



**Conservative
Animal Welfare
Foundation**



Leading The Way for Animals

**Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation:
Our Election Manifesto Proposals**

Updated February 2024



The Conservative Party has delivered leading animal welfare legislation to enhance the every day lives of animals. Recently this has included the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act, the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act, Glue Traps (Offences) Act, Animals (Penalty Notices) Act, as well as increased protection for service and assistance dogs, a ban on third party puppy and kitten sales, and CCTV in terrestrial farm animal slaughterhouses.

The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act and the Shark Fins Act have recently passed and legislation to ban electric shock collars will come into effect from February 2024. At time of writing, the Pet Abduction Bill, the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill and the The Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill are also progressing through Parliament.

But there remains a number of animal focused Manifesto commitments remaining undelivered, including the ban on the imports of so called trophies from trophy hunting, and consultations on cages and animal welfare labelling.

Now, as our exclusive polling shows (see over) the electorate wants, and demands more for animals. Now is the time for our Party to pledge to deliver even more for animals.



Lorraine Platt, Co-Founder, Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation



In June 2023, the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation commissioned a poll via Opinium, seeking the importance of animal welfare policy for those that voted Conservative at the last General Election and for those that didn't.

The results highlighted what we already knew - that strong animal welfare policies and actions are very important to voters. Our key findings included:

Two thirds (64%) would feel more positively about a political party if they included a strong commitment to animal protection. Strong commitments to animal protection would have a more positive effect on 2019 Labour voters (74%) than 2019 Conservative voters (61%).

A majority (53%) of all those surveyed think that the Conservative Government should do more if re-elected. Only a quarter of 2019 Conservative voters (25%) think that Conservatives should do about as much as they are doing now when it comes to animal welfare.

Importantly, delivering on past Manifestos is also critical to Conservative voters. Three quarters (75%) of 2019 Conservative voters say that keeping manifesto promises is the most, or one of the most, important issues for them.

Source: Opinium Poll Ref: OP23970, June 2023 (2,150 UK Adults)



Commit to a fixed and fair phase out period for the use of farrowing crates for sows and gilts in the UK, with ongoing transitional support for farmers during the phase out period.

Farrowing crates cause the greatest degree of confinement of farmed animals of any system in the UK and European Union. Each crate measures approximately 198cm x 60cm x 60cm with a footfall (area) of 1.23m.

This means that the sow is able to stand up and lie down, but is unable to turn around or move freely to explore her environment. In the UK, 60% of breeding sows are kept in crates, meaning over 200,000 sows are confined in this way.

Sows are crated one week prior to farrowing up until weaning, meaning they are typically crated for a five-week period. Given that sows produce 2.3 litters per year, this means that the typical sow spends 80 days each year, or 22% of her adult breeding life confined in farrowing crates.



Commit to a fixed and fair phase out period for enriched cages for laying hens in the UK, with ongoing transitional support for farmers during the phase out period.

Although cage-free eggs are increasingly popular with consumers, 35% of UK laying hens, some 14 million birds, still live in cages.

Cages severely damage the wellbeing of hens, restricting their movement and frustrating their ability to perform innate behaviours like wing flapping, stretching, body shaking, tail wagging, foraging, dustbathing, perching and nesting.



Introduce mandatory animal welfare labelling on all meat products for human consumption.

The absence of a mandatory method of production labelling system in the UK can lead to frustration and confusion for British consumers.

Over 80% of UK consumers have expressed a preference for methods of productions to be labelled clearly on animal products.

The system has been tried and tested with eggs, and proven to drive consumer behaviour towards higher welfare systems.

A recent poll showed that two in three (64%) 2019 Conservative voters would support the introduction of a mandatory animal welfare labelling system.



Legislate to ensure that farmed fish have the equivalent legal protection to that of terrestrial farmed animals, including at time of slaughter.

In the UK we farm an estimated up to 77 million fish each year. The sentience of fish is not in dispute, their ability to suffer has long been recognised and the sentience of fish was enshrined into UK law for the first time in 2022 as part of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022.

Yet, despite legal recognition of their sentience, a growing UK industry with ambitious plans for growth, and vast numbers of fish killed each year, fish are afforded relatively little legal protection. The Animal Welfare Committee issued an updated Opinion, released in 2023 which once again confirmed the need for mandatory regulation for farmed fish at the time of slaughter.

There are significant anomalies between the levels of protection given to terrestrial farmed animals and aquatic animals, but with no logical explanation or justification of why such differences exist in their levels of protection.

Our Additional Manifesto Proposals

Farmed Animals and Trade:

- Prohibit the commercial importation of Foie Gras to the UK
- Stop fur imports into the UK
- Ensure systems are in place to forbid the importation of farmed cephalopods (eg. octopi)
- Establish systems to ensure that the number of animals slaughtered according to religious rites, relates directly to the demand from those religious communities in the UK, and prohibit the export of non-stun slaughtered meat
- End the remote sale and shipping (eg. online/mail order) of live animals for food, such as lobsters to non-commercial customers
- Ban the practice of beak trimming
- Enshrine core standards for animal welfare in all future trade agreements, in order to safeguard the UK's existing animal welfare standards and to protect British farmers

Pets:

- Ensure that the importation of cats or dogs that have been mutilated in ways that are illegal in the UK, such as tail docking, ear cropping or de-clawing, is no longer permitted
- Introduce penalties under the Animal Welfare Act for owners whose dogs fatally injure another dog or dogs

Animal Experimentation:

- Pledge a timetabled and targeted plan to end all animal experiments, starting with an immediate ban on all animal research that is not legally required, and prohibition of the use of animals in toxicity testing where non animal methodologies already exist, such as the use of LD50 (Lethal Dose 50%) testing

Sports and Wildlife

- Commit to a review of the shooting industry (live birds) including the use of intensive cages for the rearing of gamebirds, and the associated land management techniques including the use of snares
- Prohibit the use of snares in the UK
- Align legislation to introduce a close season for brown hares in England and Wales
- Strengthen the Hunting Act 2004 in order to close loop holes that enable illegal hunting of foxes, deer and hares
- Commit to a phased end to greyhound racing in the UK
- Pledge to a review of the associated risks to animal welfare posed by horse racing, including through use of the whip, injuries, and fatalities

Environment:

- Ensure the Government formally recognises the significant contribution to global warming of intensive animal agriculture

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