

End live exports for fattening and slaughter

Support the Second Reading of the
Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill

18th December 2023



Conservative
Animal Welfare
Foundation

Why end live exports for fattening and slaughter?

> Animal suffering

During export, overcrowding means that some cannot lie down at all, while those who do may be injured or trampled to death. They can be in transit for days, suffering extremes of temperature and often without sufficient food, water or rest. Many animals endure long journeys before they even approach their export Port.

Animals used to drinking from troughs do not understand how to use the water nipple systems on trucks, while stocking density and dominant animals can prevent others accessing the water system.

The floor of the trucks also become inadequate after just a few hours of travel, risking disease and exhaustion as animals avoid laying in the waste. Sadly, many arrive for slaughter covered in their own waste.

Different animals suffer in different ways. For example, pigs can become very travel sick, even on short journeys. Newly weaned piglets are also more vulnerable than older animals, particularly to temperature changes.

In the most recent years in which live exports have occurred, between 25,000 – 50,000 sheep and calves were exported annually for fattening or slaughter from Great Britain.



> Lower welfare destinations

Many animals will proceed to destinations like Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain where they can be re-exported to other countries. There is evidence calves exported to Spain for beef production have been re-exported to countries such as Lebanon and Turkey, where non-stun slaughter is the norm.

Animals may end up in countries with far poorer welfare standards than our own, enduring practices which are illegal in the UK such as sow stalls and veal crates. Calves placed into the Dutch white veal pen systems, where they are unable to perform natural behaviour, are barely able to turn around and are not given any straw bedding.

Ultimately, once animals leave our shores, we have no control over how they are reared or slaughtered.

Case study: The Times, 2018

In 2018 The Times newspaper reported that two-week old calves were packed into lorries from Scotland on a 135-hour journey to Spain. Some of the calves were unweaned, and their immune systems were not fully developed meaning they were vulnerable to temperature changes.

Calves packed into lorries for 135-hour journey



Source: The Times (2018)

The Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill

The last two Conservative Election Manifestos in 2017 and 2019 have both contained commitments to take action on live exports for fattening and slaughter. This was later confirmed by Defra's Action Plan for Animal Welfare in 2021, and again by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak during the Conservative Leadership Contest last year.

In November the Government announced a new Bill as part of the King's Speech to end live exports for fattening and slaughter: the Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill.

It will ban the export of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses for slaughter and fattening from Great Britain, stopping unnecessary stress, exhaustion and injury caused by exporting live animals. This would only apply to slaughter and fattening exports, not the export of breeding animals.

A Brexit bonus

While the UK was part of the EU, we could not end live exports for fattening and slaughter. By delivering this measure before the next General Election, we can send a powerful message overseas and demonstrate just what is possible for sovereign nations outside of the EU. Ending live exports was touted as a key Brexit bonus, and it is important that we capitalise on the opportunity to set our own world leading standards in animal welfare.

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Brexit gave us the opportunity to take control of these matters—to decide what we, our electors, the country and Parliament want to do; and what Parliament wants to do is stop this foul cross-channel trade in live animals...

Craig Mackinlay MP



What do Conservatives have to say?



Theresa Villiers MP, 2023

No one in this House cares more about the issue of live exports than I do and I am determined that the Government will deliver on that manifesto commitment.



Steve Barclay MP, 2019

It is impossible to ban cruel live animal exports while we remain in the EU. We're working to #GetBrexitDone so we can get on with the job of protecting animal welfare once we leave the EU.



Chris Loder MP, 2022

...My hon. Friend Craig Mackinlay...referred to Kent Action Against Live Exports, which deserves a huge tribute for all the work that it has done. That group has shone a light on the most disgraceful conditions that our animals have been forced to endure, having to travel hours and hours all the way down to southern Europe. That is not acceptable.



Mark Spencer MP, 2023

We remain committed to ending the export of live animals for fattening and slaughter. There have not been any live exports for fattening or slaughter since 2020 and we want to make this permanent.



Kevin Foster MP

It is welcome that the Government will introduce a Bill about animal welfare and live exports. With the freedoms produced by Brexit, it is time to outlaw long and unnecessary journeys simply for fattening and slaughter.



Dr Neil Hudson MP

I am proud that the Government have a strong record of action on animal welfare in this Parliament. In the King's Speech, their commitment to banning live exports for fattening and slaughter is a clear sign that they support our high animal welfare standards.

Why end live exports if no exports are taking place at the moment?

Following Britain's exit from the EU, animals from the UK now need to be checked at a Border Inspection Post (BIP), however no suitable posts have been set up at Calais, Dunkirk or any other ferry port.

This means that without legislation this cruel trade can continue if a BIP is installed at Calais or another port at any time.

“ *The number of live animals exported from Great Britain since Brexit has been zero—none: not one... We still want to bring in this legislation, because there may be future demand, the infrastructure to support that trade might start up again and we want to make sure we are legislating in the right way...*

Lord Benyon, Defra Minister





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