Development of Forensic Veterinary Pathology is a PhD project at the Swedish National Veterinary Institute. This project will comprise routines at a (potential) crime scene, pathology/diagnosis, evaluation of results using the logical (Bayesian) approach and the development of a model for veterinary expert statements intended for the legal system.

The ultimate goal of the project is a secure, transparent, high quality process where forensic results obtained are correctly understood in court.

Revision of Forensic Necropsy Routines.
This part aims to improve current protocols (standard operating procedures) regarding forensic necropsies, paying attention to trace recovery and how to preserve evidence throughout the chain of investigation (crime scene => analysis). Methods established by the National Laboratory of Forensic Science (SKL) and the National Board of Forensic Medicine (RMV) will be used.

Current Status of Forensic Veterinary Pathology in Europe.
To investigate the current status of forensic veterinary pathology in Europe we will compose a survey directed to 134 pathology laboratories and institutes in Europe and a few countries outside Europe. Questions will encompass number of- and types of cases, analyses and resources available and level of special training of the investigating pathologists. This part of the project aims to identify useable resources and expertise, identify common knowledge and common problems and possibly initiate collaboration across borders in the field of veterinary forensic sciences.

Legal reporting and Evidence Evaluation.
Historical necropy reports on forensic pathology cases are being revised using the forensic logical approach. Results are tested against an advanced hypothesis and one (or more) alternative hypotheses and then reported as a grade on a scale of conclusions. The formation of hypotheses and alternative hypotheses ensures that results supporting differential diagnoses relevant for the criminal case are not overlooked.

The perception of revised and original reports will be evaluated using interviews and questionnaires directed to different instances of the legal system. We aim to include public prosecutors, attorneys, representatives of the district courts and investigating police departments. A comparison between old and revised reports will be done. We will also study verdicts where veterinary expert statements has been a part of the chain of evidence.

The overall aim of this part of the project is to gain knowledge on what is expected and desired from a veterinary report in trial.