

animals count



MANIFESTO

**A BLUEPRINT FOR A BETTER
WORLD FOR EVERYONE**

KEY policies

- Eliminate the failed practice of animal experimentation
- Redirect subsidies from livestock and fisheries farming to plant-based agriculture
- Phase out farming practices with poor welfare consequences for animals
- Establish an 'NHS for animals' to better protect the health of our animal companions
- Act on the known link between animal abuse and domestic violence, with increased penalties for those convicted of animal cruelty
- Extend the current ban on hunting with greater enforcement and stronger penalties for abuse
- A ban on 'puppy farms' and a ban on the sale of animals in all retail stores
- Promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyle initiatives in schools, GP practices and the workplace
- Educate children about the importance about compassion and respect towards all living beings
- A national bank to protect citizens' savings from the destructiveness of the capital markets
- Constitutional reform with proportional representation and a fully-elected upper chamber
- Increase the minimum wage and make it available to everyone over 18 years of age
- Tax breaks for organisations committed to genuinely environmentally-friendly practices
- Increase Government support for research into and development of a 'post-carbon' economy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The economy is in a bad state. People are dissatisfied with the government and do not hold out much hope for any incoming government. Their democratic rights have been infringed, and initiatives to reform the political system are slow and often deliberately put on hold or shelved indefinitely. Whomsoever one votes for from the main three parties, nothing much will change in the first-past-the-post system. The result is indifference and even apathy; people would rather vote for a candidate in Big Brother than in a General Election...

1.1 Rethink, redirect, reward ...

Politicians have acted as a mouthpiece for unsustainable and inhumane industries, rather than speaking on behalf of the interests of world citizens, the environment and non-human animals (hereafter, 'animals'), and taking those issues seriously. Due to the economic crisis, jobs have been lost, people have been evicted from houses and many of us have less money to spend. But we should not lose perspective; we are still far better off than most of six billion people in the rest of the world. However, the financial sector, the media, the government and most political parties lead us to believe that the current situation is one that should cause the populace to feel fear, anxiety and dissatisfaction. The only way 'out', the leaders say, is economic growth through spending, and more spending.

Yet this idea is literally bankrupt, as we've seen. The credit crunch was the result of continuous unsustainable growth, at the expense of the earth's resources. We've become greedy and needy, and have caused a massive ecological crisis, which far outweighs the harms caused by the financial crisis, and which may never be reversed.

Our oceans and forests have been depleted. It is not an exaggeration to say that we've overfished the oceans to the point where they are nearly empty. Many fish species have become extinct; coral reefs are dying, and marine birds and mammals are struggling too. About one third of amphibian species are threatened with extinction. And about half of all primate species are becoming endangered.

And let's not forget the more than 60 billion animals bred, reared and slaughtered for human consumption. The livestock industry causes massive deforestation, pollution of the environment, and takes up enormous amounts of water and land use. All very unsustainable, cruel to animals, bad for people working in the farming sector, and disastrous for the billion people who live in chronic hunger around the world.

So could we still be happy if we started to consume a bit less in general, and less animal products in particular? The small Asian state of Bhutan uses Gross National Happiness instead of Gross Domestic Product. Money, and the things you can do with it, doesn't necessarily make people happy. Welfare and quality of life include feeling healthy, content, being appreciated and recognised for one's contribution to the family or wider society, a sense of security, enjoying freedom, exercising democratic rights, compassion, empathy, respect and so on. These are the core values that need to be integrated in education at all levels and fostered within the work place.

It will strengthen social cohesion; start to restore the balance with those sentient beings around us, and may reduce crime and violence. Scientific studies have demonstrated that there is a link between animal abuse and domestic violence. Although the issue is complex, it seems that perpetrators have often been abused themselves and that they lack the sense of empathy. In order to maintain some control over their lives, and regain self-esteem, they abuse other vulnerable beings: children, spouses, elderly people or animal companions. Early warning systems need to be in place and cooperation between organisations, social services and the police should be improved to address the root of the problem. At present, too much effort and too many resources are focused on crime and violence control rather than prevention.

These examples show that animal and environmental issues are at the heart of society. The economic crisis, food crisis, fuel crisis, animal disease crises and climate change are all interconnected. Animal issues are part and parcel of the economy, environment, education and other topics and not a fringe or single issue.

It is time to rethink how we treat each other, the environment and other non-human animals. Adjust our value system and adopt a fair and just society, with equal chances and opportunities for all but not at the expense of other sentient beings.

We should redirect resources and efforts away from unsustainable, inefficient and inhumane or exploitative industries and systems, to systems that show respect for others, and that will still be here for our children and grandchildren. The EU Common Agricultural Policy subsidy system, for example, should be redirected to sectors where demand is growing instead of supporting the dying dairy industry. Funds should also be redirected to preserve and expand our forests and other important ecological systems such as wetlands and marshes, which increase biodiversity. Planting trees is particularly important as they are natural CO2 sequesters.

And we need to reward and invest in initiatives that are in line with a sustainable, low carbon, humane and fair society For example, making renewable energy the

norm and not the exception; making all trade fair. Improving public transport; making recycling, re-using and reducing waste a normal habit; increasing the production of locally-produced items and encouraging local or domestic tourism; reducing production and consumption of animal products and rewarding sustainable plant-based agriculture.

In this manifesto we set out our policies and steps that the UK government and people can take together to fix the problems in ways that benefit everyone.

1.2 Our Vision

Treating people, animals, and the environment with respect is our key priority. Short-term profiteering on the back of subsidies, causing environmental and health destruction for which the perpetrator does not pay, should be replaced by truly sustainable policies, so that we cease travelling like a runaway train down the track to the point where, in a few decades, we will say, “Only when the last tree has died, the last river has been poisoned and the last fish has been caught, will we realize that we cannot eat money.” (Cree Proverb) To stop the train, reverse the damage and adopt a new model will require very radical but commonsense steps, as described in this manifesto.

To halt the destruction of the environment and the violation of the rights of other sentient beings, we need to begin by changing our civilisation, like previous social movements which ended the oppression of slaves, women, children and other races, to the benefit of society as a whole.

