

ANIMALS MATTER



Animals matter; to our climate, to our health, to our economy, and to British voters. They matter as sentient individuals.

Improving animal welfare is both popular with the electorate and essential to creating a safe, sustainable and fair future.



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From across our proudly self-proclaimed nation of animal lovers, all Members of Parliament receive a large amount of correspondence from citizens wanting more and stronger animal protection laws and policies. Constituency-level (MRP) polling carried out in September 2023 showed that more than two-thirds of the British public feel that a political party announcing plans to 'pass more laws designed to improve animal welfare and protect animals from cruelty' would have the right priorities.¹ Polling also revealed that one in ten British people rank animal welfare amongst the top five issues facing the country, and 71% believe that passing good animal welfare laws shows compassion

and concern for those who don't have the power to protect themselves.²

The welfare and suffering of animals can be an emotive issue, but policy makers should not mistake improvements in animal protection as a sentimental or altruistic ambition. Promoting good welfare and health for animals is an intrinsic and essential part of solving many of society's major challenges, including climate change, sustainable food production, public health, and nature recovery.

This briefing sets out a vision for animal welfare and some key policies that the UK Government should introduce to improve animal protection laws, as polling shows voters expect.

All of the proposals command strong public support, most have near-zero direct cost, and all would set the UK on track to becoming a world leader in the compassionate treatment of animals, for the benefit of animals at home and abroad. ■

ANIMALS MATTER AT HOME

A vision for a food and farm strategy whereby the UK raises farmed animal welfare standards, ensures consumers have access to clear information on which to make buying decisions and encourages farmers to improve production methods whilst also protecting them from being undercut by imported food produced to standards that are illegal in the UK. The Government should commit to taking forward a food strategy which ensures access to affordable, nutritious food for all, whilst driving up farmed animal welfare standards, driving down poor production methods and encouraging the public to eat less meat in line with climate change and human health concerns.

This can be cost neutral given that stopping imports of lower welfare products will ensure consumers replace these with British produced food; the example of phasing out the use of cages for laying hens, where cage-free egg production in the UK has risen from 30% to almost 80% in the past 20 years, shows that consumers value higher-welfare standards. This major market shift, supported by retailers, demonstrates that industry can change and still be profitable.

A vision in which all pet animals bred, reared and kept have a life worth living. At present imported puppies and rescue dogs pose a disease and health risk to the UK with any outbreak of diseases such as distemper or brucellosis potentially costing the UK economy and pet owners millions of pounds. The UK Government has led the way with improving the standards in commercial activities such as pet shops and dog breeding and should ensure that all who wish to care for pet animals do so to the highest standards.

SUPPORT FARMERS TO END THE USE OF CAGES AND CRATES

Every year, around 8 million farmed animals in the UK are confined to cages for all, or part of, their life. The UK Government claims to want to be a global leader in animal welfare, but several European countries have already banned caged systems – should post-Brexit Britain fall behind best practice?

We are calling for the prohibition of a) barren, enriched and 'combi' cages for laying hens, b) farrowing crates for sows, and c) individual calf pens in British farming. Other farmed animals that are often confined to cages include rabbits, pullets, broiler breeders, layer breeders, quail, pheasants, partridges and guinea fowl. The use of cages for these species should also be prohibited by law.

Cage-free farming systems, which allow each animal to express their individual needs, are already widely used in the UK and internationally and have been proven to be economically viable. Consumer demand for food produced in cage-free systems is rising rapidly, and it is increasingly what the public expects of British farming.³

WHY IT MATTERS

As sentient beings

Cages confine and restrict, thwarting many of an animal's natural instincts. They are a desolate reflection on our society. There is a wealth of robust evidence demonstrating that enriched cages for laying hens and farrowing crates for sows are highly detrimental to welfare.

To voters

A petition on the Parliament website, calling for an end to caged farming, secured over 109,000 signatures in 2021.⁴ This followed a similar petition in 2019, which secured over 106,000 signatures.⁵

In 2019, a European Citizens' Initiative secured over 1.4 million signatures. In response the EU Commission committed to bring forward a legislative proposal, in 2023, that could end the use of all cages, across the EU27, by 2027.⁶ A number of other European countries have taken steps to ban caged systems. As one of the driving forces behind, and one of the first to implement, a ban on sow stalls across the EU, the UK should not now

be falling behind EU Member States in the area of pig welfare. The Government must act if it is not to fall behind voter expectations.

