

Impact

January 2012



**Stop
the
Cull**

The Decision to slaughter Badgers supported by the Liberal/Democrats is disgraceful. It is proposed that the slaughter trials take place after the Olympics. The places where they will take place is West Somerset and partly in Taunton Dene. The second is mainly within the Forest of Dean and Tewksbury and partly in the district of Wychavon, Malvern Hills and West Gloucestershire.

What do you do when you make a important decision. Most people look at the facts available and base their decision on them. That is why it is all the more shocking that the Tories and Liberal/Democrats have decided to proceed with the culling of badgers—against both the scientific evidence and the weight of public opinion. Of course we know why because a large number of Tory and LiberalDemocrats seats are in the countryside and their main supporters are the hunting and farming community even though the majority of people (63%)in the Countryside are opposed to a badger cull.

Badger Trust are asking you to PLEASE SIGN THE 38 DEGREES PETITION <http://www.38degrees.org.uk/page/s/badgers-petition#petition> also please go to the Labour Party Campaign www.nobadgercull.com

Please also write to your Member of Parliament urging them to take action.

Journal of the Labour Animal Welfare Society



LAWS editorial by Wally Burley

2012 marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of our Labour Animal Welfare Society. 20 years of Lobbying and Campaigning for legislation to be introduced for positive action on Animal Welfare. Great progress was made during the term of the Labour Government.

We are now faced with a Tory/Lib/dem Government who could make 2012 a bad year for Animal Welfare in Britain. There are four important campaigns we must carry out and you are urged to write to your MP's and our Labour MP's will be asked to put pressure on Ministers within Parliament.

The Decision to slaughter Badgers supported by the Liberal/Democrats is disgraceful. It is proposed that the slaughter trials take place after the Olympics. The places where they will take place is West Somerset and partly in Taunton Dene. The second is mainly within the Forest of Dean and Tewksbury and partly in the district of Wychavon, Malvern Hills and West Gloucestershire.

The Governments proposals not to carry out the decision of Parliament to ban wild animals in circuses is totally wrong. The reason is based on a German Circus taking the Austrian Government to Court after they implemented a Ban. Just recently 7 Judges unanimously ruled against the German Circus and the ban stays in Austria. There is no reason not to implement a ban.

David Cameron is again raising the issue of Hunting with dogs and he is determined to repeal the legislation banning hunting with dogs. We must therefore be watchful and ready to fight against the repeal of such legislation.

Finally the proposals to doing away with so called "Bureaucratic" legislation which could affect animal welfare particularly in farming.

Be prepared for a very busy year!!!

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Views expressed in IMPACT are not necessarily shared by LAWS or its National Committee.

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THE FUR ISSUE, ANIMAL WELFARE AND LABOUR'S POLICY REVIEW *by Mark Glover*

While in office, one of Labour's greatest achievements for animals was the banning of fur factory farming in 2000. This ban had the immediate effect of ending the incarceration and cruel death of more than 100,000 mink each year in Britain. It also set an example for the rest of the world and other countries have begun to follow this lead.

The other main method the fur trade uses to obtain fur is by catching animals in the wild and one of the main methods it uses is the steel-jawed leghold trap – a device so cruel it has been banned in the UK for decades and throughout the European Union since 1995.

With the two main methods of production now banned – due to their extreme cruelty – it is perverse and hypocritical that we still allow the sale of real fur products. It is simply illogical and it is now time for action to end this anomaly.

We already ban the sale of all whale and seal products and we now need to bring an end to the sale of real fur items.

In the meantime it is essential that we bring in measures to ensure that real fur is clearly labelled. Incredibly it is not currently a legal requirement for real fur clothing and accessories to show what they are made from and consumers are, without doubt, buying real fur thinking it is fake.

Many would be horrified if they knew that their purchase was helping to prop up a morally bankrupt industry and perpetuating unnecessary animal suffering.

The Labour Party should ensure that measures to label and ban real fur are included in a future legislative program.

Labour is currently engaged in a wide-ranging policy review and animal welfare should be a part of this process. Before the 1997 election Labour issued a leaflet 'new life for animals' that contained a list of policies for animals. Labour became a voice for the voiceless and this groundbreaking 'manifesto' proved to be very popular with voters.

