

LABOUR'S
**ANIMAL
WELFARE**
MANIFESTO



Foreword



Labour is the party of animal welfare. From bringing forward the landmark Hunting Act to protecting the treatment of domestic animals under the Animal Welfare Act, Labour has always placed the welfare of animals high on the policy agenda. At a European level, Labour secured better welfare standards for battery hens and chickens and tightened the rules on the transport of live animals. It is a record Labour is rightly proud of.

However, we cannot allow hard won progress to be undone. We know that Labour must be at the forefront of driving through the next phase of progress in the journey towards better animal welfare standards that are up to date and fit for purpose.

That is why last year we consulted widely on a range of policies on animal welfare in order to build upon the long standing leadership of the Labour Party on the issue of animal welfare, and to underpin the next phase of animal welfare initiatives under the next Labour government. Some areas of policy are devolved, for example in agriculture, and where this is the case we would work closely with the devolved governments.

We had a huge response to our consultation, with over 6,000 detailed submissions, and I would like to sincerely thank every individual and organisation who took the time to contribute their views and expertise. Every submission was carefully read and considered and we held a number of follow-up roundtables and discussions.

This document is the result of hours of meetings, discussions and combing through detailed submissions.

One of our key proposals is the appointment of an Animal Welfare Commissioner to ensure that government policy across Whitehall is continually informed and underpinned by the latest scientific

evidence on animal sentience and best practice in animal welfare. We had such a positive response to this proposal that it has been moved right to the top of this document to be our first pledge.

Never has it been more pressing to drive forward a comprehensive and ambitious agenda on animal welfare. At the time of writing this plan, we have a Tory government recklessly hurtling the nation towards a disastrous no-deal Brexit, new trade deals on the horizon that raise serious questions over animal welfare and food safety standards, flip flopping on the issue of fox hunting and the largest destruction of a protected species in living memory with the inhumane and ineffective badger cull.

When this Tory government does talk about animal welfare, it has taken a haphazard approach, announcing random stand-alone policies while simultaneously pursuing an underlying policy agenda that at best overlooks animal welfare and at worst seeks to turn back the clock. Labour will put animal welfare policy on a serious and credible footing, driven by science and best practice, rather than vague sentimentality or 'campaign-of-the-month'.

Our vision is one where no animal is made to suffer unnecessary pain and degradation and where we continue to drive up standards and practice in line with the most recent advances and understanding. The policies set out here in our Animal Welfare manifesto are the next stage in that journey.

Sue Hayman MP

Shadow Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs



Strengthening Animal Welfare in UK Law

Labour supports the full transposition of protections for animals from EU to UK law. We would build upon existing standards to ensure that the laws on animal welfare continue to reflect the latest scientific evidence in relation to animal sentience and how animals experience pain and suffering.

1. Appoint an independent **Animal Welfare Commissioner** with the objective of ensuring that animal welfare standards are always considered as legislation is introduced and as Britain takes part in international bodies, trade deals and obligations.
 - a. No specific body is currently under a statutory duty to enforce the welfare requirements in the Animal Welfare Act (2006). This would place the enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act (2006) on a statutory footing.
 - b. **The Animal Welfare Commissioner** will be responsible for gathering the latest scientific evidence on animal sentience and animal welfare, to ensure the most up-to-date and evidence-based understanding across Whitehall and to ensure the UK maintains its top ranking in the Animal Protection Index.
 - c. **The Animal Welfare Commissioner**, working alongside Government, will assist in the promotion of best practice in animal welfare internationally.
2. Enshrine the principle of **animal sentience** in law to prevent practices that expose both wild and domestic animals to cruel and degrading treatment, and to ensure that government and public bodies must have due regard to animal sentience.
3. **Expand the definition of animal** to include decapod crustaceans (this would end the practice of lobsters being boiled alive) and cephalopods (for example squid) in line with other countries including Norway, New Zealand and Switzerland.
4. **Remove two-tier sentencing for animal cruelty** so that all animals, whether domestic, under human control or wild, are protected by the same five-year maximum sentence for animal cruelty.

Domestic Pets

Labour is committed to promoting the highest level of care for domestic animals and animals in captivity. While organisations such as the PDSA provide veterinary assistance to those on income support, too often pet care is unaffordable and inaccessible.

Recognising that for many people buying a home is not affordable, Labour would seek to improve the rights of renters to keep pets.