Animals Count represents a shift in political thinking and action, away from the short-term interests of corporate donors, to one in which the interests of the weakest beings are protected, along with what is truly for the long-term good of people and our planet.

Raising the bar for animals across politics. Where other Members of Parliament (MPs) may simply sign an Early Day Motion on animal issues, Animals Count will constantly take initiatives in this field. Animals Count is modelled on the successful Dutch Party for the Animals and is primarily dedicated to advancing the rights of all non-human animals, and to demonstrating that resolving such challenges also makes major contributions to reversing obesity and other diseases, reducing global warming and global hunger.

The UK must set the example to the world by leading on animal protection and changing our agricultural practices. Many policies and regulations will need to be strengthened, and new, sustainable and compassionate legislation must be introduced.

1.3 Advancing Animal Protection issues politically

Our first and most fundamental principle is that animal abuse must end and that animals are no longer regarded as property. The false perception that prosperity is associated with consumption of meat, dairy and eggs, also needs to end. The livestock industry is responsible for at least 18% of greenhouse gases (Steinfeld *et al.*, 2006)¹, and consumes one third of the world's grain and over 70% of the soya. These figures are set to double as the developing world aims to increase meat production to European and American levels. Animals Count promotes plant-based diets for the benefit of animals, human health and the protection of the environment.

Our second fundamental principle is that until the majority recognise the need for plant-based diets, whilst millions of animals are exploited every day and their interests are violated, the very least animals deserve is appropriate species-specific husbandry and care, based on the Five Freedoms. This does not in any way detract from our eventual aim to end all animal exploitation; it simply recognizes that in the meantime any improvement is better than none.

Animals Count's General election manifesto includes four strategies to advance our aims politically:

- (a) Ending harmful animal use
- (b) Implementing direct animal welfare improvements
- (c) Encouraging sustainable development activities that benefit the environment, animals and people
- (d) Supporting socially progressive policies on non-animal related issues

¹ Steinfeld, H. *et al.* (2006) Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations: www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.htm

2. ANIMALS IN FARMS

2.1 Animals kept for meat and other products

The UK's contribution to the EU budget and particularly the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is controversial. While improvements have been made, about 80% of the EU agenda is still occupied by, and around 40% of the EU budget is spent on, agriculture, particularly the intensive animal farming and fishing industries. This is extremely cruel to animals and wasteful. The waste dwarfs the bailout of the banks, and it is not a 'one-off'; it is ongoing and getting worse.

The question is not 'Do they have rights?', but 'Can they suffer?' As science progresses, we now know that animals do suffer in much the same way as humans. We know that like us, animals can experience profound joy and suffering. Why are some animals dinner, and others animal companions?

No one who has shared their home with a dog or cat would seriously consider killing them for food, fur or to test chemicals. Yet having grown up with fairy-tale farmyard books in schools and children's libraries, many people do not consider things done to animals that they have never known as individuals.

We can no longer justify keeping animals in small, barren cages and killing them, any more than we could justify doing the same things to other human beings. Animals Count believes in a UK where animals are not exploited for any purpose. In the interim, animal welfare improvements should be supported, as follows.

Ending animal farm systems with poor welfare consequences

- (a) Large scale, intensive farms have the worst animal welfare potential. The establishment and development of new intensive farms must be banned
- (b) farming systems with the worst welfare consequences should be phased out, for example by replacing intensive farming by small-scale, regionally-bound, higher welfare farming systems in which animals are able to express a full range of normal behaviour
- (c) farmers who are front-runners in making these changes should receive incentives, whilst those who resist transforming their intensive farming systems should be sanctioned
- (d) companies that do not comply with the present legislation on animal welfare should be sanctioned through fines and other penalties

- (e) best husbandry practice should become the norm, rather than a niche in the market
- (f) *foie gras* (goose/duck liver) production, import and trade should be banned
- (g) labelling of all food products should be mandatory, and should include information about animal welfare, use of natural resources, social conditions, impact on the natural environment, and food miles.

Farms with higher animal welfare standards are increasingly developing within the UK and the rest of Europe. It is important that we reform agriculture into a high quality sector in accordance with ecological principles. Conditions for farm animals should be continually raised and husbandry standards should at least include the following minimums:

- (a) chickens should have access to free range outdoor runs which include naturalistic shelters. Beak trimming should be prohibited
- (b) poultry farming should use natural chicken varieties farmed for both egg and meat production. This would eliminate the need for rendering or gassing of millions of one-day old male chicks within the egg production industry
- (c) pigs should not be tail-docked, teeth-clipped or castrated, especially without painkillers or anaesthetics. They should be kept on straw bedding and have access to enriched, outdoor areas, with the opportunity to root and access to a wallow
- (d) dairy cows should have access to outdoor areas, should be able to graze on pastures, have access to adequate shelter, and to comfortable bedding indoors
- (e) calves should be kept with their mothers until they separate naturally
- (f) breeding policies that focus on increasing production despite negative consequences for animal welfare (e.g. the extreme and unhealthy growth speed of broiler chickens and pigs; double-muscled beef cows who cannot give birth naturally, requiring caesarean sections) should be banned. Breeding policies should focus on improving welfare
- (g) unnatural and often painful methods to increase reproduction in

cows, such as embryo lavage, embryo transfer and hormonal fertility treatments, should be banned. Development of such methods should not be allowed if the integrity and the welfare of animals are adversely affected.

- (h) cloning of animals for production purposes should be prohibited. (See also Chapter 4 'Animals in laboratories').

Reducing live animal export

- (a) Animal journeys should be minimised, and limited to a maximum of two hours
- (b) transport of live animals overseas should be banned.
- (c) misleading information about the source of animal products should be prohibited
- (d) existing EU transport rules should be strictly monitored and enforced

Curtailling animal disease

Large-scale farming establishments should be prohibited, not only because of animal welfare issues, but because they substantially increase transmission risks and susceptibility to diseases, some of which may also be dangerous for people (zoonotic diseases). Instead, farmers should be encouraged to transition to small-scale, well-managed farming systems, which are more conducive to the development of disease resistance.