The importance of animal welfare was more recently underlined by the results of the poll released by LAWS at last year's Party conference. It showed that 52% of people thought that animal welfare was 'important' in helping them decide who to vote for. It is clear that a robust set of animal welfare policies is an electoral asset as well as the right thing to do.

Since the policy review is underway right now, now is the time to let the Party know what you think about the importance of animal welfare.

We urge all LAWS members to write to shadow environment minister Mary Creagh MP, who is responsible for animal welfare under the review process. Please ask Mary to include a ban on the sale of fur in a future Labour legislative program and to create a new set of animal welfare policies fit for the twenty first century. Mary Creagh MP can be reached at: House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

Social justice is a core principal of the Labour Party. We need to extend this sense of justice to the animals we share our planet with as well as those in our care.

For more information about the fur issue: www.respectforanimals.org

WHALES FAROE ISLANDS –A report by the Chair of LAWS Wally Burley

Andy Ottaway of Campaign Whale and a member of the NEC of Labour Animal Welfare Society contacted us last November in regards to the Faroe Islands. We then sent a E.Mail to all Labour MP's asking them to take action in regards the following points:

In the past ten days Faroese hunters have killed almost 150 pilot whales in three hunts. On Tuesday November 22nd, around 1,000 whales were pursued to shore by an armada of around 30 or more fishing vessels. A total 81 were killed. Pregnant females, mothers with their nursing calves, none were spared a terrifying and cruel death.

This year alone, Faroese whalers have killed almost 750 whales in an horrific slaughter they call a 'tradition' that goes back 400 years. Last year (2010), the whalers killed over 1,000 pilot whales and 35 dolphins despite the fact that in 2008 Faroese Health Chiefs warned that pilot whales were no longer safe for human consumption.

Andy Ottaway visited the Faroes in May last year as part of a delegation of anti-whaling groups to meet with officials and express our opposition to whaling. It was clear from their discussions that the Faroese do not fear any international protest. and simply not enough is being done to protect public health. In October, Campaign Whale led a coalition of 10 international anti-whaling groups that wrote to the Faroese Government calling for all whaling and dolphin hunting to be suspended on public health, conservation and animal welfare grounds. There has been no response, but whaling has continued unabated.

In response to Tuesday's massive whale hunt, Campaign Whale called the Defra Whaling team and asked for a Ministerial intervention to try and get the hunt stopped and whaling ended. Last week he met with Defra officials and they agreed that a letter of concern would be sent to the Faroese Government. However, the large scale hunting of small cetaceans (smaller whales, dolphins and porpoises) is an issue that is hard to address effectively in this forum as

the whalers refuse to accept the IWC's jurisdiction on this issue. As a result many tens of thousands of small cetaceans are killed in cruel and unsustainable hunts around the world yet this massive level of whaling goes pretty much unopposed.

The Faroese Islanders enjoy a very high standard of living and these prosperous Islands have just a small population of under 50,000 people.

In response, the Faroese Islands indicated that the hunting of Risso's dolphins would not continue. Their prosperity is through the export of their fish to the UK, and the rest of Europe.

Mary Creagh MP replied to LAWS that the Shadow Defra team take this issue very seriously. **Fiona O'Donnell** is the shadow minister who covers this area and she questioned the Minister on this issue.

The DEFRA Minister responsible Richard Benyon replied in Parliament and by letter to our Labour MP,s;

"Nevertheless, the UK has long been concerned about the cruel way in which these hunts are conducted and has pressed for improvements for a number of years, both directly and within the IWC. I will continue to make our strong opposition to these hunts known to the Faroe Islands.

We also made progress at this year's annual meeting of the 'Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas' (ASCOBANS). The UK raised concerns about the increasing numbers, and diversity of species being taken, namely Risso's and White Sided Dolphins. Their prosperity is through the export of their fish to the UK, and the rest of Europe.

I will be writing to my counterparts in the Faroe Islands and Denmark raising the concerns of the UK Government and the British public over these hunts, urging them to share information relating to the conservation and management of cetaceans with the IWC.

