



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2017/0025, 19 January 2017

# Animal welfare standards in farming after the UK leaves the EU

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall on Tuesday 24 January 2017 at 4.30pm on Animal Welfare Standards in Farming after the UK leaves the EU. The Member in charge of this debate is Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP.

Relevant Parliamentary material:

Commons Library Briefing papers:

[Live animal exports within the European Union](#)

[Brexit: impact across policy areas](#)

Environmental Audit Committee report: [The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum](#)

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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# 1. Animal welfare standards in farming after the UK leaves the EU Background

## 1.1 Welfare of farmed animals

Animal welfare is a devolved issue.

The welfare of animals involved in commercial operations (i.e. those animals that are farmed) is subject to a substantial body of EU regulation; the RSPCA estimates that around 80 per cent of UK animal welfare laws originate from the EU.<sup>1</sup> The terms of the Brexit negotiations will have a significant impact upon what animal welfare protections are adopted, amended or discarded.

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### EU animal welfare regulations

Currently, the EU legislates on issues affecting the operation of the internal market and the free movement of animals. [Council Directive 98/58/EC](#) on the protection of animals kept for farming purposes provides general rules for the protection of animals. This EU legislation sets down minimum standards; national governments may adopt more stringent rules than this.<sup>2</sup>

The EU rules are based on the [European Convention for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes](#), and they reflect the so-called 'Five Freedoms':

- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- Freedom to express normal behaviour
- Freedom from fear and distress.<sup>3</sup>

### UK animal welfare regulations

Similar legislation implementing EU animal welfare regulations exists in England and all of the devolved assemblies nations.

**England** – the welfare of farmed animals is protected by [The Welfare of Farmed Animals \(England\) Regulations 2007](#) (as amended), which are made under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*. The *Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007* set minimum standards for all farm animals. You can read more about these regulations in Defra's [Guidance to the 2007 Regulations](#).<sup>4</sup>

**Scotland** – [The Welfare of Farmed Animals \(Scotland\) Regulations 2010](#) outline the standards by which farmed animals are required to be kept in Scotland. The Scottish Government has produced codes of practice for [cattle](#), [sheep](#), [pigs](#), [laying hens](#) and [meat and breeding chickens](#), which provide welfare recommendations for those involved in the farming industry.<sup>5</sup>

**Wales** – Section 9 of the *Animal Welfare Act* provides a duty for persons responsible for animals to ensure their welfare. [Welfare of Farmed Animals \(Wales\) Regulations 2007](#) outline the standards by which farmed animals are required to be kept in Wales. The Welsh Government has produced codes of practice for [cattle](#), [sheep](#), [pigs](#), and [poultry](#). These codes are produced to encourage livestock keepers to adopt the highest standards of animal husbandry. It is not a legal requirement to follow a code, but failure to do so may be used as evidence when someone is being prosecuted for causing unnecessary pain to livestock.<sup>6</sup>

**Northern Ireland** – Owners and keepers of farmed animals are required to comply fully with domestic legislation ([The Welfare of Farmed Animals \(NI\) Regulations 2012](#)), which sets down minimum standards for keeping farm animals and contains.<sup>7</sup> [Codes of Practice](#) have been published during for a number of farmed animals.

## 1.2 Live animal exports

EU rules to protect live animals during transport and related operations were agreed in 2004, and implemented in the UK in 2007, though there have still been a number of campaigns against such exports on welfare grounds. These regulations only apply to animals transported for commercial operations.

### Live animal exports: what are they?

Live animals are exported to other EU countries from the UK for several different purposes: breeding, fattening, and slaughter. Across the whole of the EU every year, around four million cattle, 28 million pigs, four million sheep, 243 million poultry and 150 thousand horses are transported for more than eight hours within the EU.<sup>8</sup>

Live animals transported in poor conditions over long distances can suffer from a number of different welfare problems, such as: mental distress; injuries due to unsuitable transport arrangements; hunger and dehydration; and heat stress.

### EU Regulations: protection of animals during transport

The transport and export of live animals within the European Union is regulated by Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005 on the protection of

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<sup>5</sup> Scottish Government, [“Animal Welfare: Farmed Animals”](#), [accessed: 18 January 2017]

<sup>6</sup> Welsh Government, [“Codes of practice for livestock”](#), [accessed: 18 January 2017]

<sup>7</sup> Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, [“Farmed and non-farmed animal welfare”](#), [accessed: 18 January 2017]

<sup>8</sup> European Commission [“Animal welfare—Main achievements,”](#) accessed: 21 November 2016

animals during transport.<sup>9</sup> This sets out a series of measures, including requirements for transporters to be authorised, vehicle and container requirements, limits to time in transit and requirements for authorised rest stops. These rules do not allow unfit animals to travel and set minimum age of travel for different animals. Different rules apply to journeys under and over 65km, and those under and over eight hours.<sup>10</sup>

The Commission reviewed these regulations in 2011. This review found that the regulations had had a positive impact, but acknowledged that severe animal welfare problems persisted. The main concern related to enforcement of the regulations.<sup>11</sup>

### UK implementation and enforcement

The Council Regulation was implemented in England by the [Welfare of Animals \(Transport\) \(England\) Order 2006](#), and by parallel legislation in [Scotland](#)<sup>12</sup>, [Wales](#)<sup>13</sup> and [Northern Ireland](#).<sup>14</sup> This legislation makes it an offence to transport any animal in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is responsible for carrying out inspections of animals at point of loading and at ports. Trading Standards also has powers to inspect animals during transport, and is responsible for carrying out any prosecutions under the regulations.<sup>15</sup> From 2013 to 2015, there were 37 convictions<sup>16</sup> for breaches of regulations protecting animal welfare during transport in England and Wales.<sup>17</sup>

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### Campaigns to ban live animal exports

There have been a number of campaigns seeking to either ban live animal transport altogether<sup>18</sup>, or to limit how far (and long) an animal can be transported on welfare grounds.<sup>19</sup>

Some of these campaigns have focussed on live animal exports through the Ports of Ramsgate and Dover, and specific events in 2012 when 40 sheep were euthanised on welfare grounds at the Port of Ramsgate.<sup>20</sup> In a court case that followed, the High Court ruled that the Port could not

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<sup>9</sup> [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations](#)

<sup>10</sup> EU, "[Animal welfare during transport – EU rules](#)". Accessed: 18 November 2016

<sup>11</sup> EU Commission, [Report From The Commission To The European Parliament And The Council On The Impact Of Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1/2005 On The Protection Of Animals During Transport](#), 10 November 2011

<sup>12</sup> [The Welfare of Animals \(Transport\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2006](#)

<sup>13</sup> [The Welfare of Animals \(Transport\) \(Wales\) Order 2007](#)

<sup>14</sup> [The Welfare of Animals \(Transport\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2006](#)

<sup>15</sup> Manchester City Council Trading Standards, [Farm animal transport journey times](#), December 2012

<sup>16</sup> Defra can provide information on the number of convictions rather than on the number of prosecutions. Separate figures are not kept for convictions relating to live animal exports.