Large-scale destruction of healthy animals during disease outbreaks should end, and where applicable be replaced by a targeted vaccination strategy and other appropriate preventative health and welfare measures. The European non-vaccination policy (which disallows preventative vaccinations for major diseases such as foot and mouth, bluetongue, etc.) should be abolished.

During outbreaks of non-fatal diseases, infected animals should be isolated from those not infected, and appropriately treated, unless their suffering is sufficiently severe, and prognosis for recovery sufficiently poor, as to justify humane euthanasia.

To prevent the development of antibiotic resistance in humans and animals, administration of antibiotics in animals should be limited to genuine treatment of animal patients. They should not be used as growth promoters, or used prophylactically for long periods.

Slaughter

Hundreds of millions of animals are slaughtered within the UK each year. Apart from the ethical questions surrounding killing healthy animals to satisfy our taste preferences, many animals suffer prior or during slaughter.

Slaughter should be conducted as close as possible to the point of production.

All slaughter without prior stunning should be banned, as should importation and trade of products thereby produced.

2.2 Fishing and fish farming

Fish numbers continue to fall. For example, there are now only one third as many cod in the North Sea as in 1975. The Bluefin tuna species is at risk of extinction, herring and other fish species are also threatened with extinction. Furthermore, fish suffer the cruellest catching and killing methods. Yet the welfare of fish is rarely considered.

Restoring marine life

- (a) Fish should not be caught in areas where stocks are low. Marine sanctuaries should be created
- (b) a major European network of nature reserves at sea should be developed by strictly enforcing the Birds and Habitats Directive and the OSPAR Convention
- (c) deep sea fishing should be banned
- (d) destructive fishing methods, such as trawling, should be banned
- (e) fishing subsidies should be abolished. European funds should be redirected into a social plan to retrain fishermen and redeploy them within sustainable sectors.

By-catches and controls

- (a) By-catches in fishing should end.
- (b) Whilst fishing continues, only fishing methods that prevent marine mammals being trapped in fishing nets should be used.

- (c) Penalties for fishermen violating conservation regulations should increase significantly.

Methods of killing fish

- (a) Fish should be protected from suffering before being killed. Fish should be included within EU Directives on killing and slaughter of animals.
- (b) Alternative killing methods that reduce pain and stress prior to death should be used.

Farmed fish

Fish farming, like all intensive farming, uses several kilos of feed (in this case, other fish and crustaceans), for each kilo of product produced. Like all intensive farming it is extraordinarily inefficient and wasteful. Vast areas of marine ecosystems and mangrove forests are being damaged due to the large-scale harvesting of fish and crustaceans as feed for farmed fish. Fish farming should therefore be banned.

2.3 Animals kept and killed for their fur

Although breeding animals for fur is prohibited in the UK, across Europe millions of foxes, chinchillas, rabbits, mink and other animals are kept in tiny cages and farmed for their fur. Some of these animals would naturally roam many miles each day. This is somewhat equivalent to confining a human athlete in a toilet on a wire mesh floor, with three other people, to produce a product that nobody really needs.

We believe that the trade and import of all fur products into Europe should be banned, and that in the meantime, the existing regulations should be strictly monitored and enforced, such as the import ban on dog and cat, and seal fur.

2.4 City farms and sanctuaries, large animal companions, and working animals

- (a) Large animals are sometimes kept at city farms, as companion animals or working animals. City farms should operate as animal sanctuaries, where animals are not sent to slaughterhouses.

- (b) Allowing rescued animals to live out their lives should be the main focus of city farms, together with education.
- (c) Those who keep farm animals for non-production purposes should have an ownership licence (see chapter 3 'Animal Companions').
- (d) Sanctuaries caring for retired working animals and rescued farm animals should be financially supported.

3. ANIMAL COMPANIONS

3.1 Abandoned animals

Thousands of dogs, cats and other animal companions are neglected and abandoned across the UK each year. Stray cats particularly, may suffer from hunger and thirst, pain, injury, disease, discomfort and fear. They are usually not neutered, and reproduce rapidly when resources allow, further exacerbating the problem.

Abandoned cats and dogs are confiscated by authorities or handed in by owners no longer willing or able to care for their animals. Animals are kept in shelters before being killed, due to lack of suitable homes. Yet certain individuals continue to profit from the commercial breeding and sale of animal companions. 'Puppy farms' within the UK and other European countries are establishments where bitches are continuously bred, which often impairs their health. Living conditions and preventative healthcare standards are often poor.

Animals Count would seek to:

- (a) Introduce a UK-wide animal abandonment prevention plan.
- (b) Ensure that local authorities are fully equipped to house and adequately care for abandoned animals. Each area should have at least one Animal Protection Officer with expertise in animal welfare and powers of seizure, who can investigate complaints, and enforce the licensing system.
- (c) Regulate breeders and breeding facilities.
- (d) Strengthen the Animal Welfare Act, improve Border control (on animals traded into the UK), carry out spot checks, and increase penalties for offenders.

3.2 Animal companions in the home

Animals continue to be regarded as 'property' within the law, and animal neglect and abuse remains widespread, even though the UK Animal Welfare Act 2006 includes a 'duty to care'. UK animal charities are frequently required to provide the material and financial resources for interventions – including prosecution of animal abusers – without governmental assistance. Animals Count believes more resources should be available for law enforcement. The Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) needs a rethink, and a licensing system should be introduced.

The Dangerous Dogs Act (1991)

Animals Count believes that the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA) was rushed through Parliament in response to a child being seriously bitten by a dog, which received widespread media attention. Nearly 20 years later, many organisations realise that the Act is ineffective, costly and unworkable, and the number of dog bites is increasing every year.

Together with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) Animals Count is very disappointed with the response the BVA received at their recent Parliamentary briefing that 'No government will give Parliamentary time for new legislation on dangerous dogs'. The BVA campaigns for repeal and reform of the DDA, and we agree.