NEXT STEPS

The abolition of cage systems is not a partisan issue. During the debate on the above mentioned petition, the then-Farming Minister said, "the Government are committed to phasing out confinement systems and supporting the industry to do so, not least to underpin UK food security."⁷ The Labour Animal Welfare Manifesto committed to introduce a 'phased ban on sow farrowing crates' and to 'end the use of cages on British farms by 2025'.⁸ And the Scottish Government's 2021-22 Programme for Government committed to "Start consultation this year on proposals to... phase out cages for gamebirds and laying hens, and farrowing crates for pigs."⁹ The Scottish Government's consultations on laying hens and game birds closed in June and July 2024, respectively.^{10,11} We urge the swift publication of consultations to inform bans on farrowing crates.

The UK Government must show it is serious in its ambitions, support the welcome progress delivered by food companies, and embrace a cage-free future – starting by publishing the long-awaited consultations. It must also ensure that farm subsidies, such as the Animal Health and Welfare Grant, are specifically ringfenced to support farmers with large infrastructure grants to assist them with the transition to cage-free systems. Ending the cage age would both protect millions of farmed animals every year across the UK and ensure that the UK does not fall behind other nations. ■



INTRODUCE MANDATORY ANIMAL WELFARE LABELLING ON FOOD

The UK Government has the power to give consumers the ability to make informed decisions on what animal products they buy, by bringing in clearer labelling for consumers on how animals were raised and slaughtered. In September 2022, Defra published the results of its call for evidence on labelling. This showed overwhelming support for introducing mandatory Method of Production (MoP) and a follow up consultation on proposals closed in May 2024. We call on the Government to now publish its response and begin to introduce clearer information for consumers showing how their food was produced - whether it is in supermarkets, on products or in the food service sector.

WHY IT MATTERS

To consumers

Consumers have said they wish to see clearer information on food so that they can make informed purchasing decisions. Polling from 2021 shows that 68% of the British public want to see food labelled to show the conditions that animals have been reared in and 84,000 people signed a petition supporting Honest Labelling.¹² Introducing MoP labelling will empower consumers to make informed choices about the food they purchase and help to ensure British farmers are not undermined by low-welfare imports.

To a strong economy

As it can *and should* be applied to imported products, labelling will ensure that information on any food sold in the UK, whether it is produced here or abroad, is readily available to the consumer. This will enable market forces to drive further investment in higher welfare systems by British farmers. In tandem with a trade policy that adheres to core animal welfare standards, labelling will also ensure that consumers can easily distinguish between higher welfare products and lower welfare imports that do not meet the standards that people in the UK expect their food to be produced

to. This will help give the consumer the information required to make a clearer purchase choice. Such labelling has contributed to the increase in sales of cage-free eggs and could be similarly beneficial to the way other animals are farmed.

NEXT STEPS

We call for rapid progress on this issue. The consultation results must be published as soon as possible as a first step to fulfilling public demand for making more information available to consumers.¹³ The scheme that is eventually introduced should be mandatory, apply to both domestically produced and imported meat and dairy goods, and be applicable to fresh and processed foods in a range of settings (e.g. fresh cuts of meat in supermarkets, ready meals, public canteens). The Government should allow a reasonable phase-in period for any labelling reform but this transition period should still be relatively short. ■



ACCELERATE A SHIFT AWAY FROM INTENSIVE ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

The National Food Strategy encouraged a reduction in meat consumption by at least 30% over the next decade.¹⁴ The Sustainable Farming Incentive Scheme and Animal Health and Welfare Pathway must proactively support “less and better” meat and dairy production and consumption. Agricultural and trade policy should support higher-welfare British farmers, and policy and public finance should support a transition away from unsustainable and inhumane intensive farming systems.

WHY IT MATTERS

To reach Net Zero

The Government’s 2023 Agri-climate report estimated that in 2021 agriculture was the source of 11% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁵ Intensive farming systems in the UK, especially those in which animals are caged and unable to feed from natural resources, are also heavily dependent on unsustainable imports of animal feed - typically from South America. Deforestation and land clearance for animal feed are highly damaging to local biodiversity and wildlife. In light of these factors, and the well-established link between climate change and global meat production, we must transition away from an unsustainable animal-centric food system.

For food security

Intensively growing monocultures of cereals for feeding livestock is a wholly inefficient system for providing food and nutritional security and is incompatible with environmental sustainability goals. Our analysis of Government data shows that on average 49% of wheat, barley and oats grown in the UK between 2019-21 was used to feed livestock, wasting food and resources that could be utilised for human consumption, as animals convert cereals very inefficiently into meat and milk.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has stated that reduction of excess meat (and dairy) consumption is among the most effective measures to mitigate GHG emissions.¹⁶ Consequently, priority should

be given to measures to improve food security which will not lead to an intensification of the farming system.

