

**Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation Briefing Document:
The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill**

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill is a critical Bill for animals, and relates directly to both Manifesto commitments and commitments made in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare. It is currently in Report Stage in the House of Commons.

The Bill is broad ranging, and includes farm animals and domestic/pet animals. It covers the following important animal welfare issues which appear below, in order of priority for Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation:

Export of Livestock

The Issue: Live animal exports for fattening or slaughter lead to a variety of serious animal welfare issues. The vessels used are not suitable for animals, and the journeys cause great stress and suffering to animals. Documented common animal welfare issues during journeys at sea include exhaustion, overcrowding, insufficient ventilation, disease, injury, trampling and improper access to food, water, and care. Additionally transport at sea lacks key regulations, including no regulations relating to journeys in high winds, or with bad swell conditions. Whilst within the EU it was not possible to prohibit the export of live animals for fattening or slaughter.

The Bill Proposal: The Bill proposes to ban the export of live animals for fattening or slaughter from Great Britain. This includes cattle and other bovine animals, horses and other equine animals, sheep, goats, or pigs or wild boar. It does not apply to breeding animals. Any ban would not prohibit the trade within GB, or from islands to the mainland or from GB to Northern Ireland.

Additional Notes: The Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation encourages support of the Bill in respect of ending live exports for slaughter and fattening.

The UK public supports a ban on live exports, both for slaughter and fattening. The majority of the British public would prefer British farm animals to be slaughtered in the UK and exported as meat, and many find it unacceptable to export British farm animals to other countries to be reared and slaughtered at the mercy of other countries' welfare laws and practices, which may be significantly worse than our own, and in some cases would be illegal in the UK. A ban on live exports will have huge welfare benefits for the animals who would no longer have to experience this practice. With a ban in place, these animals would instead be slaughtered and/or raised within the UK and their meat exported, which means that they will experience much shorter journeys to the location of slaughter or fattening, resulting in a significant improvement in their welfare (as detailed above).

Beyond welfare concerns, the transport of animals compared to the transport of meat is economically and environmentally inefficient. Indeed, factors such as welfare control points, cleaning requirements, the number of trucks required to transport animals compared to meat which can be more densely loaded, leads to higher costs and emissions.

A Call for Evidence (Controlling live exports for slaughter and to improve animal welfare during transport after the UK leaves the EU) was held in 2018 and a Consultation (Improvements to animal welfare in transport) in 2020. The latter received over 11,000 responses with 87% of respondents agreeing that livestock and horse export journeys for slaughter and fattening are unnecessary.

Whilst the trade is not currently active, it is very important to note that this is owing to post EU bureaucracy, not a lack of supply or demand or for any animal welfare reasons. Live exports for slaughter and fattening exports go via Ramsgate to Calais, and Calais doesn't have a Border Inspection Post that can deal with sheep/cattle. The only boat from England doing this cannot reach other ports in its permitted journey time as it is too slow. **We have no doubt whatsoever that the trade will continue again, in absence of legislation that stops it, as soon as the bureaucratic hurdles are overcome, or another ship/supplier takes the market.** This is a priority part of the Bill for CAWF and it is critical it is maintained.

The Bill covers live exports of livestock, not poultry. Historically, the live export of sheep, cattle and pigs has been the primary concern. The Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation would like to see the Bill include poultry. Adult poultry also suffer the same stresses that other farm animals endure in long journeys, including extreme temperatures, deprivation of food and water, overcrowding and not enough headroom space.

The Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation has identified additional reforms that could be introduced to improve welfare during any live animal transport. We find that limiting journey length, reducing stocking density, introducing a minimum age for transport, improving transport conditions, and improving enforcement of current laws, would be particularly beneficial to adopt along with the ban. These appear as tabled amendments to the Bill (see later).

Primates as Pets

The Issue: Keeping primates as pets is a contentious issue and has strong negative welfare implications) as it is very hard to meet the complex welfare needs of primates outside of their natural environment). It is estimated that there are around 5000 primates kept as pets in the UK, though an accurate figure is hard to achieve. These include marmosets, capuchins, squirrel monkeys and lemurs. At present there is limited regulation for the keeping and trade of primates as pets.

The Bill Proposal: The Bill proposes that anyone keeping a primate as a pet will require a licence to do so, which will make provision for the keeper to meet standards specified in the regulation for the care and management of the primate(s). These could include the environment and accommodation

that primates need; their diet; provision for their behavioural needs; their handling; their transportation; and protecting them from pain, suffering, injury and disease. There would be mandatory and non-mandatory inspection regimes from the local authority. The Bill also includes details on offences, revocation of licence, etc., as well as regulations on selling and breeding.