<sup>17</sup> [PO 52955](#) [Livestock: Exports] 18 Nov 2016

<sup>18</sup> BBC, "[Ramsgate live animal export ban backed by Craig Mackinlay MP](#)", 10 May 2016

<sup>19</sup> RSPCA, "[End long distance live transport!](#)", accessed: 21 November 2016

<sup>20</sup> [HC Deb 13 Dec 2012 cc479-535](#)

ban live animal exports, on the grounds of freedom of movement within the EU, and existing UK legislation.<sup>21</sup>

The National Farmers Union (NFU) is broadly supportive of live animal exports. In 2013, the NFU South East spokesman Frank Langrish described the trade as “a perfectly legal, legitimate and valuable trade.”<sup>22</sup> He added that “It is not in the commercial interests of anyone in the livestock trade to transport animals in a way that results in sick, injured or stressed animals.”<sup>23</sup>

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### 1.3 Antimicrobial resistance in farm animals

In the past, it was normal practice for antimicrobials to be added to animal feed across the world in order to stimulate livestock growth and so maximise productivity. This led to concerns about the impact on human health and the evolution of harmful microbes that were increasingly resistant to pharmaceutical remedies.

#### **Ban on the use of antibiotics as a growth promoter**

A ban on the use of antibiotics as growth promoters was implemented first in the UK and then in other European countries and Canada. The practice continued unchanged, however, in the United States and also continued to some extent in Europe, but with agents that were not used therapeutically in humans.

An [EU-wide ban](#) on the use of antimicrobials as growth promoters came into force on 1 January 2006. The addition of antimicrobials to animal feed for medical purposes (either as prophylactics or as treatment for existing disease) is not affected by this ban.

On 10 September 2014, the European Commission adopted a [proposal for a Regulation on veterinary medicinal products](#). The goals of the proposal included to improve the health and wellbeing of animals and to tackle antimicrobial resistance in the EU. EU negotiations on the relevant legislation are underway and not expected to be ready until late 2017.<sup>24</sup>

#### **UK actions**

On 17 October 2016, Defra Minister George Eustice set out a range of actions and information about the Government’s strategy to tackling antimicrobial resistance:

On 16 September 2016 the Government published its response to the final report and recommendations of the Independent Review on Antimicrobial Resistance.

The response includes clear commitments to reducing the need for antibiotics in livestock. We have committed to work closely with different individual sectors to ensure that appropriate sector specific reduction targets are agreed by 2017. This will ensure that future reductions are greatest where there is most scope, and that

<sup>21</sup> [HC Deb 6 Dec 2012 c893W](#)

<sup>22</sup> [“Farmers’ union - live exports ‘legal and legitimate’”, ITV news, 2 May 2013](#)

<sup>23</sup> [“Farmers’ union - live exports ‘legal and legitimate’”, ITV news, 2 May 2013](#)

<sup>24</sup> [PQ HL1725 \[Livestock: Antibiotics\] 19 September 2016](#)

they are underpinned by improvements which focus on encouraging best practice and responsible use of antibiotics.

This work aligns with the actions already set out in the Government's Five-Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy, including improving the stewardship of existing antibiotics, improving infection prevention and control and optimising prescribing practice.<sup>25</sup>

## 1.4 Brexit and farm animal welfare: the same protections, stronger or weaker?

Currently, national governments may adopt more stringent rules than the EU animal welfare legislation, which sets down minimum standards.<sup>26</sup> However, the UK Government has been resistant to 'gold-plating' EU regulations in the past over fears that this would weaken UK competitiveness.

The terms of the Brexit negotiations will go a long way towards determining what animal welfare protections are adopted, amended or discarded. This may lead to the same, stronger or weaker regulations than those currently agreed. The Prime Minister has recently ruled out the possibility that the UK would remain a member of the Single Market, meaning EU legislation will cease to have effect after the UK formally leaves the EU.<sup>27</sup> But considerable uncertainty still remains. So while nearly everyone believes Brexit offers an opportunity to change the system, no one can agree precisely how.

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### The Great Repeal Bill: The same standards

The UK Government has announced that a "Great Repeal Bill" will be the means to give effect in UK legislation to the referendum vote of 23 June 2016, which was in favour of leaving the EU.

On 10 October, 2016, the Secretary of State for the Department for Exiting the European Union [David Davis explained](#) to the House that the Government would bring forward a "Great Repeal Bill" which would repeal the *European Communities Act 1972* (the legislation that gives direct effect to all EU law in Britain):

I want today to update the House on how the Government plans to reflect UK withdrawal from the EU on the statute book, while delivering that certainty and stability.

We will start by bringing forward a Great Repeal Bill that will mean the European Communities Act ceasing to apply on the day we leave the EU.

It was this Act which put EU law above UK law. So it is right, given the clear instruction for exit given to us by the people in the referendum, that we end the authority of EU law.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> [PO 48313 \[Livestock: Antibiotics\] 17 October 2016](#)

<sup>26</sup> EU, "[Animal Welfare](#)", [accessed: 18 January 2017]

<sup>27</sup> Prime Minister's Office, "[The government's negotiating objectives for exiting the EU: PM speech](#)", *gov.uk*, 17 January 2017

<sup>28</sup> [HC Deb 10 Oct 2016 cc40-41](#)

The Minister went on to explain that this Bill will “convert all existing EU law into domestic law wherever practical”.<sup>29</sup> In evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee, the Defra Secretary of State, Andrea Leadsom, noted that around one third of all the EU legislation Defra is looking at will be challenging to transpose:

We think that in the region of about two-thirds of the legislation that we are intending to bring into UK law will be able to be rolled forward with just some technical changes, so roughly a third won't, which means that obviously there will be work to do to ensure that we can make those measures continue to work once we leave the EU.<sup>30</sup>

### **Opportunities to strengthen welfare standards after Brexit**

In a briefing published after the referendum, the RSPCA identified five areas in which they saw an opportunity to improve upon the current welfare arrangements:

- Prohibiting the non-stun slaughter of animals;
- Mandating CCTV in slaughterhouses;
- Setting rules on dairy cattle, beef, sheep, turkeys, ducks, fish
- Delivering more funding for animal welfare schemes; and
- Setting higher standards on the journey times and transport conditions for animals that are transported in the UK and overseas.<sup>31</sup>

In October 2016, speaking at a fringe event of the Conservative Party conference, Andrea Leadsom explained that animal welfare should be the UK's unique selling point in the future:

Our unique selling point both at home and abroad should be the highest standards of animal welfare and the highest standards of food traceability,”

Those are the things we really want to focus on in order to ensure we can expand, grow and compete more, innovate more and export more, which will be incredibly important going forward.<sup>32</sup>

This point was re-emphasised in her [speech to the Oxford Farming Conference](#) on 4 January 2017:

By cutting the red tape that comes out of Brussels, we will free our farmers to grow more, sell more and export more great British food – whilst upholding our high standards for plant and animal health and welfare.<sup>33</sup>

Andrea Leadsom:  
“Our unique selling point both at home and abroad should be the highest standards of animal welfare and the highest standards of food traceability”

<sup>29</sup> [HC Deb 10 Oct 2016 cc40-41](#)

<sup>30</sup> Environmental Audit Committee, [“Oral evidence: The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum”](#), 25 October 2016, **HC 599** Q 327

<sup>31</sup> RSPCA, [“The EU Referendum result: the impact on animal welfare”](#), [accessed: 19 January 2017]

<sup>32</sup> Alistair Driver, [“Post-Brexit UK to be an 'exemplar' for animal health and welfare standards – Leadsom”](#), *National Pig Association*, 4 October 2016

<sup>33</sup> Defra, [“Environment Secretary sets out ambition for food and farming industry”](#), *gov.uk*, 4 January 2017

### **Is the vote to leave the EU an opportunity to ban live animal exports?**

The Government maintains that it is not possible to ban the trade of animals within the EU.<sup>34</sup> However, there has been speculation that once the UK leaves the EU, it could ban this trade through amendments to *Harbour Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847*.<sup>35</sup>

A [Private Members' Bill](#) (the Harbour Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847(Amendment) Bill 2016-17) introduced by Craig Mackinlay MP would amend the Act to provide local authorities with the power to stop live animal exports. In November 2016, the Defra Minister George Eustice explained that the government had not yet reached a position on the nature of future arrangements concerning live animal exports once we leave the EU. The UK will still be bound by those rules set by international bodies, of which it is a member, after it has left the EU. It is possible that World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules would prevent a ban on live animal exports/imports.

### **New trading arrangements: Risks for lower welfare standards**

It is currently expected that leaving the EU will result in alternative trade and support arrangements for UK agriculture. There has been some concern that trading arrangements made with non-EU countries may result in a reduction in UK standards or in the standards of imported products.

A recent report from the Environmental Audit Committee *on The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum*, looks at concerns around how non-tariff barriers such as food and welfare standards will be picked up in any trade negotiations, and the risk of trade-offs with other industrial sectors that could be beneficial for the UK impacting on agricultural trade and standards. It summarised some of the concerns overall as regards trade as follows, but with a particular focus on the environment:

16. Leaving the EU will bring significant changes in the relationship between UK farmers and the international market, including risks such as the introduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers when selling to the EU and a reduction in barriers to entry for other countries selling to the UK. Were this to happen, it would put UK farmers at a competitive disadvantage. If farmers are forced to compete on price alone they may put pressure on Government to reduce environmental standards to help them do this. Such a lowering of standards would not only be environmentally damaging but could make farming itself less sustainable. Changes to trade arrangements risk making it much harder to design a future UK environmental policy capable of achieving the Government's environmental ambitions; management of this risk requires the involvement of both the Department for International Trade and the Department for Exiting the EU, as well as Defra.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> [HC Deb 6 Dec 2012 c893W](#)

<sup>35</sup> Jane Dalton, ["Brexit is chance to halt 'shameful' live animal exports, say protesters"](#), *Daily Telegraph*, 29 August 2016

<sup>36</sup> Environmental Audit Committee, [The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum](#), Sixth Report of Session 2016-17, 4 January 2017, HC 599

Whilst there are concerns over the potential impact trade agreements could have on agriculture, the Government has stated they wish to grow food exports following Brexit. For example, in her speech to the Oxford Farming Conference in early January 2016, Andrea Leadsom identified this as a key priority and highlighted some of the areas of current and future growth for UK food exports around the world.<sup>37</sup> It should be noted that exposed to open trade, UK farmers may call for the removal of welfare regulations in order to allow them to compete on a 'level playing field' with producers in countries with lower animal welfare standards.

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<sup>37</sup> ["Environment Secretary sets out ambition for food and farming industry"](#), DEFRA, 4 January 2017

## 2. Press Articles

### 2.1 Animal welfare standards in farming

Daily Telegraph

#### **Will Brexit change animal welfare in the UK?**

Pete Wedderburn, 12 July 2016

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/pets/news-features/will-brexit-damage-animal-welfare-in-the-uk/>

Farmer's Weekly

#### **Animal welfare laws must stay or improve – poll**

10 January 2017

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/news/animal-welfare-laws-must-stay-improve-poll.htm>

The Guardian

#### **Scrapping EU rules won't save UK farming. Supporting small farmers will; Andrea Leadsom blames the EU for 'holding us back'. But it's encouraging agribusiness to flourish at the expense of small farmers that must change**

Nick Dearden, January 5, 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/05/scrapping-eu-rules-uk-farming-small-farmers-andrea-leadsom>

BBC News

#### **After Brexit: What happens next for the UK's farmers?**

Jamie Robertson, 5 January 2017

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-38510423>

The Independent

#### **Post-Brexit 'zombies' could put UK wildlife in danger, while farming faces 'significant risks', MPs warn;**

#### **'It is essential for the food and farming sector to maintain full, unfettered access to the single market,' NFU says**

Ian Johnston, January 4, 2017

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/brexit-wildlife-farming-environment-nature-zombie-legislation-significant-risks-mps-warn-a7507846.html>

Scotsman

**Rural sector facing big questions after decision**

November 28, 2016

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/rural-sector-facing-big-questions-after-decision-1-4301461>

The Independent

**Exposed: The shocking and filthy conditions endured supermarket hens in 'enriched cages'....the poultry industry insists improve welfare standards**

October 23, 2016

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/enriched-caged-hens-chickens-video-footage-eggs-viva-tesco-asda-morrisons-one-stop-lidl-oaklands-a7374281.html>