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The Horror of Horse Fighting in the Philippines

Horse fighting, a spectator blood sport where two stallions are incited to fight each other in a controlled environment over a mare in heat, occurs throughout the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines. Events are conducted in city stadiums or large fenced in areas before raucous crowds who attend in anticipation of intense fighting, gore and even death.

Billed as a cultural tradition specific to indigenous communities, it is prominent enough to warrant local television coverage, municipal support in the form of cash prizes and sponsorship from local businesses. While horse fighting is promoted under the guise of tradition, in reality, extensive gambling on the outcomes of the horse fights, with bets running as high as ₱2000, is the main reason it has become so prevalent.

Lack of enforcement

Republic Act 8485, also known as the animal welfare act, outlawed all horse fighting in 1998. However, with penalties ranging from a minimum of 1000 pesos (approx. £10) to a maximum of 5000 pesos (approx. £50) horse fighting organizers pay little heed to the law.

Despite being illegal, not one person has been prosecuted for engaging in horse fighting since the passage of RA 8485 in 1998. Modest attempts to curtail horse fighting have been instituted by the national government's Animal Welfare Division, to no avail.

Local government in the regions where horse fighting is prevalent is fiercely protective of the activity and generally defies the national government's authority on the issue. Often, local police are even hired by the promoters for crowd control purposes.

Animal Welfare Violations

Extremely large sums of money are wagered on the outcomes of all horse fights, and it is this element that drives the industry. With high stakes in the balance, most horse fights involve purpose bred and trained animals who are large, sturdy and aggressive. The training process is brutal, involving fights with other horses, which handlers control by tying long ropes around the horse's necks, and pulling heavy sleds up hills to build strength.

During a typical horse fight two stallions are presented to a mare in heat, who remains in the ring during the fight. Generally, the two stallions will immediately engage in a battle for the perceived privilege of mating with the mare, often centering the fight in the mare's vicinity. The mare will remain in the blazing sun for the whole day without access to water and is often injured by the enraged stallions.

The stallions bite, kick and strike each other with their hooves, inflicting serious injuries until one of them submits, flees or is killed. The victor goes on to further fights until he is either eliminated, killed, or wins the tournament.

Injuries such as gouges, gashes and broken limbs sustained during fights are always serious and can be fatal.

Veterinary observers report seeing horses being struck with such force to the head that their eyes literally pop out of their sockets, horses having their entire ears torn off during fights, and horses drenched in blood from their injuries. While most fights last about 15 minutes, many can go on for up to 3 hours. In one reported instance, a fight lasted 6 hours, ending only because one of the horses was so badly injured and exhausted, he was no longer able to stand up.

Veterinary care for injured horses is rudimentary at best, often resulting in wounded horses being shot and slaughtered for their meat rather than being treated. A similar fate awaits horses that are deemed to be weak or poor fighters. In order to satisfy the bloodthirsty crowd, some injured horses are even intentionally pitted against much larger and stronger stallions,

resulting in even more gruesome injuries for the weaker opponent and a greater likelihood of death.

Currently, thousands of horses are involved in hundreds of fights throughout the southern Philippines, with some fiestas organizing up to twenty fights per day over a three day period. Please write to the Philippines Department of Tourism in London and explain that you will not support Philippines tourism until they ensure that horse fighting is ended - infotourism@wowphilippines.co.uk

Network for Animals, a London based animal protection NGO, campaigns against the horse fighting industry in the Philippines. For more information on horse fighting and to find out how you can help, go to Network for Animal's website at : networkforanimals.org.

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I will also express my concern about commercial imports by the Faroe Islands of meat from protected whale species”

The Chair of LAWS Wally Burley says;

There is simply no justification for the continuation of whaling in the Faroes. However, there is no international forum through which pressure can be applied on the islands to end this cruel and unnecessary hunting.

We would be grateful to receive members views on whether we should consider as a matter of urgency that fish

which is their major export should be boycotted from the Faroes and other countries that continue whaling in defiance of international treaties and overwhelming public opinion in the UK, Europe and elsewhere.

Action to be taken.

Please write to your Member of Parliament Asking them to do all they can to support the ending of slaughter in the Faroe Islands.

Also to write to the Government Minister asking that he should protest to the Faroe Government about this slaughter as a reminder of his promise to write.

Richard Benyon,
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London, SW1A 0AA