A huge number of animals, pitbull-type dogs in particular, are euthanised by shelters every year, due to lack of rehoming opportunities. Most dogs bite out of fear and few are aggressive biters. It is the irresponsible owners, some of whom deliberately train animals to fight and attack, that we need to target. 'Dangerous' status dogs, or 'dogs as weapons' are considered fashionable within certain subcultures. A wider social approach is required to address such antisocial behaviour, including humane education. In addition, Animals Count seeks a compulsory identification and registration scheme, tougher penalties for animal abuse and strict enforcement, and more local council animal welfare officers on the street. Breeders need to be regulated too. Human and animal agencies need to collaborate to tackle these issues. These problems affect both animals and people, and the root causes must be addressed via coordinated strategies.

Animals Count believes that the specific breeds mentioned in the DDA are arbitrary. Whilst it may be true that the breeds listed are more frequently owned by people more likely to engage in unacceptable social behaviour—leading to safety risks to other animals and the public—other dog breeds may bite as well. Rottweilers, for example, may be high up in the bite index. In fact, any breed can be selectively bred (and trained) to become more aggressive. A breed-specific ban is undesirable. However, compulsory individual aggressive dog behaviour tests, and a ban on breeding dogs that do not meet certain criteria (e.g. dogs that fail behaviour tests), are likely to be more effective.

Animal care

Animals provide us with invaluable companionship. Despite this, when they are ill or injured, too often they receive inadequate support. Although very basic emergency treatment is available from veterinarians free of charge, and although charities can assist some guardians unable to afford ongoing veterinary care, far too many animals fail to receive the care they deserve because of financial limitations of guardians, and limitations on available charitable support.

Euthanasia or inadequate care frequently result.

Similarly, financial constraints, and lack of knowledge of, or interest in, responsible pet care, result in many animals being denied the benefits of basic preventative health care measures, such as vaccination, parasite control, dental care, neutering and microchip identification.

Animals Count believes that:

- (a) The provision of a basic national animal health care system comparable to the NHS should be established. The system would seek to utilise existing private veterinary clinics and hospitals, and charities, by providing government funding for basic and emergency services. Rescue centres, rehabilitation and re-homing facilities for domestic and wild animals would also receive subsidies.
- (b) A companion animal licensing system should be established. Mandatory requirements would include minimum age limits (e.g. 18 years of age) for licence-holders, and the successful completion of a responsible animal care certificate (as is the case, for example, in Switzerland), appropriate to the species in question.
- (c) Annual maintenance of the licence would require mandatory neutering of cats and dogs by sexual maturity or earlier, other than in very special circumstances; compliance with basic preventative healthcare measures such as vaccination and parasite control; annual veterinary checkups; mandatory identification and registration, through both externally-visible identification and microchipping; and maintenance of companion animal insurance designed to fund unexpected medical or surgical expenses. Limitations would be imposed on numbers of animals that may be kept at each address, related to type of housing.
- (d) Legislation and regulations against animal neglect and abuse should be strengthened, through a range of measures, including:
 - (i) increased powers of inspection and seizure for police and licensed inspectors,
 - (ii) mandatory completion by offenders of a responsible animal care certificate (see above) appropriate to the species in question, regardless of any prior certification,

- (iii) increased penalties for offenders, including imposing relevant community service.
- (e) Resources for the implementation and enforcement of such legislation and regulations against animal neglect and abuse should be increased.
- (f) Organisations and animal shelters that conduct inspections, animal seizures, provide shelters for animals, or prosecute animal abusers, should receive adequate government funding. Statutory regulation of animal sanctuaries should be introduced.
- (g) Whilst companion animal overpopulation persists, breeding of cats and dogs should be prohibited other than in exceptional circumstances. Breeding of companion animals to meet breed standards, or for other purposes, that result in hereditary anatomical, physiological or other impairments likely to be contrary to good welfare, must always be prohibited. All breeding establishments must be independently inspected and tightly regulated.
- (h) A complete ban on the sale of animals in shops of any kind should be introduced.
- (i) Establishments selling animals should be subjected to mandatory regulation in accordance with best practice principles, including with respect to stocking densities, health and husbandry standards, independent, unannounced inspections, and a range of penalties that could include revocation of licences, fines and custodial sentences, where violations are apparent.

3.3 "Exotic" animals in captivity

Non-domesticated species also suffer as human companions. The stresses such animals endure during capture from the wild, transportation and confinement, and poor husbandry conditions at markets or in pet shops, result in a high incidence of major health and welfare problems, and premature deaths. Furthermore, wildlife trading contributes to decreases in wild populations of many birds, mammals, reptiles and (ornamental) fish.

Animals Count believes that only animals included on a list of species that can adapt to captivity should be kept as companion animals. The list would be formulated in accordance with the biological needs of each species, and the UK

Animal Welfare Act, which stipulates a duty to adequately care for animals. The keeping of unlisted animals as companion animals would be prohibited.

The list should be more stringent than the list of species for which licences can currently be obtained under the UK Dangerous Wild Animals Act. For example, monkeys should not be included, as they make unsuitable animal companions.

3.4 Human-animal relationships

Humans may also suffer as a result of poor policies on animals. For example, many social housing corporations and care homes do not allow companion animals. Yet some residents live in relative isolation due to reduced social networks, and for these people companion animals may be extremely important.

Animals Count believes that companion animals should be permitted within social housing corporations and care homes, providing their own needs can be satisfactorily met.

Sociological evidence has demonstrated strong links between domestic violence and cruelty towards animals. Children who are cruel to animals in childhood may progress to being violent toward people, as adults. Recognition of such a connection is of use to social workers and others trying to protect children and adults from potentially violent individuals. By acting promptly on cases of animal abuse, it may be possible to prevent further acts of violence towards people or animals. Additionally, animal abuse should be more seriously considered as a crime in its own right.

Hence, Animals Count believes that social and healthcare workers and other authorities should be educated about the animal-human violence link, encouraged to cooperate better and required to report suspected animal abuse to appropriate authorities, in the hope of mitigating potential future abuse of animals or people.