Additional Notes: CAWF has campaigned against keeping primates as pets. A Call for Evidence, opened in 2019 received over 200 responses, and a Public Consultation followed in 2020. This issue was included in the Conservative Party's Action Plan for Animal Welfare 2021.

Importation of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets

The Issue: The issue of low welfare imports, particularly of dogs, from within and outside of the EU has been on the rise for some time. Puppies are being produced in overseas puppy farms and are often smuggled in to the UK masked as non-commercial imports. These puppies often have been raised in sub-standard, low welfare conditions and taken from their mother's too early, which causes them (and the breeding bitches) a lifetime of behavioural and medical issues, with a high mortality rate (owing to diseases such as Parvovirus). The rise in demand for 'designer' puppies (popular breeds), particularly since lockdown, has further fuelled this illicit and cruel trade.

The Bill Proposal: The Bill seeks a reduction in the limit on commercial and non-commercial movement of dogs, cats and ferrets. Additionally, it seeks to increase the minimum age at which dogs can be brought into Great Britain, prohibiting the movement into Great Britain of mutilated dogs (those with cropped ears and docked tails – treatments outlawed in the UK), and the movement of heavily pregnant dams (female dog) into Great Britain.

Additional Notes: A Public Consultation was held on this matter in 2020. CAWF has supported coalitions working on the issue of puppy smuggling and low welfare breeding. This issue was included in the Conservative Party's Action Plan for Animal Welfare 2021.

Pet Theft

The Issue: It is estimated that there were 2000 incidents of dog theft reported in England and Wales alone in 2020. There was an estimated increase of reported dog thefts by almost a fifth during

lockdown. The issue of pet theft causes severe emotional impact for the owners, and there are likely significant welfare issues in many cases for the animals involved, as some are reportedly used for training (bait dogs) for illegal dog fighting.

The Bill Proposal: The Bill proposes to introduce the offence of taking a dog without lawful authority, with a penalty of up to 5 years imprisonment or a fine, or both. It also gives powers to extend the regulations to one or more other species of animal.

Additional Notes: CAWF has supported coalitions working on the issue of pet theft. This issue was included in the Conservative Party's Action Plan for Animal Welfare 2021.

Dogs Attacking or Worrying Livestock

The Issue: Livestock worrying is when a dog attacks or chases livestock on agricultural land or is at large in a field with sheep, which can result in significant injury or suffering and in the worst cases, death of the animals involved. This also has devastating consequences for livestock keepers, causing personal distress as well as significant financial costs. Industry surveys show that dog attacks on sheep are increasing year on year.

The Bill Proposal: The Bill proposes improved powers that will enable the police to respond to livestock worrying incidents more effectively - making it easier for them to collect evidence and, in the most serious cases, seize and detain dogs to reduce the risk of further incidents. The scope of livestock species is also increased and there are changes to locations where the offence(s) can occur.

Additional Notes: Whilst CAWF has not campaigned on this topic, we welcome legislation that protects farm animals and the farming industry.

Zoos

The Issue: This is an administrative part of the Bill.

The Bill Proposal: As changes to animal ownership will occur as a result of this Bill (e.g. Primates), it is important that the definition of a zoo, and other related terms, is defined in order to remove any potential loopholes for enforcement or licencing.

Summary

The Kept Animal Bill is an extremely important Bill for animals. It will help to continue the strong, world leading advancements in animal welfare that the UK has shown a track record in delivering on.

Voters resoundingly support and expect actions that enhance animal welfare. The Kept Animal Bill and other animal policies are popular with the electorate and must not be weakened or negated on. Animal welfare consistently ranks highly on the public's priorities; a recent poll, for instance, showed that 87% of people in the UK want the Government to maintain or increase its level of action on animal protection. Many of these people voted for the Conservative Party in 2019 on the basis of the compassionate, ambitious approach to animal welfare promised in the Party's Manifesto and Action Plan for Animal Welfare.



Conservative opinion polls specifically show overwhelming support for the animal welfare measures included in the Manifesto (the Government's policy of ending trophy hunting imports, for instance, show 92% of those polled in favour of this legislation coming into force as soon as possible) and the Kept Animal Bill is no exception.

Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation strongly supports the Bill and urge for the Bill to return as soon as possible to deliver Conservative Manifesto Commitments to advance animal welfare.