FT (log in required)

**The anguish of Britain's farmers**

James Blitz, January 5, 2017

<https://www.ft.com/content/9213d2cc-d340-11e6-b06b-680c49b4b4c0>

Observer

**Pigs, Brexit and China: what's the future for Britain's farmers?**

Jay Rayner, 21 August 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/aug/21/british-pig-farmers-china-pork-brexit>

## 2.2 Live Animal Exports

Daily Telegraph

**Brexit is chance to halt 'shameful' live animal exports, say protesters**

Jane Dalton, 29 August 2016

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/29/brexit-is-chance-to-halt-shameful-live-animal-exports-say-protectors/>

BBC News

**Brexit call for Ramsgate live animal exports ban**

21 July 2016

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-36854529>

Kent News

**Will EU exit put a stop to live animal exports?**

Simon Allin, 7 May 2016

[http://www.kentnews.co.uk/news/will\\_eu\\_exit\\_put\\_a\\_stop\\_to\\_live\\_animal\\_exports\\_1\\_4525640](http://www.kentnews.co.uk/news/will_eu_exit_put_a_stop_to_live_animal_exports_1_4525640)

## 3. Press Releases

### RSPCA

#### **The EU Referendum result: the impact on animal welfare 30 July 2016**

##### **Introduction**

On June 23rd the UK decided by a vote of 52% to 48% to leave the European Union. The RSPCA's position on this issue remained neutral during the Referendum and produced a briefing outlining the pros and cons of both options. The RSPCA can now campaign to ensure that animal welfare is not compromised as part of the process to leave the EU and that opportunities are taken to improve existing policies and standards. This briefing summarises the present situation, where those improvements could be made and where legislation should be maintained. There are specific briefings on the individual laws mentioned.

The timetable is uncertain, but it is probable that Article 50, to leave the EU, will be triggered in early 2017 and there will then follow a process of at least two years to negotiate a deal that is satisfactory to the UK and the EU. The Government has already set up a Unit to consider what proposals to make to the EU.

##### **What is the process for leaving the EU and what would be the impact on animal welfare?**

The UK now needs to negotiate a new trade treaty with the EU. This can take a maximum of two years but deletion or amendment of existing laws could take many more years. The most important decision is what to do with the 44 animal welfare laws that have been agreed at the European level. The UK also now has the power to negotiate unilateral trade treaties with other countries, but these are more relevant in deciding what welfare standards are applied to imported products and have little impact on legislation. The UKEU negotiations may lead to the same, better or worse terms than those currently agreed. The most important decision is whether to be part of the single market or not, as this will probably mean that the UK will have to continue with all existing European legislation as well as future laws. If the UK is not part of the single market then it has to agree which European legislation it will retain and which it will drop.

The EU has adopted three different types of European legislation on animal welfare: Directives,

Regulations and Decisions. Thirteen of the 44 animal welfare laws in the *acquis* are Directives, which have already been implemented into existing UK legislation. These will need to be repealed if they are no longer required. 31 are Regulations and Decisions, which are applicable to the UK without national implementation. Depending on how the UK exits the EU, these may be automatically deleted on UK withdrawal unless Parliament legislates for them to remain. Alternatively, all pre-

existing laws will simply be carried over for amendment on a piecemeal basis.

The UK will still be bound by those rules set by international bodies of which it is a member. These include trade rules, as set by the World Trade Organisation, and which limit its ability to ban imports or exports or give any trade advantages to its own producers. So, whilst it is true that EU rules prevent the UK banning the live exports of farm animals or the imports of puppies, it is likely that WTO rules would also prevent both of these actions. Should the UK agree to the single market rules, any ban would not be possible for these issues. The UK can start free trade negotiations with other countries only once it has left the EU.

### **What animal welfare issues are covered by the EU?**

Around 80% of UK animal welfare legislation originates from the EU with over 40 laws relevant to animal welfare. These laws cover all four groups of animals farm, research, wildlife and companion and span over 40 years (see Table below). The RSPCA has worked actively to improve animal welfare within the EU and in particular since 1980 when it formed Eurogroup for Animals, the European animal welfare coordinator. Over the past 36 years the Society has campaigned via Eurogroup to improve legislation in Europe so is determined to at the very least maintain these standards.

At the macro level, the Lisbon Treaty recognises animals as sentient beings; although this impact is limited, it sends a strong message to legislators that any legislation impacting on animals needs to take into account their capacity to suffer.

The largest body of legislation concerns farm animals with 18 relevant EU law adopted. There are five laws setting standards on the way farm animals are reared and produced. There are species specific laws for laying hens, veal calves, meat chickens and pigs. There is also legislation covering consumer information, such as mandatory labelling of the provenance of eggs and beef, the labelling of some poultry meats, and country of origin legislation regarding where certain meats and animal products have been produced. One law sets rules on the live transport of animals and a further one on how animals must be killed/slaughtered. Certain veterinary products have been prohibited with bans on the use of hormones in cattle, including BST, which can have a negative impact on the welfare of the animals.

The twelve laws covering wildlife fall into two areas those part of international treaties and those not.

The latter include the law to prohibit the import of wild caught birds, implemented in 2005 and responsible for the dramatic drop in wild caught birds into the UK. There is also an import ban on seal products due to welfare concerns on the manner in which these animals are kept and killed. There is legislation setting standards on the management of wildlife, covering their hunting, trapping and protection of habitat and legislation on the keeping of animals in zoos. The use of driftnets is prohibited due to their impact on marine animals and there are bans on the use of certain traps in wildlife management due to their cruelty.

The use of animals in research is regulated by nine different laws, covering the breeding, care and use of animals for scientific purposes, the transport of animals, the use of animals to test chemicals, biocides, plant protection products and novel foods, and the prohibition of the testing, marketing and import of cosmetics products testing on animals.

Companion animals is the least regulated area. Five laws provide rules allowing free commercial and non commercial movement of dogs and cats provided they have been identified and vaccinated. There is an import ban on products made from dog and cat fur.

### **What animal welfare issues are covered by other international law and Treaties?**

There are a number of areas, in particular wildlife legislation, that are covered by EU legislation and ratify existing international Treaties and obligations. The UK is a member of these obligations and will therefore continue to be bound by them. The UK is a member of CITES which regulates the trade in endangered species implementing the rules of the UN CITES Convention. This prohibits the import of endangered species and products such as ivory and whale meat. The UK is also a member of the International Whaling Commission, which has a moratorium on the hunting and killing of whales for commercial purposes.

