

# [News story: Christine Middlemiss begins as UK Chief Veterinary Officer](#)

Christine Middlemiss [has today](#) taken up post as UK Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) taking over from Nigel Gibbens who has stepped down after 10 successful years in the role.

[Watch Christine's message on her first day at Defra](#)

Christine has a wealth of experience and joins Defra after serving as the CVO for New South Wales, Australia. She took up that role in August 2016 and during her tenure she led major improvements to biosecurity across many farming sectors including implementation of new outcome focused and risk based biosecurity legislation; online animal certification processes and improving evidence and risk based disease control approaches.

She comes from a farming family in the south of Scotland, with a background in beef cattle and sheep. Prior to moving to Australia Christine was an experienced veterinarian who worked for a number of years in private practice in Scotland and the north of England with specific interest in research, meat processing and livestock genetics. She then joined the Animal Health agency (now part of the Animal and Plant Health Agency) in 2008 as a Divisional Veterinary Manager in Scotland. She also led Defra's Animal Traceability and Public Health policy team detecting and responding to new and emerging diseases such as Schmallenberg and Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea.

She re-joins the department at a time when animal welfare is a top priority for the Government, demonstrated by a number of recent announcements including legislation making CCTV cameras mandatory in slaughterhouses, the call for evidence on a ban on third party puppy sales and the draft animal welfare bill. The Government is also committed to the very highest standards on animal welfare. As the prime Minister has set out, we will make the United Kingdom a world leader in the care and protection of animals as we leave the EU.

Speaking about her appointment, Christine Middlemiss said:

I am delighted to have been appointed. It is a privilege to take over from Nigel and lead my veterinary colleagues to support our farming and food industry on the UK reputation for high health and welfare of our animals.

I am very much looking forward to working again with the team at Defra, its agencies, the devolved administrations and all the individuals and groups who will contribute to meet future challenges.

Our Secretary of State has confirmed he wants to cement the UK's place as a world-leader on animal health and welfare as the UK

leaves the European Union, and I'm delighted to have an opportunity to play a part in that.