We will explore further measures to tackle puppy smuggling and ban the use of shock collars, expand microchipping to cats, tackle the problem of abandoned horses and work with the police on livestock worrying.



5. **Improve accessibility to vets** for those on low incomes and/or living in remote areas, working with organisations like the PDSA to explore how access to affordable vet care can be expanded. Work with animal welfare charities to encourage take-up of subsidised neutering.
6. Refusal of landlords to allow pets is a common reason for cats and dogs being given up to animal shelters. We would consult with tenants and both social and private landlords so that **tenants can keep pets as a default** unless there is evidence that the animal is causing a nuisance, or its welfare is compromised.
7. Work with care home providers and advocate groups to explore the potential **for elderly, disabled and homeless people** who move into care homes, sheltered accommodation or hostels **to be able to keep their pets** and work with relevant agencies to provide 'safe houses' for pets of people escaping domestic violence.
8. **Ban** the keeping of and trade in **pet primates**.
9. Bring in proper **regulation of animal sanctuaries** and rescue centres.

Dogs & Cats

10. Take increased measures to **tackle puppy smuggling** working with the Dogs Trust and other appropriate charities on the best and quickest way to achieve this.
11. **Ban the use of animal shock collars**, including sale and importation.
12. Expand mandatory **microchipping to cats**.
13. Expand the **reporting of motor accidents** beyond livestock and dogs **to include cats**.
14. Strengthen Section 1 of the 'Dangerous Dogs Act' taking into account the recommendations of the House of Commons EFRA Committee inquiry to better protect the public.
15. Take action to **tackle livestock worrying** in line with the Livestock Worrying Police Working Group's recommendations.

Horses

16. Implement legislation to **tackle the problem of fly grazing and horse abandonment**, mirroring the Control of Horses (Wales) Act to provide a consistent approach across the border.
17. **Review the current horse passport system** to improve horse welfare and act on concerns following the 2013 horse meat scandal.

A High Welfare Future for Farming

Most British farmers are proud of their high levels of animal welfare. However, we have an obligation to ensure that best practice is adopted right across the board and that outdated and cruel practices are no longer acceptable and are phased out. Several high-profile instances that have been exposed through CCTV have revealed poor practices and have raised questions about culture and procedures in some slaughterhouses.

Labour supports a move away from highly intensive, environmentally damaging farming methods and is committed to promoting best practice in cruelty-free animal husbandry and to ensuring better enforcement of agreed standards. Labour will seek to end the 'cage age' of outdated farming practices that cause animals distress and restrict natural behaviour. We will provide meaningful support for farmers moving to higher welfare standards.



18. Commit to **keeping and strengthening the statutory codes of practice** covering the treatment of farm animals.
19. **Ban live exports for slaughter and fattening.** This would include an exemption for breeding animals providing provision is in place ensuring they are transported under genuinely high welfare standards. This would also include an exemption for livestock transported across the Northern Ireland border.
20. **Ban imports of Foie Gras** to restrict the market for this cruel and inhumane product.
21. Introduce a **formal whistle blowing procedure** through the Food Standards Agency to enable employees to report bad behaviour and practice within abattoirs.
22. **Increase management accountability** of poor employment practices that undermine workforce standards.
23. Carry out a review of training and standards within slaughterhouses.
24. Introduce a **phased ban on sow farrowing crates** with a reasonable phase out period, replacing with safe, free-farrowing systems. Farmers would be supported in moving to free farrowing systems by farm support payments for a transition period.
25. **End the use of cages** on British farms by 2025, allowing producers time to plan and make necessary changes.
26. Research into **the impact on animal welfare of highly intensive livestock farming practices.** This would consider the overall management of a farm and the treatment of the individual animals. We need to feed the nation with high quality, affordable food produced to standards we can trust.
27. Design **post-Brexit farm subsidies** to reward and encourage both high animal welfare standards and environmental practices. Embed and enhance in policy the responsibility for farmers to conserve, enhance and create safe habitats for birds and animals during the breeding season, and encourage the growth of wild flowers.

Wild Animals

Labour is clear that our animal welfare obligations go beyond domesticated animals. Unlike the Conservatives who have championed fox hunting and given the green light to the highest ever number of badgers being killed across England, Labour is exploring ways to further enhance the Hunting Act and bring forward a ban on the badger cull. We will tackle criminality and promote sustainability.