The UK is a member of the OIE, the World Animal Health Organisation, which sets standards on animal disease and health and has agreed thirteen different guidelines on animal welfare all of which meet existing EU legislative standards aside from the guideline on dairy cattle. These standards will be retained.

Then there are the EU laws that implement the Council of Europe Conventions. There are six Conventions of which the UK has ratified five of them, international transport, slaughter of farm animals, keeping of farm animals, 'protection' of animals used in scientific procedures and the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats. The Pet Convention has not been ratified but it is also not part existing EU legislation.

### **What legislation do we want to preserve?**

The Table below summarises existing EU legislation and where there are opportunities for improvements.

Table Summary of the 44 pieces of legislation that have been adopted at the EU level. EU Legislation, Directives, International Agreements, Opportunities:

<http://politicalanimal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/EUBrexit.pdf>

For further information: [politicalaffairs@rspca.org.uk](mailto:politicalaffairs@rspca.org.uk)  
[www.politicalanimal.org.uk](http://www.politicalanimal.org.uk)

### **What issues are not covered by leaving the EU?**

The UK already sets laws on any issues that have been devolved from the EU to member state level. So, requirements concerning animal cruelty are set individually by England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and not impacted by Brexit. These include the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the framework law in England and Wales. The RSPCA spends the majority of its budget and work programme on issues concerning companion animals.

Specific legislation on companion animal welfare under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 will continue. This includes standards on the tail docking of dogs, the ban on the use of shock collars in Wales and the raft of legislation the UK Government is currently considering on the breeding, boarding and selling of dogs, the licensing of horse riding establishments and the selling of all animals, in England. Sentencing is also not part of the EU acquis and is devolved. It will not be impacted.

Other areas that will not be affected and where the UK or the devolved governments can set legislation, include the hunting of wild animals by dogs (the Hunting Act 2004 in England and Wales), the welfare of wild animals in travelling circuses and the ban on fur farming.

### **How much do we pay in and get out of the EU budget for animal welfare?**

The UK is a net contributor to the EU budget, which in 2015 amounted to £8.5 billion (€11.7 billion). The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which is the subsidy scheme for farmers, accounts for 39% of the EU budget. In 2015 UK farmers received €3.08 billion in direct support back from Europe under the CAP and an additional €414 million for those farmers who implement schemes for environmental and animal welfare benefits. The total subsidies received in 2014 represented 55% of total income from farming.

The UK now has to negotiate a new subsidy system for British farmers and decide which subsidies to keep and which to improve. The UK government's manifesto gave a commitment to include additional funding for animal welfare schemes, such as assurance schemes, or to fund farming to higher welfare standards. Brexit provides an opportunity for the devolved administrations of the UK to do this.

### **What are the opportunities to improve animal welfare?**

Although the UK sees itself as operating some of the highest animal welfare standards, examples exist where it has fallen behind other countries. The UK's devolved administrations (most animal welfare law in the UK is now devolved) now have the power to implement higher standards than those under the EU laws. It has done this previously. For example, with regards to farming, the UK prohibited the veal crate system in 1991 15 years before it was banned in the EU and it prohibited sow stalls in 1999 14 years before they were phased out in the EU. It is acknowledged that UK governments are reluctant to implement higher standards than the EU especially on farm animals due to the fear of its impact on the competitiveness of the industry. However, there are certain areas where other countries have higher welfare standards than the UK, such as on the farming of chicken and

laying hens. Leaving the EU also provides England and Wales opportunities to go further in certain areas where there is existing European legislation. For instance prohibiting the slaughter of farm animals without stunning, which is already prohibited in three other EU countries, or making it mandatory to install CCTV in slaughterhouses. There are opportunities for long distance transport of animals by for instance setting a lower maximum journey time.

The UK could also legislate for the mandatory labelling of animal products based on method of production. We know this can have a significant impact on consumer behaviour. Compulsory labelling on egg provenance was introduced in the UK in 2003, allowing consumers, for the first time, to know how eggs. In subsequent years, sales of free range eggs increased and now account for around 52% of eggs produced in the UK. Around 90% of these are certified RSPCA Assured.

There are other examples in wildlife where the UK now has the opportunity to take action to improve animal welfare. The UK already has a ban on fur farming and could restrict imports of fur products based on their method of production or trapping, although this would be still subject to WTO approval.

### **A summary of the animal welfare issues impacted on by remaining or leaving the EU**

By leaving the EU, the UK has the opportunity to improve animal welfare but it also presents a wide range of risks to present welfare standards that have been set at the European level. Those areas that are not currently covered by EU laws, mainly for animal cruelty and domestic animals, are not affected.

The RSPCA would like to see:

- As part of the EU/UK negotiation, the UK accept all the present EU laws in the *acquis* that set standards for animal welfare.
- England and Wales take the opportunity to promote higher farm animal standards by diverting money from the old CAP subsidy system into schemes that reward farmers that produce under higher welfare assurance schemes or farm to meaningful higher welfare standards.
- Ensure that in any negotiation on Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with other countries there is agreement to prevent the import of products into the UK that are produced to lower welfare standards and so minimise the threat of those products undermining our own farming products and incentivises and encourages negotiating partners to improve their animal welfare standards.
- England and Wales administrations look at opportunities to improve animal welfare once the negotiations have concluded in areas such as non stun slaughter, CCTV in abattoirs and reducing times for long distance live animal transport.
- The UK to continue to set its own standards in those areas that are not covered by the EU e.g. hunting with dogs, fur farming, animal cruelty, and the sale and breeding of domestic animals.

- The UK prevents imports of certain animals where they represent a disease or welfare risk (such as the trade in puppies from the EU) and do not contravene WTO rules.

For further information: [politicalaffairs@rspca.org.uk](mailto:politicalaffairs@rspca.org.uk) [www.politicalanimal.org.uk](http://www.politicalanimal.org.uk)

## **Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)**

### **Sowing Fresh Seeds post Brexit**

**17 August 2017**

Recently, Britain made history by voting to leave the European Union. We must use this momentous decision as a major opportunity to persuade the UK government to take positive steps to improve the lives of farm animals.

#### **A future food and farming system**

As the UK moves away from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), we have a blank canvas to develop a cohesive Food and Farming Policy that seeks to deliver the following:

- Producing nutritious food and promoting healthy diets
- Farming in ways that restore natural resources – soils, water, biodiversity – and then maintain them in good shape for future generations
- Achieving food security
- Ensuring that farming contributes to the Paris target of limiting temperature increases to ‘well below 2°C’
- Providing decent livelihoods for farmers
- Reducing farm antibiotics use
- Achieving high standards of animal welfare

We need to move away from industrial livestock production, a key driver to the detrimental impact of today’s farming on the environment, public health, antibiotic resistance, climate change and animal welfare.

