Green sprouts - including sustainability in Herd Health and One Health education

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2009

2015

2023

7 boundaries assessed, 3 crossed

7 boundaries assessed, 4 crossed

9 boundaries assessed, 6 crossed

Figure 1: The evolution of the planetary boundaries framework

WHY?
Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science requests inclusion of knowledge and competences on green transition and sustainability in all educational programmes. University of Copenhagen has created green centers and finances cross-disciplinary educational initiatives.

HOW?
As an experiment we adapted a 4-week course on Herd Health Consultancy and Veterinary Public Health for students in their final year elective tracks into a course on sustainability for a total of 30 veterinary students in 2023-2024.

The planetary boundaries (Fig. 1) and wellbeing economics (Fig. 2) frameworks were introduced to set the scene. The teaching approach was interactive with transdisciplinary project-based learning and open discussions about the current and future animal-based food production - and about the role of the veterinarian in the transitions to come.

QUOTE FROM STUDENT
“I entered the course with some skepticism about sustainability. It has always been something that you have heard you have to deal with, but also that it is very intangible, as there are so many aspects.”

COURSE ELEMENTS

Multi-disciplinary seminars
(e.g. anthropological, animal science, geoscience + natural resource management)

Field visits
(e.g. nature conservation projects, abattoir company, farmers’ organisations, alternative farms, cattle farmer congress)

Communication
Group dynamics, perspectives, motivational conversations, change talk, conflicts, etc.

Digital core competences
Understanding data sources and flows, practice software coding

Project work and writing
Group reports and peer-feedback
Presentations and discussion of self-selected sustainability topics, and the role of the veterinarian
Individual self-reflection write-up

QUOTE FROM STUDENT
“I realized that in the development of a sustainable future, we as veterinarians have an essential role in influencing and advising farmers in the transition to a more sustainable production as well as research and development in sustainability initiatives. This role will only become greater as the debate in sustainability develops.”

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