4. ANIMALS IN LABORATORIES

Enormous numbers of animals are killed or harmed within fundamental and clinically-applied biomedical research, toxicity testing, and biomedical education. Over 3.7 million procedures involved animals for these purposes in the UK in 2008 – the most recent year for which figures are available. However, a substantial body of large-scale systematic, unbiased reviews published within scientific journals have clearly demonstrated that the human clinical and biomedical utility of invasive animal experiments is generally poor.

The costs of such research in terms of animal, human and financial resources is usually very high. Animals are sentient beings who often suffer in laboratory environments and during scientific procedures. Accordingly, such experiments cannot normally be justified on a cost-benefit basis. In addition, very strong arguments proposed by philosophers and others assert that animal interests deserve serious consideration, independent of any possible human value, and that animals should not be treated as disposable tools to further human goals, which range from the trivial to the serious.

Large-scale scientific reviews have also described the ongoing development of alternative methodologies within biomedical research, toxicity testing, and education. A substantial body of educational studies have clearly established that students from virtually all educational disciplines using humane learning methodologies nearly always achieve learning outcomes at least equivalent – and often superior – to those achieved through harmful animal use.

Animal use within the UK is regulated by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. In the EU animal use is governed by European Directive 86/609/EEC on the Protection of Animals used for Experimental and Other Scientific Purposes, which is currently undergoing formal review. Although the review is incomplete, EU parliamentarians recently voted to end the necessity for ethical review and licensing of most experimental protocols, to allow almost unlimited animal re-use, to allow severe and prolonged suffering, and to allow greater use of primates.

Accordingly, Animals Count seeks:

- (a) An immediate ban on the harmful use of all primate species.
- (b) An immediate ban on the genetic manipulation of animals (including cloning).
- (c) An immediate ban on the use of animals for xenotransplantation.
- (d) A ban on all harmful use of animals within biomedical research,

toxicity testing and education. Only non-harmful use would be permitted. Examples include non-invasive observational or behavioural studies of domesticated species, or non-domesticated species within sanctuaries or the wild; the education of students via participation in humane handling; beneficial clinical procedures on genuine animal patients; and experimental treatment of animal patients, genuinely suffering from severe, naturally-occurring disease or injury, when conventional treatment is not effective.

- (e) Increased funding for the further development, scientific validation and implementation of alternative methodologies.

In the interim, the following policies should be implemented:

- (f) Immediate, quantitative, binding targets for reductions in animal use with the aim of eventually replacing all harmful animal use with non-harmful or non-animal alternatives.
- (g) Mandatory, independent ethical review of all experimental protocols as a condition of licensing, with ample opportunity for prior, independent and public scrutiny of such protocols.
- (h) Mandatory retrospective evaluation to assess the degree to which experimental objectives were successfully met, the extent to which animals suffered, and to help inform both future research and further experimental licensing decisions.
- (i) Mandatory compliance as a condition of experimental funding, licensing, and publication of results, with a range of best practice standards, and each of the 3Rs: replacement, reduction and refinement of animal use, before and during experiments. These would include: minimum standards relating to animal sourcing, housing, environmental enrichment, opportunities for social interaction for social species, appropriate use of anaesthetics and analgesics (pain-killers), animal handling, non-invasive endpoints, and statistical input during experimental design.
- (j) Mandatory prompt, public sharing of all experimental results, to minimize experimental duplication.
- (k) Increased, compulsory training and continuing professional development in experimental best practice standards and alternative methodologies, for all animal researchers and technicians.

- (l) The provision of independently-scrutinized sanctuaries, maintained to high welfare standards, funded by industries and sectors using animals, for those animals retired from laboratory animal use, in which such animals shall be housed for the remainder of their natural lives.

5. ANIMALS IN ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORT

5.1 Traditional use of animals and “bloodsports”

The ‘traditional’ use of animals in ‘entertainment’ often causes severe suffering and death, and is absolutely unnecessary. Such harmful animal use for entertainment or non-essential luxuries is morally bankrupt, and should be banned. In the UK, hundreds of thousands of people can easily obtain a licence to stalk and kill deer and hunt or shoot other species. Such ‘recreational’ activities have no place in a civilised society.

The cruelty of bloodsports such as various forms of hunting, hare coursing, and bullfighting is obvious, and these practices are not ethically justifiable. As a purported measure to control populations they are discredited since hunters actually breed foxes who are used to train the hounds. Hounds are routinely killed if they show insufficient interest in hunting and once they are no longer young and fast. Whilst banned in law in the UK with overwhelming parliamentary and public support, hunting with hounds continues in practice and prosecutions are rare. Other forms of hunting, such as ‘canned hunting’ and pheasant shoots (involving animals kept in tiny cages, usually for long periods, and released just before being shot), are equally disturbing and unnecessary.

The aforementioned ‘violence link’ (in 3.4 above) is sometimes evident in children and adults who hunt and kill animals for fun. These people may be desensitised to violence towards animals and may display more aggressive behaviour towards other people (e.g. peaceful hunt monitors).

In addition, some companion animals become victims of shooting accidents (or even deliberate acts of cruelty through misuse of guns), and occasionally people are accidentally shot.

Angling is equally ethically unjustifiable. If fish could scream, angling would be banned very rapidly. Unfortunately, however, these intelligent, feeling creatures cannot vocalise when in pain.

Therefore, Animals Count seeks a ban on all hunting ‘for sport’:

- (a) All bloodsports should be banned, without loopholes. The existing Hunting Act should be strictly enforced and tightened.
- (b) Organisations that promote the use of guns to schoolchildren should be banned.
- (c) Wild animal population control (the necessity of which is frequently questionable) should be carried out by trained,

authorised, professional wildlife officers, with invasive methods avoided at all costs.

- (d) Harmful animal use should no longer be allowed within any type of art, fashion, cultural exhibition or entertainment.

5.2 Racing animals

The greyhound and horse racing industries frequently ignore animal welfare regulations, and thousands of animals suffer and die each year on and off the tracks. These industries are part of the betting industry, and frequently lead to unethical practices.

