

Animal Welfare Policy

Vision

The Green Party envisions a world in which:

- Animals are recognised and treated as sentient beings with intrinsic worth.
- Domestic animals, including farmed animals and other animals in captivity, have a high quality of life.
- People act compassionately in their interactions with animals.
- Aotearoa New Zealand leads the world in its treatment of animals.

Key Principles

1. All animals in people's care can satisfy their hunger and thirst with suitable food and water; their disease, discomfort and distress are resolved in a timely and appropriate way; and they have the opportunity to express a range of natural behaviours beneficial to their wellbeing.
2. Ownership of animals, including companion animals, is a responsibility, not a right.
3. Owners should ensure that their animals do not cause harm to other animals or people.
4. Animals used for economic or other purposes must not suffer from unnecessary or unreasonable distress or pain.
5. Protection of indigenous biodiversity is paramount. The control of pests to protect indigenous biodiversity should employ the most humane methods possible.
6. New Zealanders should be able to make informed purchasing decisions to avoid directly or indirectly causing suffering to animals.
7. Non-violence and empathy towards all animals should be nurtured, from early childhood onwards.

8. Non-animal testing should be used instead of animal testing whenever possible.
9. Animals must not be cloned except to save a species from extinction.
10. Animals must not be used in GE experiments or fed GE food.

Specific Policy Points

1. Ensuring high-quality care for domesticated animals

Animal welfare issues are addressed within the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI), and the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RNZSPCA).

A. Independent, Parliamentary Voice for Animal Welfare

- 1.1 Establish a Minister for Animal Welfare that must be held separately to the portfolio for primary industries. This Minister would work to advocate for the interests of the welfare of animals, without having a conflict of interest with the primary industries.
- 1.2 Establish an Office for Animal Welfare and ensure that it is fully resourced to:
 - a) Carry out the policy, monitoring, compliance and enforcement work that is currently part of Ministry of Primary Industries work.
 - b) Work with NAWAC to develop, implement, monitor and recommend animal welfare codes.
 - c) Monitor animal welfare in the racing and entertainment sectors.
- 1.3 Establish a Commissioner of Animal Welfare and ensure that it is fully resourced to:
 - a) Stand independent of political parties and Ministries, and reports to Parliament.
 - b) Appoint members of the NAWAC and the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee.
 - c) Review and report on animal welfare codes and regulations to protect animals from suffering due to the direct or indirect actions of humans.
 - d) Proactively investigate and make recommendations on complaints regarding animal welfare.

B. Animals in Agriculture

The Green Party will phase out methods that cause suffering to agricultural animals or prevent them from expressing normal patterns of behaviour that are beneficial.

Policy Positions

- 1.4 Support a continued ban on farrowing crates under the Animal Welfare Act.
- 1.5 Phase out painful agricultural techniques, such as the debeaking of hens and maceration of day-old chicks, in association with the development of alternative, humane practices, such as the prevention of pecking through improved rearing conditions and gender selection of fertilised eggs.
- 1.6 Prohibit new, and phase out existing, factory farming of animals, including highly intensive outdoor facilities such as feedlots.
- 1.7 Ensure that all agricultural animals are provided with appropriate, sufficient and readily accessible shade, shelter and comfortable resting areas.
- 1.8 Support the breeding of genetic lines with inherent disease resistance and traits such as horn free.
- 1.9 Discourage the use of breeds and the development of transgenic animals with inherent deformities or susceptibilities for agricultural research or other purposes.

D. Transport of Animals

Transportation is inherently stressful for animals and some suffer greatly.

Policy Positions

- 1.10 Require animals to be slaughtered as near as possible to the location of rearing, support the development of more localised slaughter houses, and require specific transport conditions to minimise stress for animals.
- 1.11 Limit the permissible journey length for transporting of live farm animals for slaughter in consideration of their suffering while being transported.
- 1.12 Significantly strengthen protection for bobby calves who are particularly vulnerable to rough handling and mistreatment during transport.
- 1.13 Live export of animals by sea involves high casualty rates and stress for the animals involved.
- 1.14 Continue to support a prohibition on the export of animals for slaughter, and tighten the current rules to prevent the export of animals for slaughter under the guise of export for breeding.
- 1.15 End the export of live animals for breeding to countries without acceptable animal welfare regulations, including a humane death.