CAP payments, which are primarily a subsidy for land ownership, should be replaced by post Brexit payments for ecosystem services and high animal welfare standards.

#### **A more ambitious approach to animal welfare**

With the UK no longer bound by EU rules, we are now able to adopt a more ambitious approach to farm animal welfare. We call on the UK government to:

- Ban the export of live animals for slaughter or fattening
- Protect UK farmers from low welfare imports
- Encourage a move from factory farming to free-range systems
- Halt the zero-grazing of dairy cows
- Phase out enriched cages for laying hens

- Improve the welfare of pigs

This is a real opportunity to make changes for the better. Animals should be back on the land where they belong, replacing factory farming with extensive farming methods which provide high animal welfare and environmental standards.

That's why we are releasing a new [Charter for Food, Farming and Animal Welfare](#). The government must act now and adopt these policies – for the good of the animals, the people and the planet.

## **Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)**

### **Live animal transport – summary**

<https://www.ciwf.org.uk/our-campaigns/live-animal-transport/>

All CIWF press releases

<https://www.ciwf.org.uk/media/press-releases/>

## **National Farmers' Union (NFU)**

**17 January 2017**

### **NFU Council responds to PM's Brexit speech**

**Statement released following this week's NFU Council meeting, responding to today's speech by the Prime Minister, Theresa May:**

British farming underpins the country's biggest manufacturing sector. Farming is of vital strategic importance for the country both in producing food for a growing population, being a driver of the rural economy, delivering high quality standards of food production and animal welfare, but also managing Britain's landscapes, environment and natural resources.

It is therefore vital that a post-Brexit Britain works for everyone – which must include our farming sector.

Following the Prime Minister's speech, this morning NFU Council reiterated four principles which British food production needs in a post-Brexit Britain:

The best possible access to trade with Europe;

Access to a competent and reliable workforce;

The government to give commitment that agriculture is a key industry for Britain and a post-Brexit Britain will allow farmers to be profitable, productive and realise the potential of British food production;

That any changes to trading relationships or the agricultural policy affecting farmers should be subject to a period of transition to allow farming businesses to adapt to any new environment.

We firstly welcome the Prime Minister's acknowledgement that access to a reliable workforce from overseas is vital for many British industries. This is especially important to many farming businesses and we look forward to that acknowledgement being turned into a commitment which is then acted on.

The NFU has long called for clarity from government as to what the intended trading environment will be for Britain post-Brexit. Some 72% of agricultural exports go to the EU with some sectors being heavily dependent on trade with the rest of Europe. For example, of £300m UK lamb exports, £290m came from sales to Europe, and 78% of wheat and barley exports went to the EU.

Therefore, whilst clarity from the Prime Minister has been needed, NFU Council still has legitimate and important concerns. The Prime Minister has ruled out the UK's continuing participation in the European Single Market or the EU Customs Union and instead has stated her intention to pursue a free trade agreement with the EU. We hope the Prime Minister's ambition can be achieved, but as we know these kind of deals normally take years to conclude and do not cover all products.

If a quick and comprehensive deal cannot be achieved it would be absolutely vital that there are appropriate phased arrangements to avoid a disruptive cliff-edge to allow Britain's farmers to adapt – especially given that farming is a long term industry where farmers are making decisions now without knowing what a future trading environment will look like. The British farming sector – along with many other industries – has consistently warned of the dangers of putting up barriers to accessing the European Market whether financial or logistical.

Following today's speech we are now seeking urgent talks with the government as to how a post-Brexit Britain could work for Britain's food production and for detailed commitments on a suitable transition period. We continue to urge the Prime Minister to ensure that British farming has a profitable, productive and resilient future post-Brexit and that a post-Brexit Britain truly does work for everyone.

## **NFU on animal welfare and care summary**

### **15 November 2016**

British farmers invest huge amounts of care, time and effort to produce food to world-leading animal welfare standards.

This recognition of welfare's importance is being extended throughout the food chain with the [Red Tractor farm assurance](#) schemes strengthening the emphasis of animal welfare in all its farm standards.

Ultimately British health and welfare standards are ahead of European and global standards. In the past, the UK has moved faster than other countries to introduce animal health or welfare legislation.

British farmers are proud of their animal welfare standards.

**Here are some examples of how they operate to world-leading standards and respond quickly to consumer demand for higher welfare products:**

- 88,000 farmers are part of [Red Tractor assurance](#) which demands high standards which are set to protect food safety, traceability, animal welfare and the environment.
- **Eggs farmers** invested £400m to convert old-style 'conventional' cages to 'enriched colony' cages to meet new European standards
- 90 per cent of **poultry meat** is produced to Red Tractor standards which sets a considerably lower stocking density (chickens per square metre) than the EU Directive requires.
- The **British pig industry** boasts some of the highest standards in comparison with the rest of the world. For example a partial ban on sow stall housing came into force across the EU in January 2013 but a number of countries are still not compliant and consequently are now producing pork in illegal systems. The UK banned sow stalls outright in 1999, some 13 years earlier.

NFU

### **UK leads the way in animal welfare summary**

9.12.2014

A map created by World Animal Protection, an international non-profit animal welfare organisation, shows that the UK has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world.

The interactive map, created by World Animal Protection, rates the animal welfare and conservation policies of 50 countries. These ratings are based on an "Animal Protection Index" that measures each country's efforts to protect animals with legislation, improve animal welfare and recognise animals' emotional and cognitive abilities. The UK is ranked as A, sharing the highest rank status with Austria, Switzerland and NZ.

When the UK's ranking is looked at in more detail the particular measure for animal welfare protection of farm animals is individually ranked as an A status as well showing how seriously the UK's farmers take animal welfare.

<http://www.worldanimalprotection.org/news/ground-breaking-animal-protection-index-assesses-animal-welfare-around-world>

### **Poultry Association**

**The British Poultry Council says the new EU rules on chicken welfare will benefit chickens throughout the whole of Europe, dismissing claims by campaign groups that the rules will mean chickens will be farmed in conditions worse than they live in now.**

## 26 August 2016

“It is disingenuous of these groups to make such statements in a misleading and emotive campaign, when for the first time we have detailed EU-wide legislation to improve and protect chicken welfare” said BPC Chief Executive, Peter Bradnock.

