

Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation



CHARTER FOR A CARING FOOD POLICY THAT NOURISHES OUR HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE

SECTION 1: CREATING A POST BREXIT FOOD AND FARMING POLICY

As the UK moves away from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), we have an opportunity to develop a new vision for our food and farming system. This should:

- Produce nutritious food and promote healthy diets
- Farm in ways that restore natural resources – soils, water, biodiversity – and then maintain them in good shape for future generations
- Provide decent livelihoods for farmers
- Reduce farm antibiotics use
- Ensure that farming and our diets contributes to the Paris target of limiting temperature increases to well below 2°C
- Achieve high standards of animal welfare.

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



Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation calls on the UK to adopt the following:

CORE OBJECTIVE: PUT ANIMALS BACK ON THE FARM

Replace intensive farming with pasture and land-based farming of animals to high animal welfare and environmental standards

PLEDGES AIMED AT ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE:

PRODUCTION: REDUCE GRAIN-RELIANT LIVESTOCK FEEDING

A 33% reduction by 2025 – and a 50% reduction by 2035 – in the use of human-edible crops to feed farm animals as this is an inefficient, environmentally damaging way of feeding people. Farmland covers 70% of the land surface of the country. Of that, two-thirds is pasture. Therefore, Britain should be a pioneer in pasture-led farming, certainly for cattle and sheep. There is enough farmland to keep all our chickens free range. In terms of costs, pasture-fed livestock for sheep and beef cattle is competitive in terms of price returns for the farmer. This is highlighted in the recent report by the Pasture-fed Livestock Association (PFLA) and can be found on their website: www.pastureforlife.org

- **CONSUMPTION: ENCOURAGE LESS AND BETTER MEAT AND DAIRY CONSUMPTION**

This would give us healthier lives, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help restore the environment and make it easier to feed the growing world population. As a guide, we should aim for a 33% reduction in meat and dairy consumption by 2025.

- **REDUCE ANTIBIOTIC USE**

End the routine preventive use of antibiotics in industrial farming. This should be accompanied by a switch to higher welfare farming systems less reliant on antibiotics.

- **INTRODUCE HIGH STANDARDS OF ANIMAL WELFARE**

Phase out intensive farming systems including cages and crates.

- **HONEST LABELLING**

Introduce mandatory labelling of meat and dairy products as to farming method.

- **BETTER PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

Public procurement will only use meat, milk and eggs that have been produced humanely and sustainably in the UK.



SECTION 2: FIRST-RATE ANIMAL WELFARE SHOULD BE PART OF UK'S POST BREXIT INTERNATIONAL BRAND

WE CALL ON THE UK TO:

As part of the EU/UK negotiation, the UK accepts all the present EU laws in the acquis that set standards for animal welfare

Ban the export of live animals for slaughter or fattening

Once the UK is no longer bound by EU rules, it will be free to ban live exports. A move away from EU membership could lead to reduced ability to have influence over the welfare of the animals once they leave UK shores, heightening the importance of reducing the trade to zero and instead building on an already thriving trade in meat and meat products from the UK to many EU and other countries.

Adopt a more ambitious approach to animal welfare

Good welfare goes beyond minimising negative experiences; it also involves providing animals with opportunities to have positive experiences such as pleasure, interest, and a sense of well-being. Animals should be treated as sentient beings, as individuals. The status of animals as sentient beings should be enshrined in UK legislation. Although the UK sees itself as operating some of the highest animal welfare standards, examples exist where it has fallen behind other countries. For example, beak trimming is banned in Sweden and Austria. The UK Government had decided to ban beak trimming in 2002. It was due to come into force in 2011 but has been put off.

We now have the power to implement higher standards than those under EU laws. The UK has done this before and prohibited the veal crate system in 1991, 15 years before it was banned in the EU. The UK also prohibited sow stalls in 1999, 14 years before they were phased out in the EU.

Leaving the EU provides opportunities to go further 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. We support the BVA position on non-stun slaughter.



Protect UK farmers from low welfare imports

It is vital that UK farmers are not undermined by lower welfare imports. The UK must insist on the inclusion in new trade agreements of a clause requiring imports to meet UK animal welfare standards on meat and processed products.

Encourage a move from factory farming to free range systems

Industrial systems, even with good management, have little or no potential for delivering good welfare outcomes. Free range and pasture-based systems, if well designed and well managed, have the potential to produce high standards of welfare. When animals are housed, they should be kept in large barns with ample space, plenty of straw, natural light and effective ventilation.

Adopting higher welfare standards is entirely in keeping with the way in which the market is evolving; major companies are moving away from intensively produced food such as eggs produced by caged hens.

Halt the zero-grazing of dairy cows

UK dairy cows are being taken off the fields and kept indoors in year-round zero-grazing operations. Government should provide incentives to farmers to keep cows in pasture-based systems.

Phase out enriched cages for laying hens

All the UK's major supermarkets have pledged to stop selling enriched cage eggs. Germany has banned enriched cages from 2025. The UK should do the same.

Phase out farrowing crates

The UK should require the replacement of pig farrowing crates with free farrowing systems. Some of these have been developed by British scientists and farmers.