Part of the solution is a reduction in the number of factory farms, as this will release the acreage currently used to grow crops for factory-farmed animals to diversify the human-edible crops grown. This could allow the UK to reduce reliance on the imports of some foods, thereby boosting the UK’s food security. It could also lay the foundation for healthier, more nutritious diets whilst still supporting UK farmers - particularly regenerative, smaller scale farmers who put nature at the heart of their farms.

NEXT STEPS

The UK Government must support a just protein transition by revising dietary guidelines; supporting alternative protein innovation; and offering financial incentives and skill-building to help farmers and food growers shift away from intensive animal agriculture to sustainable protein production.

Other governments, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, have taken welcome and tangible steps to reflect the true climate and environmental costs of animal agriculture, including through taxation, and to support and incentivise a shift to more plant-based protein production. The UK Government can support such a shift, without appearing unduly prescriptive on individual dietary choices, by adopting an animal product reduction target within publicly funded food procurement.

We also urge the Government to revise and make mandatory the Government Food Buying Standards across the public sector, and to commit to increase the proportion of higher welfare meat procured, such as organic-certified meat. These policy actions will set our country on track to achieve public health and sustainability goals, improve food security and ensure the UK is able to compete in the global plant-based foods market. ■



LICENSING ANIMAL RESCUES, SANCTUARIES AND REHOMING FACILITIES TO IMPROVE WELFARE STANDARDS

In England, there are many hundreds of animal rescue and rehoming centres and sanctuaries operating without any requirement to be licensed. While many are run well, with great care given to animals, a great many cannot or do not meet the needs of the animals in their care. Establishing and maintaining an animal care and/or rehoming facility is a complex and costly business, and organisations such as the RSPCA are too often called in to investigate and educate poorly run establishments and provide care or homes for their animals. Scotland and Jersey already operate licensing systems for animal rescues and sanctuaries, and the Welsh Government is also considering introducing licensing. England, which has more than three quarters of UK rescues, must not be left behind and must require by law that all animal rescues and sanctuaries are licensed under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

WHY IT MATTERS

To animals and adopters

Requiring rescue and rehoming centres and sanctuaries to be licensed would improve the welfare of animals kept in such establishments by creating a legislative structure that sets standards of care, drives improvements in standards of keeping, and allows for enforcement of

such standards. This would protect animals from being kept in poor welfare situations; it would prevent well-meaning people wishing to provide homes for animals from becoming overwhelmed with placement requests; and it would provide the public with confidence to be able to visit/adopt from rescue centres and sanctuaries without the risk that they are inadvertently supporting poor welfare practices. At present there is no assurance scheme for rescues and whereas you need a licence to open a pet shop or a dog kennels you don't at the moment to open an animal rescue. Helping potential adoptees of dogs and cats to choose which rescue to rehome from would also speed up the process of rehoming which is critical at present with thousands of dogs and cats kept in rescues awaiting adoption. As a commercial puppy trader could also get around the law by saying they run a rescue, it would also close the loophole in the ban on third-party puppy sales by preventing third party sellers from setting up as bogus rescue centres.

NEXT STEPS

Scotland introduced licensing for all rescues and sanctuaries in 2021 and the Welsh Government is also considering this in 2024. The UK Government should ensure harmonised regulation and close the loophole of allowing unregulated English rescues to undermine the legislation in the other devolved regions. A consultation on this has been promised since 2021. Standards already exist, produced by the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH), to assist licensing which would help to reduce the burden on local authorities. This is a quick and easy solution to help animals, pet adoptees and rescues. ■



TACKLING ILLEGAL PUPPY IMPORTS

No accurate data exists, but it is likely that a substantial proportion of the English market for puppies is provided by unlicensed English breeders or imported puppies, including those from Wales, Ireland and continental Europe. The demand for puppies during COVID-19 lockdowns and the sharp increase in dog prices resulted in an increase in the illegal importation of puppies from countries such as Romania, where investigations found that over a third of puppy imports came from.¹⁷ Alongside this, an increase occurred in dogs being imported with cropped ears, with the RSPCA seeing a 621% increase in the number of reports of ear cropping and cropped ears during a five year period.¹⁸

The Government has a manifesto commitment to crack down on the illegal puppy trade. The Kept Animals Bill, which was scrapped in May 2023 would have made it illegal to import puppies under six months old, or dogs with cropped ears. A replacement Bill also fell when the election was called.