- 1.16 Encourage the exchange of breeding material, such as through semen and egg import–export.

E. Companion Animals

Companion animals provide huge benefits to humans in many ways and are often much-loved members of a family. However, they can also be particularly vulnerable to neglect and abuse. Overbreeding of cats and dogs, including working dogs, causes particular problems and every year animal shelters and rescue organisations are overwhelmed with thousands of unwanted animals due to irresponsible breeding.

Policy Positions

- 1.17 Incentivise and educate about responsible pet ownership.
- 1.18 Support education around dog safety, particularly in at-risk areas.
- 1.19 Support measures such as microchipping and desexing of companion animals, particularly for cats and dogs.
- 1.20 Ban the life-chaining of animals, such as dogs and goats.
- 1.21 Oppose the expansion of breed-specific legislation for dogs because it unfairly penalises responsible dog owners and dog breeds: any dog can be dangerous.
- 1.22 Increase funding to the RNZSPCA so that it is adequately resourced to undertake its animal welfare enforcement work.
- 1.23 Require council pounds and animal rescue shelters to provide a good standard of care for animals.
- 1.24 Investigate the primary causes of overbreeding of companion animals (e.g. 'backyard breeding') and develop a strategy to address this, including requiring breeders to be registered.

F. Animals in Entertainment Industries

- 1.25 Support a ban on the use of animals in rodeo events, as these events inherently result in some animals experiencing pain and distress.
- 1.26 Require all racing codes that use animals to make publicly available the numbers of animals bred, raced, injured, euthanised and re-homed or retired from racing, through birth-to-death reporting.

2. Improving understanding of animal welfare issues

Policy Positions

- 2.1 Encourage and support educational programs that promote respect and empathy towards animals, at all levels of education.

- 2.2 Support informed consumer choice by:
 - a) Requiring the presence of animal products to be clearly indicated on labels.
 - b) Requiring all producers of animal products to label their animal products according to strict criteria concerning the methods by which the animals were raised.
 - c) Requiring all consumer products to carry labels indicating whether they have been tested on animals.
- 2.3 Promote dietary choices that support high standards of animal welfare.
- 2.4 Encourage the development and use of methods for controlling animal pests which involve a minimum of suffering, including humane alternatives to 1080 and other slow-acting poisons (see our [Conservation Policy](#)).

3. Animal Experimentation

The extent of animal experimentation should be drastically decreased with the ultimate aim of minimising animal suffering. Animal ethics committees play an important role in safe-guarding the welfare of animals in institutions and must be representative, accountable and well informed.

Policy Positions

- 3.1 Ensure that animal ethics committees have strong guidelines, are committed to minimising animal use and have a thorough knowledge of non-animal methods of research.
- 3.2 Require animal ethics committees to make records of all their deliberations available to the public.
- 3.3 Make a legal presumption that non-animal methods of product testing will be used.
- 3.4 Develop a public database of alternatives to animal testing and require that these methods are used wherever suitable.
- 3.5 Support the development of non-animal methods for research, testing and teaching.
- 3.6 Require non-animal methods of experimentation and testing to be used wherever they exist.
- 3.7 Where non-animal methods do not exist, experiments and research on animals are limited to situations where:
 - a) It is endeavoured that no animal suffers unnecessarily as a result, with end points agreed and pain managed; and

- b) The study can show the potential for overwhelming benefit to animals or humans. Such research should recognise the principles of reduction, refinement and replacement, with the eventual aim of eliminating suffering, distress or pain to animals involved in animal experiments.
- 3.8 Require all educational institutions to provide non-animal alternatives, wherever they exist, for course work.
- 3.9 Require all experiments involving animals to be reported to the Office for Animal Welfare, and for this information to be publicly available. Information required will include the species and numbers of animals involved, the purposes for which the animals were used, what non-animal methods were considered as alternatives to using animals and the reasons why none of these non-animal methods were able to be used.