The new rules reflect much of current UK practice, specifying strict conditions for housing and management of chickens reared for meat, including air quality, light levels and sleeping times, maximum stocking densities, and the training required for all those who manage the flocks.

Importantly, the way birds are actually cared for on farm will be measured by monitoring welfare indicators for every flock at the time the birds are slaughtered. The Government’s Official Veterinarian will report any welfare concerns from this monitoring back to the farmer and to the UK Animal Health Agency for investigation. “This process of continuous official monitoring of welfare outcomes on farms provides real assurance that the welfare of chickens is protected and enhanced under the new rules” said Bradnock.

The rules fix maximum stocking densities measured in weight per square metre of floor area. Farms that meet the conditions set down can rear up to a maximum of 39 kg per square metre, equivalent to between 17 and 18 chickens per square metre at the average UK slaughter weight of 2.2kg.

The legislation provides that, on a case by case basis, farms that meet additional stringent welfare performance conditions may apply to the Secretary of State for permission to grow birds at a maximum density of 42 kg per square metre, which is equivalent to 19 birds at the UK average weight of 2.2 kg each.

Crucially farmers will only be eligible for this higher stocking density if they have had an unblemished welfare record for the previous two years on monitoring and have kept mortality rates to a low level prescribed in the legislation for at least the last seven consecutive flocks.

There is no justification for banning farmers in England having access to the higher stocking density provided for in the EU legislation. Such “gold plating” will not enhance the welfare of the chickens because chickens will only be permitted to be kept at that level on farms where their welfare will not be compromised in any way.

Nor is there any scientific justification for such a ban in the UK. A recent major study on stocking density and chicken welfare by Oxford University, carried out for Defra, concluded that chicken welfare is influenced more by housing conditions than by stocking density.

While almost all chicken reared in the UK is at 38 kg per square metre or lower, BPC would not want ruled out the possibility of higher stocking densities in the future, facilitated by developments in housing or equipment design which benefit welfare.

## National Pig Association

### Pig industry stepping up to the antibiotic challenge

**14 November 2016**

The UK pig industry is stepping up to the antibiotic challenge on a number of fronts, the National Pig Association (NPA) has revealed, as the spotlight falls once again on the issue.

Excellent progress is being made in implementing the NPA's Antibiotic Stewardship Programme, which, published in May, sets out a framework for reducing and refining antibiotic usage in the pig sector.

It includes key strands on recording antibiotic usage, education across the supply chain and responsible use of medication on farms.

Today marks the start of [World Antibiotic Awareness Week](#), which aims to increase awareness of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and encourage best practice globally to help tackle the problem.

While this has inevitably sparked renewed calls for restrictions in how antibiotics are used, the NPA is highlighting some of the positive steps the UK pig sector is already taking to implement its stewardship programme. These include:

- Data for 535 pig units covering nearly 6 million pigs has been entered into the industry database for antibiotic use
- Entering data onto AHDB Pork's eMB-Pigs is likely to be made compulsory next year under the Red Tractor Pork assurance scheme, covering over 90 per cent of pig production
- Practices are changing on farms. For example, one of the UK's biggest pig producing companies is in the process of stopping the administration of antibiotics through feed
- Awareness of the issue is rising rapidly across the pig industry. The topic has been discussed at numerous events over the past year, including, recently, at a For Farmers conference in London, the NPA's regional producer meetings and various events organised by veterinary companies for producers
- The Pig Veterinary Society's autumn meeting in Edinburgh included a dedicated session on antimicrobial use and resistance, at which the Chief Veterinary Officer spoke.
- PVS will also be sharing best practice in antibiotic use at the London Vet Show this week.
- NPA is looking at strengthening the training requirements for pig farm staff responsible for administering antibiotics. For example, they may be expected to undertake a Certificate of Competence in responsible use of antibiotics in the future.

The stewardship programme has already received widespread praise, including from Defra Minister Lord Gardiner, Defra's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer Simon Hall and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.

Mr Hall praised the NPA's 'responsible, proactive attitude' approach to the antibiotic challenge.

NPA chief executive Zoe Davies said: "We are all aware of the challenges that lie ahead but I am pleased to say we are making very good progress in implementing the NPA's Antibiotic Stewardship Programme.

"We are proving, as we said after the O'Neill report was published in September, that we are up for the challenge. This is just the start, however. As an industry we are fully aware there is much more work to be done."

NPA senior policy advisor Dr Georgina Crayford said the immediate priority for the pig sector was to upload antibiotic usage data onto eMB-Pigs. The numbers on the database are set to rise further as more of the UK's large pig producing companies upload their data.

Dr Crayford said: "It is absolutely vital that we are able to present accurate figures on current usage by early 2017 to ensure we can agree fair and proportionate usage reduction targets."

She also stressed the need for a balanced debate on antibiotic usage on farms and AMR.

Dr Crayford added: "Of course everyone understands the need to reduce and refine antibiotic usage and the livestock sector has been working hard to achieve this. But we also need to be clear about what constitutes responsible usage on farms.

"And, in line with the One Health agenda, we must ensure the health and welfare of livestock are not compromised by the setting of unrealistic targets."

### **Notes to editors**

1) The World Health Organisation's World Antibiotic Awareness Week runs from November 14-20. It aims to increase awareness of global antibiotic resistance and encourage best practices among the general public, health workers and policy.

2) The NPA published its Antibiotic Stewardship Programme in May. It sets out the following priorities

for replacing, reducing and refining antibiotic use in the pig sector. These are:

- Capture and collate antibiotic use data recorded on pig farms
- Benchmark each farm's antibiotic use against other farms of a similar type
- Extend education in effective disease control strategies
- Reduce antibiotic use, consistent with responsible human and food-animal medicine
- Promote veterinary prescribing principles to strictly limit the use of antibiotics of critical importance to human health

- Appoint Stewardship Commissars who will continually review industry's use of antimicrobials and champion initiatives
- 3) All UK livestock sectors will face new targets for reducing and refining antibiotic usage from 2018, following the recommendations of the O'Neill report, published in September.
- 4) NPA senior policy advisor Dr Georgina Crayford has provided more background on how antibiotics are used on pig farms.

*For further information please contact:*

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## 4. Parliamentary material

### 4.1 Live animal exports

#### PQs

##### [Livestock: Exports](#)

**Asked by: Mr Roger Godsiff**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy to allow individual ports to ban live animal exports after the UK has left the EU.

**Answered by: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Until exit negotiations are concluded the UK remains a full member of the European Union (EU) and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. During this period the Government will continue to negotiate, implement and apply EU legislation.