WHY IT MATTERS

The illegal puppy trade is a lucrative business worth millions of pounds to unscrupulous breeders, transporters and sellers – according to the Scottish SPCA, the Scottish Market alone is worth approximately £13 million annually.¹⁹ Thousands of puppies are imported from breeders in Europe for sale in the UK, with the number of dogs being imported rising from 44,563 in 2019 to 70,154 in 2021.²⁰ Although imports have now dropped to 34,570 in 2023, these puppies are often reared in poor conditions, denied adequate veterinary care and taken from their mothers too soon.²¹ This results in high numbers of puppies arriving to their new families sick, and in many cases, dying within just a few days, causing heartache and high veterinary bills. It is estimated that 40% of illegally bred puppies die before they reach five years of age, with 15% getting sick or dying within their first year of birth.²²

The British public are vulnerable to countless adverts for puppies on classified sites or social media by unscrupulous sellers, with many becoming untraceable immediately after the sale completes. We advocate for thorough regulation of online pet sales to be incorporated

into any legislation tackling illegal puppy imports, in order to combat the illegal puppy trade more effectively.

The practice of mutilating dogs by cropping their ears and docking their tails is cruel and unnecessary, often carried out without anaesthetic or pain relief, and has no benefits for the dog whatsoever. Ear cropping can actually be detrimental to a dog's health, behaviour and welfare. The procedure is carried out purely for aesthetic or cosmetic reasons. The wounds can take a long time to heal, need a lot of aftercare and can become infected easily. Ears are also an important part of the dog's body and are used to signal how they are feeling.

To the public

86% of the public support measures to end the illegal puppy trade, 76% support a ban on imports of dogs with cropped ears and 81% measures to make dog theft a specific offence.²³

NEXT STEPS

The UK Government should raise the minimum age for dogs to be transported into the UK to six months and limit the maximum number of dogs that can be transported in one journey to three dogs per vehicle. The Government should also prohibit the transport of dogs that are more than 42 days pregnant, in addition to extending the ban on the movement of dogs with mutilations (e.g. ear cropping and tail docking) to Northern Ireland with a strict exemption for dogs that are being rehomed.

The VeriPet system, developed by FOUR PAWS and Europetnet, connects national digital Identification and Registration (I&R) databases with classified ad sites, enabling the traceability and identification of stakeholders throughout a dog's lifetime. The UK Governments should explore strengthening pet and seller traceability through mandatory implementation of VeriPet, so only registered pets can be advertised online by traceable sellers. They should also bring in long-awaited reforms to microchipping laws which would allow authorities to access pet and owner data via a central portal thereby hastening the reunification of owners and their lost or stolen pets. This would also save local authorities money by reducing time spent collecting and kenneling stray and lost pets. ■

INTRODUCE CORE ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS IN TRADE DEALS

ANIMALS MATTER ABROAD

In our modern globalised world, animal welfare issues are no longer limited to animals within a country's borders. UK policies and markets have enormous influence on the lives of billions of animals worldwide, and the way animals and nature are treated globally impacts us directly. If we are to address the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, we must realise the impact that UK policy can have on the world.

If we allow the import of lower welfare animal products into the UK, we are giving our endorsement to industries which are driving these global crises, and ensuring that these practices, often banned in the UK, continue to cause harm to billions of individual sentient beings and to the health of our planet. The UK is making great progress in ending low welfare practices, however this must also be reflected in the products we allow to be imported. We must ensure that our trade policy includes core animal welfare standards and that we end the import of low welfare and damaging products such as fur, foie gras, and hunting trophies.

The previous UK Government made repeated commitments not to compromise “on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food safety standards” in trade negotiations. However, as we saw with the UK-Australia trade agreement and with the Trans-Pacific trade agreement (CPTPP), the UK has been prepared to allow in animal products from other countries that would be illegal to produce in the UK, including battery eggs and pork produced in sow stalls. As these practices are often cheaper, the imported food will inevitably undercut British-produced food, resulting in our farmers being undercut and undermining the use of public funds to support higher welfare farming in the UK.

WHY IT MATTERS

As sentient beings

Importing products that are illegal to produce in the UK is simply offshoring poor animal welfare. Trade deals signed or underway will liberalise trade and encourage imports from a wide range of inhumane farming systems banned in the UK, including wool from live lamb cut (mulesed) sheep in Australia; beef from cattle transported for twice as long as permitted in the UK or kept in barren feedlots in Australia; eggs from barren battery cages in Mexico; and pork produced in sow stalls from Canada.

