

New Film Series *The Deadly Five* Highlights Global Animal Infectious Diseases

Vienna, Austria – April 23, 2025 – The EU-funded **WiLiMan-ID** project (<https://www.wiliman-id.eu/>) is excited to announce the launch of a brand-new **short film series**, *The Deadly Five*. This series is aimed at raising awareness of five critical animal infectious diseases, classified as high priority. Each film in the series focuses on a different disease and the experts studying and fighting them, highlighting the risks each disease poses to animal and public health, as well as the strategies being developed to mitigate their impact.

"Through this series, we aim at bringing the attention on the complexities of animal infectious diseases, and the global efforts required to monitor and control them. Our work at WiLiMan-ID is crucial in understanding and mitigating the economic and health threats posed by these pathogens," said **Christine Citti**, Project Coordinator of WiLiMan-ID.

The Deadly Five video series explores:

- **Avian influenza (AI):** A highly contagious viral disease affecting poultry, wild birds, and occasionally mammals, with pandemic potential.
- **African swine fever (ASF):** A devastating non-zoonotic disease affecting domestic and wild pigs, with severe economic consequences.
- **African horse sickness (AHS):** A deadly disease affecting horses, mules, donkeys, and zebras, transmitted by biting midges.
- **West Nile virus (WNV) & Usutu virus (USUV):** Mosquito-borne viruses cycling between birds and mosquitoes, with potential human and equine impact.
- **Chronic wasting disease (CWD):** A fatal prion disease affecting deer populations, recently emerging in Northern Europe.

Most of these diseases, including African swine fever and African horse sickness, cause serious economic losses to agricultural systems. In addition, three of these – specifically avian influenza, West Nile fever, and chronic wasting diseases – pose a threat to human health. Each film delves into the latest scientific insights on these diseases, highlighting disease surveillance, prevention, and control.

Working Together to Improve Global Health

The series is produced in collaboration with leading research institutes from three countries, including the Norwegian Veterinary Institute (Norway), the Animal Health Laboratory of ANSES (France), the Friedrich Loeffler Institute (Germany), and the National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (France). In fact, WiLiMan-ID brings together 14 partners from 11 countries with expertise in virology, genomics, cell biology, biochemistry, epidemiology and modelling, to name just a few.



"The general public might have heard about avian influenza or African swine fever, but is perhaps rather unaware of these diseases, the global challenges they present to economies and public health, and the efforts and resources the EU and each of our experts put into combatting them and preventing outbreaks. This is why we created a series of five films to allow each disease its own spotlight," said **Markus Schmidt**, CEO of Biofaction (Austria), which oversees communications for WiLiMan-ID.

For more information on *The Deadly Five* series, visit <https://www.wiliman-id.eu/the-deadly-five/>.

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