The government has not yet reached a position on the nature of future arrangements once we leave the EU.

**HC Deb 10 Nov 2016 | of Commons | 51663**

##### [Livestock: Exports](#)

**Asked by: Lady Hermon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many live (a) sheep and (b) cattle have been *exported* from the UK to other European countries in 2016; and if she will make a statement.

**Answered by: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

(a) Live sheep exported from the UK to EU Member States from 1 January 2016 to 31 October 2016:

- UK to Republic of Ireland 337,385
- UK to EU (except Republic of Ireland) 48,039
- Total to all EU Member States 385,424

(b) Live cattle exported from the UK to EU Member States from 1 January 2016 to 31 October 2016:

- UK to Republic of Ireland 12,159
- UK to EU (except Republic of Ireland) 21,702
- Total to all EU Member States 33,861

These figures have been collated from the EU Commission's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) Data Warehouse and include trade

to Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries) who accept EU trade.

The figures include sheep and cattle exported for the purposes of breeding, production/fattening and slaughter.

**HC Deb 04 Nov 2016 | 50924W**

## Debates Commons

[Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847 \(Amendment\)](#)

**HC Deb 10 May 2016 | vol 609 cc565-568**

## Lords

[Agricultural Sector \(EUC Report\)](#)

**HL Deb 22 Nov 2016 | vol 776 cc1906-1930**

## Westminster Hall

[Food Security](#)

**HC Deb 06 Jan 2016 | vol 604 cc110-134WH**

## EDM

[LIVE EXPORT OF ANIMALS - EU FREE TRADE RULES](#)

That this House is aware that recent statistics have revealed that in 2012 over 47,000 young calves and sheep were exported live from the UK to fattening farms and slaughterhouses abroad causing huge amounts of suffering to the animals concerned; notes that this practice operated despite the enactment of Article 13 of the EU Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union which required member states in formulating and implementing EU policy on agriculture, transport and the internal market to pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals; and believes that following the recent referendum, the Government has been given the opportunity in any future trade negotiations to uphold this consideration in its deliberations and to desist from reasoning that any actions to change such practices would be illegal under EU free trade rules.

**06 Sep 2016 | EDM 411 | (session 2016-17)**

**Primary sponsor:** Alan Meal

## 4.2 Welfare of farmed animals

### PQs

[Poultry: Animal Welfare](#)

**Asked by: Caroline Lucas**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 44023, on poultry: animal welfare, if she will make it her policy to extend the ban on unenriched battery cages for laying hens to quail egg production.

**Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The welfare of quail raised for egg production, is protected by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which makes it an offence to fail to provide satisfactorily for welfare needs and by the general provisions of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007. We have no current plans to introduce new legislation specifically to ban unenriched cages for egg laying quail.

Once we leave the EU, we have an opportunity to make sure all our policies are delivering for the UK, including for animal welfare.

**HC Deb 20 Sep 2016 | 45992W**

[Poultry: Animal Welfare](#)

**Asked by: Diana Johnson**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy to ensure the UK maintains the requirements of Council Directive 1999/74/EC on battery hens.

**Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The EU-wide ban on keeping hens in 'battery' (conventional) cages in 2012 represented a significant welfare advance across the EU was supported by the UK and has been implemented in full. The Government has a manifesto commitment to protect farm animal welfare and to push for high animal welfare standards to be incorporated into farming policy.

**HC Deb 08 Sep 2016 | 43718W**

[Animals](#)

**Asked by: Deidre Brock**

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, if he will, in his negotiations to leave the EU, retain free movement of animals as (a) pets and (b) farm animals.

**Answering member: Mr Robin Walker | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union**

We continue to receive views across the range of the Department's responsibilities following the outcome of the EU Referendum. Defra will be working on our future policies in this area, liaising closely with other key departments on future support for agriculture, animal welfare, and the food and drink industry. The Government will work with industry and the public to develop these new arrangements.

**HC Deb 27 Jul 2016 | 43205W**

[Agriculture](#)

**Asked by: Rachael Maskell**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress she has made on publishing the Food and Farming Plan.

**Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Following the result of the EU Referendum, we now have an opportunity to consider our long term vision for food and farming outside of the EU.

It remains essential that the UK has a thriving food and farming industry with high animal welfare and environmental standards, access to international markets and a long term commitment to boosting productivity through innovation and skills. We are now focused on taking forward the actions that support these objectives, in order to develop our long term vision. To do this, we will continue to work with a wide range of interests to develop that vision, and to work together to deliver it.

**HC Deb 12 Jul 2016 | 42231W**

[Livestock: Antibiotics](#)

**Asked by: Kerry McCarthy**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the Government's policy is on (a) European Commission and Parliament proposals to reduce the routine overuse of antibiotics in farming and (b) proposals for (i) an EU-wide ban on the routine use of antibiotics in groups of food-producing animals where no disease has been diagnosed in any of the animals and (ii) restrictions on metaphylactic use.

**Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The objective of the review of EU legislation on veterinary medicines and medicated feeds includes tackling the threat of antibiotic resistance. The government supports measures that will provide a framework for reducing the use of antibiotics in livestock, including restrictions on preventative use.

When one or more animals have been exposed to a bacterial disease threat and could be sub-clinically infected, the metaphylactic use of antibiotics may be essential to maintain health and welfare.

**HC Deb 06 Jun 2016 | 38945W**

## **Inquiries**

**Lords: EU Energy and Environment sub-Committee**

[Brexit: agriculture - new inquiry launched 18 January 2017](#)

Following the UK's vote to withdraw from the EU, the inquiry will examine the implications of Brexit for agriculture and identify priorities for a post-Brexit relationship with the EU.

## 5. Further reading

RSPCA – *The EU Referendum result: the impact on animal welfare*

<http://politicalanimal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/EUBrexit.pdf>

CIWF – *The impact of the World Trade Organisation rules on animal welfare*

<https://www.ciwf.org.uk/media/7131790/the-impact-of-the-world-trade-organisation-rules-on-animal-welfare-2015.pdf>

NFU – *Farming's Offer to Britain: How farming can deliver for the country post-Brexit*

<http://www.nfuonline.com/assets/80290>

NFU – *UK Farming's relationship with the EU*

<http://www.nfuonline.com/assets/61993/>

### **Commons Library Briefing papers:**

*Live animal exports within the European Union*

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06504/SN06504.pdf>

*Brexit: impact across policy areas*

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7213/CBP-7213.pdf>

Environmental Audit Committee report: *The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum*

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmenvaud/599/599.pdf>

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