For food security

The need to ensure the recovery of nature is closely linked to the method, and consumption, of meat and dairy production. At the same time, it's important that the issue is not simply outsourced to other countries, as that has implications for food security.

A trade policy without adequate safeguards will therefore negatively impact the UK's current animal welfare standards for decades to come – undermining our hard-won regulations and seriously undercutting higher welfare British farmers by forcing them to compete with products from lower welfare systems, which risks putting more farmers out of business, jeopardising

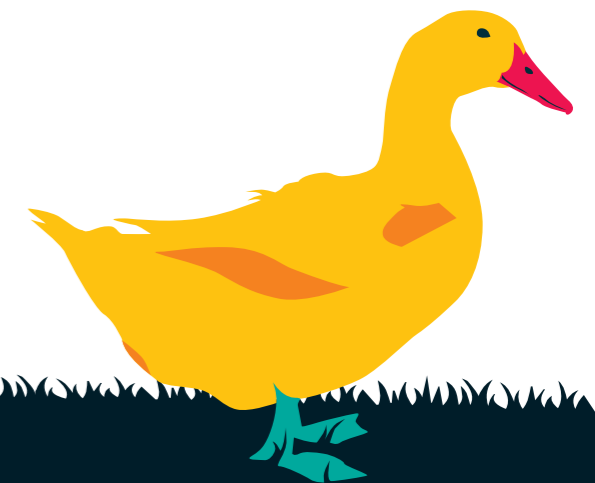
our food security and outsourcing animal cruelty. The National Farmers Union agrees, stating in April “there are currently no standards in place to safeguard farming business from imports that would be illegal to produce here. That is why, alongside the WWF, we have written to the three main political parties in England to call for the formation of a core standards commission”.²⁴

For a strong economy

Trade deals typically include reductions and elimination of tariffs on imports. If the tariff on imports of food produced to low standards is eliminated, British farmers will be entirely unprotected from unfair competition. It's not just our farmers who will be exposed. Our food industry employs over four million people in the farm to fork food chain. Enshrining core animal welfare standards in trade deals would limit the risk of producers in the UK being undercut by such conditionality.

NEXT STEPS

As proposed by both the animal welfare sector and National Farmers Union, Britain should set core minimum standards for animal welfare and the environment as a condition for any tariff- or quota-free access that is granted through trade deals. The UK Government should promote trade in higher-quality, sustainable goods, rather than engaging in a “race to the bottom” in which British farmers are undercut by imports of agri-food products produced in conditions that would be illegal in Britain. Meeting those core standards would ensure they are competing with British producers on a fair and ethical basis. ■



BAN THE IMPORT OF HUNTING TROPHIES INTO THE UK

Trophy hunting is barbaric and can negatively impact populations of threatened and endangered species in various ways, including disrupting social structures, reproduction rates and infanticide, whilst failing to provide adequate or sustained conservation funding.²⁵ The fact that people from the UK are still travelling the world to kill some of the world's rarest animals in order to import their body parts home is a stain on our country's reputation. However, Britain can lead the way by passing the world's most comprehensive ban on the import of hunting trophies and ending our involvement in this damaging practice.

WHY IT MATTERS

As sentient beings

Trophy hunting is not about killing an animal for sustenance or self-defence but purely for pleasure. The trophy hunting industry actively encourages the use of less effective and thus less humane weapons like bows, handguns and muzzle-loaded rifles.²⁶ Animals killed by trophy hunters can be left to suffer for days once initially wounded. Cecil the lion was shot with an arrow and took around 10 hours to die.

To voters

Polling confirms that the overwhelming majority of the British public agree that trophy hunting has no place in our society, with more than 80% supporting a trophy hunting import ban and 76% wanting a ban applied to all species.²⁷ A commitment to ban the import of hunting trophies appeared in both Labour and Conservative Party manifestos in 2024 and has been included in four Queen's Speeches.

To safeguard biodiversity

The conservation benefits claimed by the trophy hunting industry have failed to materialise. Trophy hunting has been shown to cause population decline and negatively impact population viability of a number of threatened or endangered species.²⁸ The practice deliberately targets mature, large animals whose removal can have a devastating impact on social structures of species like lions, leopards and elephants and increase infanticide.^{29, 30, 31}

Trophy hunting also fails to support biodiversity by indiscriminately killing non-target species, such as caracal which may predate on game stock. By ending our involvement in this unethical and unsustainable practice, we can prioritise and catalyse funding to support innovative non-consumptive conservation programmes.