Most people regard these races as a harmless or natural sport, which the animals enjoy, but they are far removed from natural canine and equine behaviour. Approximately 18,000 foals are born into the closely-related British and Irish racing industries each year, yet only around 40% go on to become racers. Those horses who do not make the grade may be slaughtered for meat, or repeatedly change hands in a downward spiral of neglect. Of those horses who do go on to race, around 400 are raced to death every year.

Similar to the greyhound industry, in which thousands of dogs are raced to death or discarded, commercial horse racing is a ruthless industry motivated by financial gain and prestige.

Accordingly, Animals Count seeks a ban on betting on racing animals.

5.3 Circuses

The use of (exotic) animals in circuses results in widespread suffering due to appalling living and transport conditions, inadequate husbandry methods and cruel training techniques. Several very successful and impressive European circuses that do not use animals already exist.

Hence, Animals Count believes that the use of animals in circuses (including 'domestic' animals) should be banned.

5.4 Zoos

The implicit educational message conveyed by keeping animals in zoos is that

keeping wild animals in small, inadequate enclosures, sometimes without other animals of their own kind, is justified to entertain us. However, many animals suffer due to not being able to display normal behaviour. They often develop behavioural problems (e.g. boredom, 'pacing' or excessive aggression) and experience stress. As a result they may also be more susceptible to certain diseases. Learning about wild animals can be achieved without seeing live animals confined in unnatural enclosures. Documentaries, wildlife magazines, the internet and other sources provide excellent learning materials that are not ethically problematic. Zoos do not teach respect for life, and can no longer be justified.

The EU Zoo Directive, although a very slight improvement on the UK Zoo Licensing Act 1981, does not go far enough in protecting animals in zoos. Zoos still take animals from the wild. For example, throughout the 1990s over 1,000 elephants were taken from the wild and sold to zoos. Over 70% of elephants in European zoos today were wild-caught.

Existing zoos should not expand, and new zoos should not be established. The worst zoos should be closed immediately, with remaining animals either being placed within sanctuaries or sent to zoos with higher welfare standards. The higher-standard zoos should transition towards non-animal zoos, or be turned into animal sanctuaries.

Animals Count believes that:

- (a) State-of-the-art non-animal zoos should be established in the UK, and existing zoos should be turned into animal sanctuaries where all animals are allowed to live out their natural lives. Zoos, aquaria and 'entertainment' establishments, which have animals on display should be phased out, and new establishments should be prohibited.
- (b) Existing enclosures should be improved to ensure compliance with the highest welfare standards. Enclosures that house species, which are unfit for captivity, should be closed.
- (c) Breeding of species kept in zoos that are not included within conservation or reintroduction programmes should be banned.
- (d) Conservation programmes in native habitats, rather than captivity, should be supported to mitigate habitat destruction by urban development and farming.

6. ANIMALS IN THE WILD

6.1 Wildlife

Ending the destruction of wildlife habitats, and subsequent extinction of endangered species, should be considered a top priority by government. UK coastal areas and marine reserves are starting to receive more attention; however, this should be extended to all areas of ecological importance. And while the UK position is anti-whaling, we must ensure that other European countries do not support any whaling, seal clubbing or shark-finning activities either.

The corrupt and lucrative trade in live exotic animals or their products, resulting in the decimation of species, should be monitored more strictly, and penalties for offenders should increase. Wildlife crime units at borders should be expanded.

Animals Count believes that:

- (a) The UK should continue the strengthening and enforcement of international agreements on the protection of endangered species, and the restriction of trade in these animals (CITES) in order to end large-scale trafficking in wild animals. Additional control at borders is essential, and international cooperation and integration of data on wildlife crime should be enhanced.
- (b) Wild animals should be protected within their countries of origin, and local authorities should be supported in combating illegal trade.
- (c) Organisations that confiscate (wild) animals, provide sanctuary, or prosecute animal abusers should receive government funding.
- (d) All whaling activities should be rejected. The UK should push for a total ban, and should take measures against countries that do not respect the current moratorium.
- (e) The UK should find humane solutions to human-animal conflicts due to habitat loss and migration of wild animals into urban areas. Animals that cause excessive damage should be dealt with humanely, and never be hunted by people who enjoy killing animals.

6.2 Nature and biodiversity

Worldwide, large areas of tropical rain forest and other vulnerable areas are cleared each year to grow animal feed, further increasing the impact of CO₂ emissions, due to the diminishing number of trees that can absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere. This is also resulting in massive biodiversity loss. Within the UK, primary forests and other biologically diverse ecosystems, and many animal species that live in these habitats, have disappeared at a very rapid rate, due to human encroachment, fragmentation, hunting and climate change.

Nature restoration and the promotion of biodiversity are vital to facilitate the return of animals to their original habitats. Conservation of wildlife ought to be a high priority, and the extinction of plant and animal species should be halted wherever possible.

In many parts in the UK green spaces and places are isolated patches scattered across regions. An intelligent ecological plan, linking these patches via ecological 'corridors', should be developed to facilitate movement of wild animals.

Adequate rubbish disposal is of utmost importance to keep the number of certain (unwanted) wild animal species down, and to prevent birds and other animals from ingesting or becoming caught in plastic and other rubbish. Such measures will enhance the environment for everyone.

Accordingly, Animals Count believes that:

- (a) An action plan containing tangible objectives and (financial) measures should be created to effectively halt the loss of biodiversity. Local and national authorities should be held accountable on an annual basis for the achievement of intermediate goals.
- (b) UK conservation programmes in-situ (i.e. within natural habitats, rather than captivity) should be funded to restore natural habitats and to offset urban environmental impact.
- (c) Nature reserves, parks and green corridors should be preserved and expanded, to facilitate green recreation and wildlife protection.
- (d) Farmers should be encouraged and supported to return some of their land to wildlife and recreation.
- (e) Local and national authorities should be required to take rapid

and effective measures to protect surface and groundwater.

- (f) An active policy strategy should be developed to reduce the carbon footprint of UK citizens.
- (g) Importation of products such as unsustainably-managed timber and palm oil, which adversely affect biodiversity internationally, should be banned.
- (h) Natural reserves and ecosystems protection programmes in sensitive parts of the world should be financially supported by the European Union.

