Our Animal Welfare priorities for Europe

The European Union plays a key role when it comes to guaranteeing the welfare of animals across Europe – something guaranteed in European treaty. While good progress has been made, we want to see more achieved during the next Parliament.

SNP MEPs in the European Parliament have constantly fought to ensure that this principle is fulfilled and reflected in all European activities. We have made good progress in the last few years, such as the EU ban on the testing of cosmetic products on animals. We have highlighted a wide range of animal welfare-related issues, from closing the loopholes undermining the ban on “shark finning” to the welfare and conditions of pet rabbits.

However, much more remains to be done to improve conditions for Europe’s animals. SNP MEPs will make animal welfare a priority in the next Parliament.

Enforcement of animal welfare legislation - Vital EU initiatives on animal welfare, such as the banning of battery cages and sow stalls, have been fatally undermined by a lack of enforcement. We will fight for more effective action to ensure Member States meet deadlines for the improvements of animal welfare, better harmonisation of enforcement mechanisms across Europe, and swifter punishment of those Member States which do not make an effort to comply in time.

The passage of a framework law on animal welfare - Scotland’s Animal Health and Welfare Act enshrines in law a duty of care for the welfare of animals by pet owners and those responsible for animals. We will work to ensure this is guaranteed EU-wide, and that a legally binding minimum level of protection exists for all animals in Europe.

Printed and promoted by Peter Murrell on behalf of the Scottish National Party, both at 3 Jackson’s Entry, Edinburgh EH8 8PJ.
Animal Transport - Europe is failing to reduce long journey times for animals. We need to encourage the reduction of these journey times without putting at risk farming in remote and isolated regions. Shorter journeys can be promoted through the development of a network of regional slaughterhouses and through rural development support. We will also support the uptake of new technologies and a crackdown on violations of the rules.

Cloning - Cloning of animals has been shown to lead to significant animal welfare problems, through high mortality and deformity rates. Cloning of animals directly for human consumption is not necessary. We support European Commission proposals to ban the marketing of food from clones.

Trade - Europe has the highest animal welfare standards in the world. Too little has been done by the EU to promote the export of our standards to other continents. We will argue for EU animal welfare standards to be included in both bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

Bullfighting - European taxpayers pay subsidies for the owners of bulls who rear them specifically for participation in bullfighting, through the Common Agricultural Policy. We will continue to fight for the abolition of this subsidy.

Pets - We will lobby for action to improve the conditions of companion animals and examine a number of different possible solutions, including micro-chipping of dogs. We will push the Commission to take action against Member States where the welfare of companion animals is comprehensively violated, such as the mass euthanasia of stray dogs.

Animal Welfare Labelling - We have the right to know how the food we buy is produced, and should have the opportunity to choose animal welfare-friendly production systems. We will build on egg labelling by pushing for research to establish effective means of labelling production systems for other types of food.