NEXT STEPS

Since July 2022 two government backed Private Members Bills have been introduced to ban hunting trophy imports. Henry Smith's 2022 Bill passed its Commons stages with minor amendments and reached Committee stage in the Lords before falling at the end of the session following delaying tactics by a small number of Peers. John Spellar's 2023 Bill reached second reading in the Commons before the session ended early for the general election.

Following the failure of the two Private Members Bills, it is now imperative that the Government brings forward a Bill to honour the Labour Party's manifesto commitment to end hunting trophy imports. This Bill must resist the efforts of the trophy hunting industry to build in so-called 'smart ban' loopholes that would allow the continued importation of trophies from endangered species if there is a claimed 'conservation benefit' to kill. Aside from being ethically unacceptable, such a permitting scheme would be impossible to accurately execute in practice, and would require an unpopular and disproportionate use of public funds. There would be a high risk of judicial reviews being brought against the Government from both trophy hunters and conservationists. Instead, the Government should increase funding and support for non-consumptive conservation programmes to provide sustainable and effective protection for at-risk species, delivered in collaboration with the communities who live alongside them. ■



LEAD THE WORLD IN ENDING THE CRUEL AND DANGEROUS FUR TRADE

The UK led the world by banning fur farming twenty years ago and has been followed by twenty countries, and growing, across Europe. Despite this ban, the UK still imports real fur from an estimated one million animals kept in terrible conditions on global fur farms. The sale of cat, dog and seal fur is already banned, but there is strong public support for legislation to be expanded to cover all species.

WHY IT MATTERS

As sentient beings

The keeping of millions of wild carnivores, such as foxes, mink and raccoon dogs, in wire mesh cages for their entire lives fails dismally to meet their biological and behavioural needs. Unable to act out their natural behaviours these animals can suffer psychological disorders. Fighting between cage mates and even cannibalism is common. In the wild, coyotes, foxes and raccoons are caught in brutal metal traps where they can remain for hours, or even days, before the trapper returns to bludgeon or suffocate them. In their desperate struggle to break free, the animals can break their teeth or even gnaw off their own limbs. There is no such thing as humane fur farming or trapping; 'assurance schemes' or 'high-welfare fur farming' have been repeatedly and extensively proven to not provide animals with a life worth living and are run and funded by the fur industry.^{32, 33}

To prevent pandemics

The stressful and unsanitary conditions endured by thousands of animals living in unnatural proximity on fur farms create the perfect petri dish for viruses to reproduce and even mutate. Mink on almost 500 fur farms worldwide have been infected with COVID-19, with spillover to humans recorded in at least six countries.³⁴ The World Health Organisation identified the risk and spread of COVID-19 within fur farms, spillover from fur farms to humans, and transmission to wildlife populations in Europe as high.

Recent outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1) in animals on over 70 fur farms in Spain and Finland have led to orders to kill around 500,000 farmed

animals on public health grounds. These infections have raised pandemic fears amongst scientists, with two leading UK virologists from Imperial College London strongly urging governments to "consider the mounting evidence suggesting that fur farming, particularly mink, be eliminated in the interest of pandemic preparedness."³⁵ In September 2024 a study of animals on Chinese fur farms published in Nature found 36 novel viruses including a concerning new coronavirus, HKU5, which author Professor Eddie Holmes, virologist at the University of Sydney, described as 'absolutely a red flag' and added that fur farms present a "clear epidemic or pandemic risk".³⁶

To voters

Opinion polls consistently show the British public to be opposed to fur. Recent polling shows that only 3% of people say they wear fur³⁷, and 77% believe the UK Government should ban the import of animal products, such as fur, where production methods are banned in the UK.³⁸

NEXT STEPS

The previous Government ran a Call for Evidence on the fur trade in May 2021 which attracted almost 30,000 responses but, three years on, the findings have yet to be published.

In June 2023, the then-Government instructed the Animal Welfare Committee to provide an opinion on the welfare issues associated with the fur trade by the end of 2024. We encourage the immediate release of the Call for Evidence findings and for the Government to publish a consultation to inform a fur import and sales ban, so that legislation can be introduced as soon as possible, to help protect both animals and public health. We also urge the UK Government to use its seat at global public health fora to ensure that urgent steps are taken to eliminate fur and other animal industries that give rise to serious zoonotic disease risk. ■



ENDNOTES

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