7. ENVIRONMENT

7.1 Climate change

Climate change is the new buzz word in mainstream politics. Climate change affects us all, but particularly the most vulnerable: those in developing countries, animals and plants. Whilst the UK Climate Change Bill includes a target of a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050, others are calling for 90% reductions. The measures currently proposed to achieve even a 60% reduction fall far short of what is needed. Without major societal changes, this target will never be met.

Farmed animals produce more greenhouse gases (18%) than all forms of transport in the world combined (13.5%). Animals in intensive farms in Europe require feed high in protein, particularly soya, to fuel rapid growth and production of meat, milk and eggs. Most of this feed comes from huge soya plantations in Latin America. Destroying the forests removes the trees that were a carbon sink, in order to fuel the livestock industry, which is itself a huge source of the global warming gases methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide. The adverse environmental impacts are compounded.

Hence Animals Count believes that:

- (a) The importation of grain and soya as animal feed, and feed from cleared rainforest land, should be banned.
- (b) Compliance by suppliers with relevant animal protection and environmental regulations, and best practice standards, should be ensured through regular, unannounced, independent quality control audits.
- (c) The intensive livestock farming industries should more accurately contribute towards the costs of repairing the damage they cause (polluter-pays principle).
- (d) Pollution controls should be effectively enforced and penalties for violators should increase.

In addition, Animals Count would:

- (e) Increase Government funding for research into and development of a "post-carbon, "post-petroleum" economy to ensure that the United Kingdom is well placed to manage the vital changes required in our economy due to the inevitable depletion of petroleum resources. Oil reserves will not last forever and it is

already becoming increasingly more expensive and technically more complex to access those reserves still remaining. We need to plan now and engage in intensive research and development of renewable power resources. This development also includes phasing out nuclear and charcoal-fired power stations.

7.2 Deforestation and the poor

While the global human population is expected to rise from 6.1 billion to 9 billion by 2050, world meat production is predicted to double, as the rest of the world - particularly China and India – attempts to use rising incomes to emulate the consumption levels evident within Europe and America.

1kg of intensively-reared beef requires about 7kg of animal feed and 15,500 litres of water. It produces as much pollution as driving for three hours, while leaving all the lights switched on at home. Land used for grazing already covers more than a quarter of the planet's available ice-free surface. An average of 6 million hectares of forest – an area twice the size of Belgium – and 7 million hectares of other land, have been converted to agriculture every year for the last 40 years.

Demand for soya is set to double by 2050. Forests and other precious wildlife habitats are being destroyed to make way for crops for animal feed, pasture for grazing, and unsustainable palm oil plantations. Indigenous people also lose their territories. Rural communities are being forced off their land, and small-scale farmers are forced out by large agro-businesses.

An Indian or other farmer in the developing world owns, on average, no more than two acres of land, yet manages to feed a family of five, with no government subsidy. In the USA, EU or Australia, each cow needs about 25 acres of land to produce its food - enough for ten farming families in the developing world. According to the UN's food and agriculture programme, 854 million people do not have sufficient food for an active and healthy life, and this is rising with the rising price of food, in a world that is actually bursting with food.

Knowing what we do, how can we say that it is enough just to change from intensive animal farming to organic animal farming, which uses no less land, rather than simply eating plant foods directly?

Hence, Animals Count would:

- (a) Support planet-friendly farming, through the promotion of agriculture that takes account of food security, climate and biodiversity protection, rural employment, animal welfare and human health.

- (b) Reduce the use of chemicals and pesticides.
- (c) Make European companies, including supermarkets, accountable for the impact on people and the environment abroad.
- (d) End export subsidies for dumping surpluses and waste abroad.
- (e) Support a reduction in meat consumption

7.3 Farming

Unlike some environmental organisations, which promote organic animal farming as the ideal, Animals Count sees this as like putting a bandage on a bullet wound. We propose the only solution that ends all farm animal suffering and uses the minimal amount of land, and that is to eventually stop eating animal products completely. This is the only way to halt and reverse rainforest destruction, and guarantee food security for the whole world, by dealing with the root cause, which is increasing demand for livestock feed.

The relevant human health, animal welfare and environmental concerns are increasingly appreciated by a growing number of people, and this will lead to a slow decline in the consumption of meat in particular. Less meat means less deforestation, less greenhouse gases and less pollution. In India, for example, about half of the households do not eat meat, fish or eggs, and the average consumption of meat is only a few kilograms per person per year. India is self-sufficient in food – for the moment – and even exports soya.

The Common Agricultural Policy is due for a full reform in 2013. It must deliver support for farming that is in the long-term public interest, to fulfil its original purpose of providing a sustainable and secure future for food production within Europe. At the same time it must now also ensure equitable use of land and natural resources across the globe, so that EU production and consumption does not damage the environment and communities overseas.

Hence, Animals Count would plan for a rapid reduction of 50% in UK meat production and consumption. This could mean everyone eating half as much meat, or 50% of people eating no meat, or somewhere in between. Animals Count would encourage a reduction in consumer demand for meat and dairy, and increased demand for plant based options, through, for example:

- (a) Awareness-raising programmes.
- (b) Removal of VAT exemptions for animal products (which are luxury items).

- (c) Change public procurement policy to ensure healthy, sustainable, plant-based options are always available on menus at public institutions.
- (d) Re-direct funds away from meat and dairy production, to encourage livestock-free farming, including production of high-protein crops, such as peas, beans and lupins.
- (e) Subsidise organic vegetable farming.

8. ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

We need to rethink the very economic system that has been the engine not for growth but for unsustainable social debt, the depletion of the earth's resources and appalling environmental destruction. The "credit crunch" has demonstrated, in stark and dramatic terms, that the orthodoxy of unrestricted, unrestrained monetarism, with the pursuit of profit at all costs, no matter what the cost to others, is a bankrupt system that has failed the vast majority of people in this country.