Although many retailers now refuse to stock real fur, it is still sold in the UK. Consumers can also be misled into buying real fur, believing it to be fake.

28. Develop a National Wildlife Crime Strategy and make illegal hunting and all wildlife crime a reportable offence.

29. Enhance and strengthen the Hunting Act, closing loopholes that allow for illegal hunting of foxes, deer and hares. This would include:

- a. Review penalties under the Hunting Act 2004 to ensure it is an effective deterrent, including consulting on the introduction of custodial sentences, bringing it in line with the penalties for other wildlife crimes.
- b. Introduce a new 'recklessness' clause to prevent trail hunts being used as cover for the illegal hunting of wild mammals.
- c. Remove the exemption for 'research and observation'.
- d. Remove the exemption 'use of dogs below ground to protect birds for shooting'.

30. Bring in measures to effectively tackle hare coursing.

31. End the badger cull. We would work instead on non-lethal interventions to reduce the incidence of disease in cattle.

32. Trophy hunting is cruel and unjustifiable and can act as a cover for illegal poaching. Labour would end the import of wild animal trophies from threatened species.

33. Improve enforcement and prosecution rates for the illegal persecution of birds of prey. We will consider introducing vicarious liability in line with Scotland.

34. Ban all fur imports.

35. Ban the sale and use of snares and glue traps.

Zoos

36. Review the effectiveness of the Zoo Licensing Act (1981) and its monitoring provisions. Establish a full-time, independent zoo inspectorate to draw up **revised standards of animal welfare in the UK's zoos** to ensure consistency in licensing and inspection.





Marine Life

Today whales, dolphins and other marine animals face a variety of man-made threats including hunting, ship strikes, chemical pollution, ocean noise, entanglement in fishing gear and issues arising from climate change.

- 37. Labour **commits to the 'Blue Belt'** to protect and enhance our marine environment around the UK and overseas territories.
- 38. Labour **strongly opposes whaling** and would work with our international partners to stop the return of commercial whaling.
- 39. There is a huge problem with **Abandoned, Lost and Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG)**, otherwise known as Ghost Gear. Labour will consult on a National Action Plan on Ghost Gear.
- 40. Bring in a **ban on electric pulse fishing**.



Animals in Sport

Labour would seek to improve the animal welfare conditions of animals in used in sport.

Greyhounds

The lack of transparency around what happens to greyhounds after they are no longer fit for racing means that we anecdotally hear of many cases where healthy animals are needlessly destroyed. We must ensure all retired animals are properly cared for.

- 41. Issue **best practice on responsible ownership** and develop statutory minimum standards for racing and welfare.
- 42. Introduce better mechanisms to trace ownership and implement a centralised database to record what happens to greyhounds after they are no longer fit to race. **Regulations would be extended to Trainers' Kennels**, which are not included in the 2010 regulations.

Horse racing

- 43. The use of the whip is allowed for two purposes: to keep rider and mount safe, and for 'encouragement'. Labour would carry out an independent **review of the use of the whip** to establish if its use for 'encouragement' can be justified.

Game birds

- 44. Implement an independent review into the economic, environmental and wildlife **impacts of driven grouse shooting** and model alternatives.
- 45. Enact the last Labour Government's proposed legislation on **cage rearing of game birds**.



Animals used in Research

Labour is concerned by the lack of transparency regarding project license applications and the continued permissibility of 'severe' suffering as defined in UK legislation. Non-animal methods for research have developed and improved over time. Labour is proposing a comprehensive review of animal testing with a view to improving practice, limiting animal suffering and increasing transparency, with a long-term objective to phase out animal testing entirely.

46. Review the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and commit to ending within an achievable timeframe, the permitting of 'severe' suffering as defined in UK legislation, with a long-term objective to **phase out animal testing entirely**.
47. Commit to a stringent review of defined areas in regulatory testing, with the aim of immediately identifying and **eliminating avoidable tests**.
48. Make **animal testing project licenses open and transparent**. This would be undertaken in such a way as to ensure addresses and names of individuals were not exposed and intellectual property, confidentiality etc. was also protected.
49. Commit to a **ban on the export and import of animals** for use in research unless with specific Home Office consent where there would otherwise be greater welfare detriment.
50. Contribute to the development and validation of **sound, scientific, viable non-animal research methods and technologies** and encourage research in the field.

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