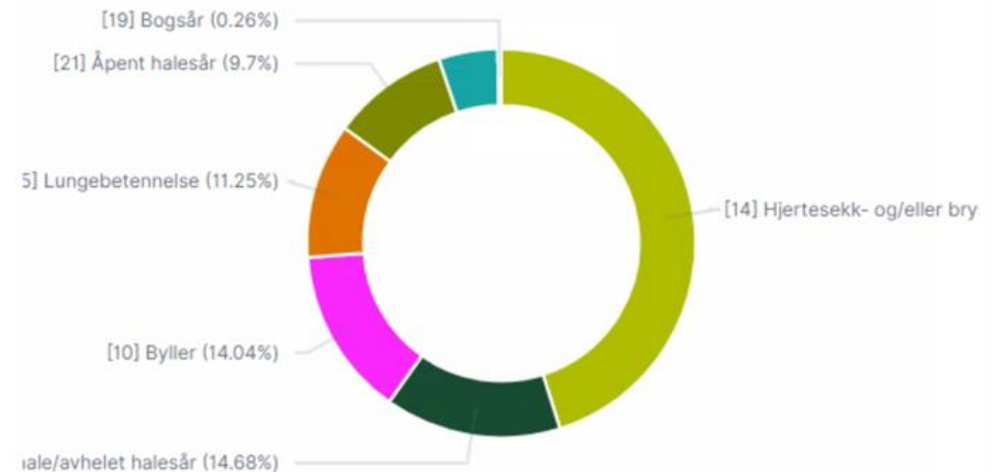
# The Police and Legal System

- The Police may take temporary custody of animals
  - The decision must be confirmed by the FSA within 7 days
  - The responsibility for the animals is then transferred to the FSA
- When the control authority requests assistance, the police shall assist in the execution of control and decisions
- **Animal Crime Units** (which is no “Animal Police” the American way):
  - One unit in each police district (12) has a special responsibility for AW crime cases
  - Investigators and police lawyers cooperate with the FSA
  - The tools are exchange of knowledge and quality investigation
  - The units don’t perform AW inspections
  - The aim is to fight AW crime and bring serious AW crime cases successfully to court
  - Some important cases have been tried all the way up to the Supreme Court and set the standard for what is considered as “intentional or grossly negligent violation” and relevant level of punishment.

# Risk based

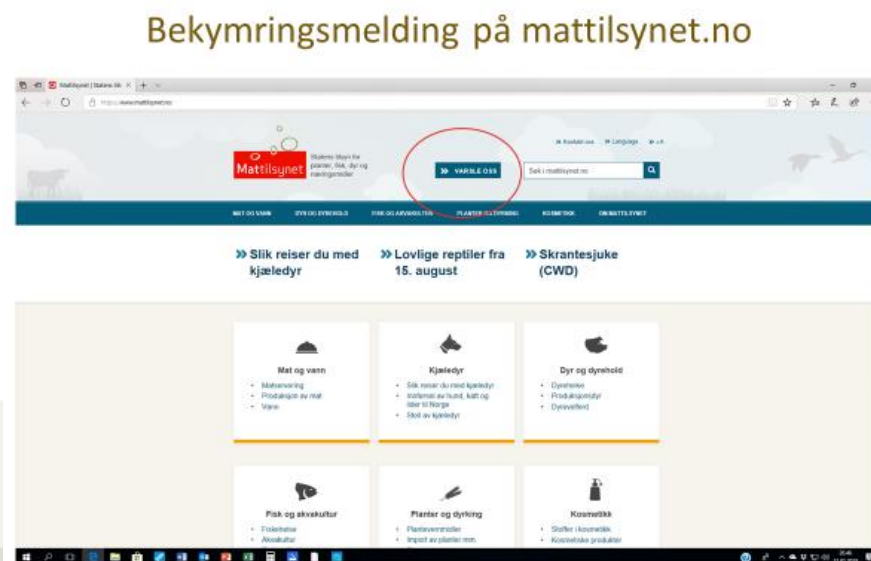
- Follow-up of notices of concern from the public, vets and other professionals in contact with animal holdings
- Systematic follow-up of known animal holdings with chronically poor animal welfare
- Data from the slaughterhouses – AW indicators:
  - USR – extended digital registrations of pathology on the carcasses (p.m. control)
  - Notice to the local FSA unit on a.m. findings indicating poor animal welfare in the animal holding
- In the future: Collect and analyse internal and external data indicating state of AW
- More responsibility on the industry through their Animal Welfare Programs.

Prevalence of 6 indicators in swine



# Main challenges

- Fish welfare: By far our most important production animal
  - 300 mill smolt per year at sea
  - 20 % die or disappear during the production cycle at sea
  - Lice, infectious diseases (ILA, PD)
  - AW for cleaner-fish
- Chronically poor welfare in animal holdings
- Handling notices of concern from the public (12 000 per year)
- Animal welfare for pigs.



Thank you  
for your  
attention!