Introduce Method of Production Labelling

Introduce mandatory labelling of meat and dairy products to indicate the farming method employed. We know this can have a significant impact upon consumer behaviour. Compulsory labelling on egg provenance was introduced in the UK in 2003 allowing consumers for the first time, to know how their eggs were produced. In subsequent years, the sales of free range eggs increased and now account for around 52% of eggs produced in the UK.

Meat sold in supermarkets, shops and other food outlets should be clearly labelled and indicate whether or not non-stun slaughter methods have been used. Currently, the public are unaware of the method by which their meat was slaughtered.



Introduce CCTV in all slaughterhouses

SECTION 3: BUILDING AN INTEGRATED FOOD POLICY

Production: Policies should be adopted to facilitate a transition from industrial grain-based livestock production towards sustainable, humane forms of animal husbandry.

45% of UK cereals are used as animal feed. For every 100 calories fed to animals in the form of human-edible crops, we receive on average just 17–30 calories as meat. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation warns that using cereals as animal feed threatens food security by reducing the grain available for people.

Redefining the role of livestock

Recent research argues that, rather than being fed on cereals, the role of livestock should be to convert materials that we cannot consume – such as grass, by-products and food waste – into edible food.

The UK should avoid the excessive use of cereals in animal feed and instead put more emphasis on:

- *raising animals on extensive pastures:*
- *integrated crop/livestock production:* the link between animals and the land should be restored through mixed rotational farming where animals are fed on crop residues, pasture and food waste and their manure, rather than being a pollutant, fertilises the land.

Benefiting British farmers

Our proposals would benefit British farmers. With high land and labour costs, British farming cannot compete on cost alone. Quality must become part of Britain's post Brexit international brand. Good animal welfare and pasture-based farming are key components of quality. The UK must become a world leader in pasture-fed livestock and the skilful management of such systems.



Consumption: Policies should encourage the adoption of balanced diets with less and better quality meat and dairy products. This would produce multiple benefits:

Health

Lower consumption of red and processed meat would reduce the incidence of heart disease, obesity and certain cancers. Public Health England's *Eatwell Guide* advises: "Eat less red and processed meat".

- **Environment**

Industrial livestock's huge demand for cereals has fuelled the intensification of crop production which, with its monocultures and agro-chemicals, has led to water pollution, soil degradation and biodiversity loss. Reducing the need for animal feed would ease the pressure to farm arable land intensively so enabling these natural resources to be restored.

- **Climate change**

Studies show that without a substantial reduction in meat and dairy consumption, our diets alone will take us over the Paris Agreement's target of limiting temperature rises to well below 2°C.

- **Animal welfare**

Reduced consumption of meat and dairy products would enable sufficient animals to be farmed using higher welfare standards.

End the routine preventive use of antibiotics

The use of antibiotics in farming contributes to the transfer of resistant bacteria to people. Antibiotics are used regularly in industrial pig and poultry farms to forestall the diseases that would otherwise be inevitable in the crowded conditions. We need a shift to higher welfare farming, where animals are kept healthy through husbandry practices that promote good health, rather than through routine antibiotic use.



SECTION 4: INSTRUMENTS NEEDED FOR ACHIEVING THESE POLICIES

Public information and education

The Government should develop programmes to increase public awareness of the implications of different livestock farming methods and consumption levels for human health, the environment, food security and animal welfare.

Labelling

Mandatory labelling of meat and dairy products as to farming method would enable consumers to drive improvements in animal welfare.

Better public procurement: taking the lead, setting the standard

Public bodies should use their buying power to augment the market for food produced to high nutritional, environmental and animal welfare standards. Public bodies' commitment to quality will help change our attitude to food.

Develop policies that provide access to affordable, nutritious food for all

In recent years healthy foods have been consistently more expensive than less healthy ones. The Faculty of Public Health states: "In the UK, the poorer people are, the worse their diet, and the more diet-related diseases they suffer from". Food policy should ensure that everyone can access healthy food irrespective of their income.

Getting prices right

- **Internalising negative externalities**

Livestock production, in particular industrial production, produces a range of costly 'negative externalities' including damage to the environment and health. These represent a market failure as the costs associated with them are borne by third parties or society as a whole and are not included in the prices paid by consumers. Mechanisms are needed to enable the negative externalities of livestock production to be included in prices thereby reflecting the true cost of using resources and their environmental impacts.

- **Post CAP subsidies and taxation**

The decision to leave the EU provides a new opportunity to focus on sustainable agriculture and producing high quality products that deliver animal welfare. The main role for public



funding should be to provide support for public goods that the market cannot – or can only partially – deliver such as high environmental and animal welfare standards. We should place farm animal welfare at the heart of new agricultural policy and reward Farmers who farm to meaningful higher welfare standards.

Taxes should also be used to lower the cost of quality food and farming for both farmers and consumers. Farmers adopting high standards of animal welfare should be given generous capital allowances and an extra tranche of tax-free income.

Creation of a new food culture

The current food culture gives great weight to factors such as low prices and convenience. There is no part of this culture that invites consumers to think about how low-cost meat, eggs and milk are produced and how this impacts upon animal welfare, public health and the environment.

A new food culture must be created which cares about the nutritional quality of food and values farming methods that protect the environment and animals.

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Many thanks to [Compassion in World Farming](#) for their kind assistance.