

BREXIT & ANIMALS

10 Point Plan for animal welfare as the United Kingdom exits from the European Union

Introduction

ADI, APA, Cats Protection, Compassion in World Farming, OneKind, the RSPCA, The Donkey Sanctuary, the USPCA, World Animal Protection and World Horse Welfare intend to ensure that the welfare of all animals - both in the UK and in Europe as a whole - is not endangered by Brexit negotiations and that opportunities for improvement to animal welfare are fully exploited. Although the UK sees itself as operating some of the highest animal welfare standards, examples exist in some areas where it has fallen behind other countries. Leaving the EU provides the UK countries with opportunities to go further in those areas where there is existing European legislation. This position paper highlights those opportunities.

Currently there are 39 basic EU acts relating to the welfare of animals, of which 14 are Directives (implemented by UK legislation) and 25 Regulations and Decisions (which have full direct effect between individual citizens). While there is a lack of certainty as to how negotiations will progress, this briefing highlights ten areas where it is likely that Westminster and the devolved administrations will have flexibility to improve animal welfare.

Risks

If the UK were to decide to derogate from EU standards, there is a risk that animal welfare may suffer. It is estimated that 80% of the current animal welfare legislation applicable in the UK comes from EU law. The EU legislation covers farm animals, wildlife, animals in research, and, to a lesser extent, companion animals. Those laws that are Regulations or Decisions are particularly at risk of disappearing from the UK because they are directly effective without the need for implementation by Westminster and the devolved Governments. Specific legislation would need to be passed to carry these over after Brexit; this would not happen automatically.

Opportunities

There are certain areas where EU Membership has long been identified as a barrier to stronger animal welfare protection within the UK, and where Brexit may provide an opportunity for the UK to strengthen its laws in these areas. However, the parameters of World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules will continue to impact the UK, as it will become a member of the WTO independently.

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1. Farm animals and equines

Enact a new support system for farming that promotes animal welfare, environmental health and landscape goals, recognises species and habitat protection as an important part of farm management and rewards farmers to develop such plans and meets farmer livelihoods needs in a cohesive manner.

2. Farm animals and equines

Address long distance transport of farmed animals and horses by reducing journey times, improving vehicle standards and stopping live exports for slaughter from Britain.

3. Farm animals and equines

Enhance the British brand of high welfare standards by introducing new legislation on slaughter houses, making CCTV mandatory, phasing out non-stun slaughter of animals and providing clear labelling on methods of slaughter.

4. Farm animals and equines

Introduce new specific farming legislation on areas currently not covered such as ducks, dairy cattle and beef cattle.

5. Farm animals and equines

Phase out routine 'preventative' use of antibiotics on farms.

6. Farm animals and equines

Introduce a mandatory method of production labelling.

7. Wild animals

Implementation of a 'positive' or permitted list of species that can be kept and traded as pets where there is sound, impartial evidence that the welfare of such species is relatively easy to assure and maintain and their keeping does not pose a disproportionate risk to human health or to the environment.

8. Wild animals

Ensure that wildlife legislation in all UK administrations provides equivalent or higher level of protections for the habitats, conservation and welfare of wild animals.

9. Animals used in research

Ensure that there is no weakening of regulatory controls (either in the legislation itself, or as enacted operationally by the Home Office) on animal research and testing in the UK.

10. Movement of dogs, cats and equines

Reintroduce enforcement and veterinary controls to ensure that rules on non-commercial movement of dogs and cats are not used by commercial traders, in particular reintroducing tick treatment for cats and dogs entering UK, reintroducing treatment for alveolar echinococcosis (*Echinococcus multilocularis* infestation) for cats and introducing a proper database for all imported dogs and cats. Conduct more stringent enforcement and border checks for dogs, cats and equines.

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