

Help to Get Started

Thank you for your interest in the Veterinary Carbon Calculator, brought to you by Vet Sustain in collaboration with Investors in the Environment. We are thrilled you have taken the first step towards understanding the operational carbon footprint of your veterinary business, and that you are on the journey to reducing your environmental impact!

The Veterinary Carbon Calculator is specifically tailored to the environmental impacts of veterinary practice, to enable vet teams to easily calculate their carbon emissions across five key areas (energy, travel, waste, refrigerants and anaesthetics). The calculator converts various elements of business activity, such as utility use, travel and importantly veterinary specific areas, including anaesthetic gases and veterinary care waste, into carbon dioxide equivalent emissions (CO₂e). This allows you to identify your hotspots of carbon emissions, and from there you can set reduction targets, and track, measure and celebrate successful reductions.

Looking at your business resource use, the Veterinary Carbon Calculator will allow you to identify high impact areas. Within the calculator we capture information about your business, this is important to allow comparisons and to contribute to benchmarking. For each business, resource use may differ depending on things like the type of premises you have and services you offer.

Frequently Asked Questions:

I'm not in the UK, can I purchase a calculation?

The calculator is currently set up with UK 'factors' meaning the in-country specifics such as energy networks, transport and waste disposal are taken into account within the calculation to give an accurate footprint. If you are interested in the development of our calculator in your region, please get in touch with us at www.vetsustain.org/contact-us

What GHG conversion factors are used?

This calculator has been designed using the UK GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting. For information on the methodology of how the factors have been calculated, please see the most recent 'Methodology Paper' provided by BEIS and DEFRA.

Data Collection

In order to accurately calculate your carbon emissions, you will need to collect and input data from your business resource use. The Veterinary Carbon Calculator comes with a separate **Data Collection Checklist** document to help you collate all of your information in one place, and makes sure you have everything you need.

Practical tips:

- It's important to note that **not every aspect of the list below will be applicable** for every practice.
- The data collection phase can be time consuming, but the more information you have the more accurate your baseline will be, and you will be able to more closely monitor progress in subsequent years. We recommend **dedicating some time for one or two members of staff to collate the data needed**. Any member of the team can do this so this does not need to take up any clinical time.
- Whilst you may consume or produce something listed, you may not yet have accurate measurements for it. Don't let this put you off, **make a start with the data you do have**. Over time your carbon footprint may change as you start to measure more resources more accurately and introduce improvements to your systems, equipment and processes.
- The Veterinary Carbon Calculator calculates the operational impact of your veterinary practice over the course of one year - therefore you need **one year's worth of data** to input into the calculator.
 - There is no rule on how your reporting year should run, it could be January to December, or April to March, etc., but it is best that the reporting year is meaningful to you (for example it could match the calendar year, the financial year or your company reporting year).
 - Within the calculator select the 'year' of calculation relevant to the majority of your reporting year i.e. if you are Apr 2022 to Mar 2023, then you select '2022' as the year of your calculation. This will apply the correct 'factors' to your calculation.
- We strongly recommend organisations with multiple sites **complete a carbon calculation per site**, in order to get an accurate measurement and set a targeted reduction plan.
- Keep track of the data required, and think about how you can make data collection easier in subsequent years.

So, what do you need?

The Data Collection Checklist:

You can find and download this from the Carbon Calculator dashboard.

Practice information:

This information helps benchmark anonymised data across the profession.

- Practice type: Small animal, farm, equine, exotics or mixed practice
- Do you have RCVS Hospital status?
- The number of full-time equivalent employees and full-time equivalent vets. If you don't know or aren't sure, ask your practice manager or HR department (if you have one).

Energy & Water:

- Electricity used in kWh - you'll need to check your meter readings or energy bills for the year. Are you on a renewable energy tariff or not?
- Gas used (units of measurement vary between suppliers - check and be aware of which units apply to your practice) - check your meter readings or gas bills for the year.
- Fuels such as LPG tanks for equipment (LPG covers both butane and propane) - check invoices for the year which will show the amount purchased.
- Oil: Burning oil (kerosene used for heating) or gas oil (red diesel usually used for plants or generators) - check invoices for the year which will show the amount purchased.
- Biofuels such as wood chips or wood pellets - check invoices for the year which will show the amount purchased.
- Water supply and waste water: check your meter readings or bills for the year. Waste water treatment should be included on your water bill.

Travel:

Depending on the type of practice, travel may contribute a small or large amount to your overall footprint. There are a few ways you may record your business' travel.

- Fleet travel: this includes all vehicles that belong to (or are leased by) the practice, and are used for business travel. You may either record this as miles or as litres of fuel purchased.
 - For fleet mileage: you will need to know the engine size and fuel type, and the total mileage travelled in that vehicle in the year.
 - For fleet fuel in litres: you will need the total purchased litres of petrol or diesel for the year. Note you do not need to record fleet fuel in litres if it has already been accounted for in fleet mileage.

- Grey fleet travel: this refers to vehicles that do not belong to the practice but are used for business travel (i.e. staff using their own vehicles). You ideally need to know the engine size and fuel type (if you don't know the engine size there is an 'average' option), and the total miles travelled.

Collating the information on fuel purchased or miles travelled may depend on your practice reporting system. For example, fuel purchased can be tracked via fuel cards or business expense claim receipts showing the mileage of staff travel. If you only have the expenses paid information, you can calculate the miles travelled by dividing the total expenses paid by the rate per mile.

Waste:

Using resources responsibly and ensuring waste is segregated correctly can have a significant impact on your carbon footprint.

- Domestic waste: weights (kgs) of each waste stream (e.g. general waste, recycling, food waste) are usually provided on invoices from waste companies.
- Veterinary care waste: Typically weights (kg) are usually provided by your waste company, but some may be provided in litres (for example Sharps). Waste streams are typically broken down into sharps, offensive, cytotoxic, anatomical and pharmaceutical waste.
- If your waste company measures in litres and you are unable to weigh your waste streams, you can use an approximate conversion of 0.4kg per litre of waste.

If you record your waste based on a number of bags rather than in litres or kgs, you can weigh a number of each of the 'types' of waste bags (clinical/general/ recycling) over a 'typical' week, and then record the average weight for each type. You can then use the average weight x number of bags for the calculator. This is not as accurate as having a weight for each bag, but helps to provide a rough figure to use.

Refrigerants and Anaesthetic gases:

- Anaesthetics such as Isoflurane/Sevoflurane bottles or Nitrous Oxide canisters – Invoices from the year will show the quantity of bottles or canisters purchased, and the size of each bottle.
- Refrigerants within air conditioning or refrigeration equipment (if applicable) – Servicing records will show any refrigerant that has been added into the system (i.e. recharged). Systems are not always recharged but speak with your servicing company for advice.

And remember not every aspect will necessarily be applicable to every practice!

Ready to get started?

[Login](#) to your calculator dashboard where you can access the calculator, along with other supporting resources. We also have a [helpful video walking you through the process of using the calculator](#).

If you are a multi-site practice you can purchase additional calculations from your account, and you don't need to 'complete' one calculation to add another, you can have several in progress and manage them all from one dashboard. It's important to note that once you have completed and submitted the final calculation, it won't allow you to edit the data and recalculate. However, if for whatever reason you do think you have made a mistake, we are able to reopen the calculation for you to resubmit, please do just get in touch.

To allow consistency and minimise any errors in the data collection / inputting process we suggest that the same person(s) are involved in repeat calculations year on year.

If you need any further help please reach out to Vet Sustain at www.vetsustain.org/contact-us