

# LABOUR ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY

## Briefing: Five Changes to Improve the Lives of Millions of Animals



**Labour has pledged to “introduce the biggest boost in animal welfare for a generation”. Now, it’s time to make it happen.**

The Labour Animal Welfare Society (LAWS) is an animal welfare society right at the heart of the Labour Party. Since 1992, we’ve provided support and advice to the party on animal welfare issues and worked to achieve strong policies to advance the well-being of animals. Our recommendations are demonstrably popular with voters and would make significant, much needed, improvements.



### 1. Mandatory Animal Welfare Labelling

**Introduce an “A-E” method-of-production welfare label for eggs, chicken and pork.** This labelling regime would help consumers to make more informed decisions about the animal welfare status of their purchases whilst combatting existing misleading labelling. It would allow farmers to more easily be compensated for their higher welfare production. And it would support domestic farmers by helping consumers to identify imports produced to animal welfare standards which would be illegal if produced in the UK.

- 97% of respondents to a [2021 Defra Call for Evidence](#) on labelling supported the idea of mandatory animal welfare labelling.
- DEFRA’s impact assessment found that the labelling scheme would provide a net benefit to society of approximately £140 million over 10 years.

**How: Implement the well-developed proposals from Defra’s May 2024 consultation by introducing secondary legislation under the Food Safety Act 1990, and providing a 12-18 month transition period for industry to update their labels.**

### 2. End the Cage Age

**End the Cage Age for layer hens and pigs.** Each year, approximately 8 million layer hens in the UK spend their lives in cages with little more than the space of an A4 piece of paper each, and around 200,000 mother pigs in the UK are confined in farrowing crates unable to turn around. These systems prevent animals from expressing normal patterns of behaviour and significantly compromise their welfare.

- Scotland recently [consulted on banning cages](#) for hens and the [Welsh Labour Manifesto](#) commits to continuing the Welsh Labour government’s work on caged farmed animals.
- A number of European nations have already banned these cages, leaving Britain falling behind.

- Polling from July 2022 by [Bryant Research Ltd](#) found that 94% of the British public consider it unacceptable for chickens to be kept in cages with 750 sq cm of space (i.e. to use enriched cages), and 96% said it was unacceptable to keep pigs in cages which prevent them from turning around for several weeks.
- DEFRA recently launched a £22 million laying hen housing grant scheme to support the costs of farmers in England who wish to transition to higher welfare housing.

**How: following a consultation, lay secondary legislation to implement a five-year transition period for moving to cage- and crate-free housing by amending The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007.**

### 3. Ban Low Welfare Imports

**Ban the importation of products produced using production methods that are illegal in the UK:** fur products, foie gras, eggs produced using battery cages, and pork produced using sow stalls.

- Farming bodies, including the NFU, strongly support a ban on low welfare imports, to stop British farmers being undercut.
- The public agrees: a [Bryant Research survey](#) from 2023 showed that 84% of people support putting restrictions or bans on lower-welfare imports that do not meet UK production standards.
- The most up-to-date legal opinions by trade lawyers confirm that these import bans are consistent with both the World Trade Organisation’s rules and the UK’s Free Trade Agreements. Other jurisdictions such as India and Israel, have already banned imports of fur and/or foie gras. These bans would be consistent with the UK’s existing legal requirement for all meat imported into the UK to meet our humane slaughter laws.

**How: introduce an animal welfare bill to ban the imports of these products and include an enabling power which allows other practices to be added in the future via secondary legislation.**



## 4. Strengthen the Hunting Act

**Strengthen the Hunting Act 2004 by closing loopholes which allow for the illegal hunting of foxes, deer and hares.**

The previous Labour government introduced the groundbreaking Hunting Act 2004. This legislation needs to be updated to stop trail hunting being used as a smokescreen for illegal hunts.

We are pleased to see Labour's manifesto contain an important commitment towards this end, by pledging to ban trail hunting. We endorse this commitment and also wish to see strict penalties enforced under the Hunting Act.

**How: introduce an animal welfare bill to amend the Hunting Act by introducing a new 'recklessness' clause to prevent trail hunts being used as cover for illegal hunts.**

## 5. Phase out Animal Testing

**Partner with scientists, industry and civil society to work towards the phasing out of animal testing within five years.**

Labour's general election manifesto commits to working towards the phasing out of animal testing and we encourage the Home Office to prepare a rigorous roadmap over the coming months setting out a pathway to achieving this goal.

We also wish to see a reinstatement of the full ban on animal testing for cosmetics to cover all ingredients used exclusively and predominantly for cosmetics. The ban on animal testing for cosmetics was introduced in 1998 by the Labour government and it is now time to strengthen this law in order to end unnecessary animal suffering.

**How: prepare a roadmap for the phasing out of animal testing within five years, in collaboration with scientists, industry, and civil society.**



## JOIN LAWS

LAWS is affiliated to the Labour Party as one of the official Socialist Societies.

By joining the Labour Animal Welfare Society, you'll be part of an organisation that works to improve the lives of animals by promoting the cause of animal welfare across the Labour Party.

Individual membership is now £20 per year, with a concession rate of £10. Organisations and Constituency Labour Parties can also join/affiliate to LAWS for £30 per year.

Join at [www.labouranimalwelfaresociety.org.uk](http://www.labouranimalwelfaresociety.org.uk) or scan below:



Get in touch at [labouranimalwelfaresociety@gmail.com](mailto:labouranimalwelfaresociety@gmail.com)



Pig in farrowing crate, UK. Credit: Tracks/CIWF 2019

**British people care about animals.** 71% of the British public believe that it is never acceptable to cause pain and suffering to animals (One Poll, 2022) and 69% describe themselves as animal lovers. (YouGov, 2022)