

Why Manifestos Matter!

Party manifestos are critical - they're an open and documented pledge as to what a Political Party wants to, and commits to, doing should they be elected. A recent poll conducted by the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation asked: 'In general, how important is it that parties keep their manifesto promises? Three quarters of respondents (74%) said it was the most, or one of the most important issues for them. This is how important manifestos, and their associated pledges really are.

That's why ensuring that manifestos contain pledges that are good for animals is a primary focus area for the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation. Our purpose is to ensure animals are well protected under law, and that laws are strong and fit for purpose. That's why before every election we produce a detailed and well thought out Manifesto for Animals, which we present to key governmental stakeholders and decisions makers.

This coming election is no different. Our 2023 [Manifesto](#) contains the following primary asks - all critical for the advancement of animal welfare:

1. End live exports from the UK for slaughter and fattening.
2. Commit to a fixed and fair phase out period of the use of farrowing crates for sows and gilts in the UK with ongoing transitional support for farmers during the phase out period.
3. 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.
4. Introduce mandatory animal welfare labelling on all meat products for human consumption.
5. Legislate to ensure that farmed fish have the equivalent legal protection to that of terrestrial farmed animals, including at time of slaughter.

Additionally, our Manifesto includes asks to ban the commercial importation of foie gras, ban fur imports, prohibit the remote sale and shipping of live animals for food to non-commercial customers, ban 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), ban the use of snares and align legislation to introduce a close season for brown hares in England and Wales.

But, with any document, its very existence is not enough. It's more important that people are aware of it and read it, and that it gets to the right people so it can truly help influence change. This year we were grateful to be able to discuss our Manifesto at No. 10 and additionally gain [media coverage](#) for its launch. What's more, at our recent World Farm Animal Day Reception at the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester, we circulated Manifesto summaries to attendees.

Attendees included a host of MPs and even a Defra Minister - including Rebecca Pow, Kevin Foster, Meghan Gallacher, Theresa Villiers, and our event host Anna Firth MP - amongst others. Also in the room were various NGOs and other key stakeholders.

At the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation, we believe strongly in our manifesto proposals. Our years of experience in this area and our professional expert networks help us shape our policy asks. We know that animals matter to voters (our recent polling showed that two thirds, 64%, would feel more positively about a political party if they included a strong commitment to animal protection), we now call on the Conservative Party to show that animals do really matter to them too by including our asks in their General Election Manifesto.