The British government needs pushing in the direction of sustainable and environmentally-friendly businesses because all parties (whether Labour or Conservative), have promoted short-term, 'get-rich-quick' policies, especially since 1979, which have created illusions of prosperity, followed by grim recessions. Despite the fact that almost all the British state's saleable assets (BP, electricity, water, gas companies etc) have been sold off since then, Britain's national debt is now back to being as high as it was in the late 1970s – but without the assets the country then had.

We need to better protect the savings and wealth of everyone in our community. To encourage such a vital change in our economy we would:

- (a) Promote sustainable, environmentally-friendly businesses generally, for the long-term benefit of society.
- (b) Establish a state bank that pays a basic savings rate on deposits of three per cent and loans to creditors at four per cent. The difference to be used to pay salary and other business costs, which is to be run as a service to citizens and not for profit.
- (c) Remove all subsidies for livestock and fisheries farming industries. These businesses are unsustainable, both financially and environmentally. There should be no state funding for such essentially unnecessary and failing industries that are causing profound damage to the environment. Those businesses and individuals currently working in those industries should be encouraged, through state funding of training and new business ventures, to move into genuinely sustainable and environmentally friendly industries.
- (d) Provide direct funding for new businesses, product development and manufacturing by creating special government bonds that will be available to pension funds and other long-term investors.

We need to reduce privatisation of public services. We need to recognise that essential public services, such as healthcare, education, transport infrastructure,

gas and electricity supplies are not the same as for-profit, speculative private business ventures. Public services are vital services to the citizens of this country, and the relentless focus on profit and the privatisation of many of them with ever-increasing private sector involvement has damaged these services and caused them to become less efficient in the services and support they offer to the people who rely on them.

In order to make employment fair for all, we would:

- (e) Increase the top tax rate to 50 per cent for those earning more than £100,000. Those who benefit most from the wealth created in the United Kingdom need to give more back to the society that has provided them with those benefits and the security and opportunities that arise from substantial private wealth. At the same time we would raise the tax threshold at which tax becomes payable to £10,000 to better protect the earnings of the lower paid.
- (f) Increase the minimum wage to £6.50 per hour and make it available to all over 18, ending the unnecessary and unjustifiable discrimination against young people in the workplace.
- (g) Introduce a maximum wage, whereby no member of an organisation can earn greater than 50 times more than the lowest-paid worker in that organisation. This is a policy that has already been introduced voluntarily (in various forms) by co-operative and true partnership organisations (such as The John Lewis Partnership) with no adverse impact on productivity, competitiveness or profitability – in fact, it promotes all of those measures for judging the value of an enterprise. This would further encourage wage growth amongst the lower-paid and end the "rush to the top" of salaries at executive level and re-establish a more reasonable earnings link between the lowest and highly paid in our society.

The United Kingdom needs to be less focused on The City of London for the support of its economy. We have been too dependent upon the financial services sector at the expense of a too-small manufacturing base to sustain the economy during recent recessions. We would:

- (h) Support a broader employment programme with greater diversity of job opportunities will protect the United Kingdom more effectively from the pressures of a globalised economic environment.
- (i) Streamline an effective programme of registration for employment even whilst applications for residence in the United Kingdom are in process. This will reduce the potential for abuse and exploitation of workers in and their dependency on the "black economy" and increase tax receipts by providing access to the legal economy and protection of these workers

with full employment rights.

We would further:

- (j) Encourage and advance the availability of apprenticeships in manufacturing and other trades to broaden and diversify employment opportunities for young people leaving education, especially those for whom the formal academic route would not make the most effective use of their talents and skills.
- (k) Improve flexible working (including more part-time jobs) at the same time ensuring full employment rights for all workers.
- (l) Ensure the basic right to union membership and participation in all workplaces. No employer allowed to ban union membership and activity.
- (m) Provide statutory time available to employees to take time off from work to deal with the death of a spouse, parent or child up to a maximum of ten days without incurring financial penalty from their employers or having to allocate holiday entitlement to such time off.
- (n) Cap the maximum bonus payable to employees within the financial services industry whose businesses have been in receipt of taxpayer-funded financial support.
- (o) Increase the penalty applied to businesses that fail to adhere to all tax rules and reduce the legal loopholes available to businesses to avoid paying due tax on their business conducted within the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom.
- (p) Demand greater transparency regarding the residency of high net worth individuals, their business conducted in the United Kingdom and their tax due and payable to the Treasury.

8.2 Economy and agriculture

It is not generally known that 40-50% of all cereals are not eaten by humans, but by livestock. For soya the figure rises to 75%. It takes 7kg of corn and soya beans to make just 1kg of beef. Vast areas of former rainforest land are cleared to grow the feed crops necessary to produce meat. That is a highly inefficient way of producing food. The soya is mostly imported from countries such as Brazil, which has the biggest soya export market in the world. Most of that soya is being produced in very environmentally sensitive areas, including the Amazon rainforest and woodland savannah. This is an ecological disaster; and a much

bigger long-term concern than the current global economic crisis. As well as being crucial for biodiversity, rainforests are also an important carbon sink, trapping CO₂ that otherwise contributes to global warming.

The costs of animal products are artificially lowered through the provision of subsidies to farmers. These subsidies were meant to guarantee farm income, but have actually resulted in surpluses, and hence price collapses. Without surpluses, prices would rise and subsidies would no longer be necessary. Farmers are trapped in a system that requires even further intensification and cost reduction so that they do not run at a loss.

Worldwide livestock farming is set to double to meet growing global demand, as developing countries aspire to western levels of consumption. 1.4 billion cows eat more plant-based food than all the people of the world combined, yet only 10-15% of what they eat is turned into food for humans. Every cow receives a subsidy of approximately 2 euros a day, which is more money than half the population of the developing world have to live on. Ending subsidies will save taxpayers money as their money will no longer be spent subsidising methods, which bring no real benefit to anyone – merely a short-term benefit to the producer, and most of all the retailers.

Hence, Animals Count would:

- (a) End all subsidies for animal farming and fisheries.
- (b) Tax the production and sale of foods linked to pollution and declining health, in accordance with the 'polluter pays' principle, to partially compensate for the burden they impose on environmental and public healthcare systems.
- (c) Encourage locally produced, higher-welfare animal products, in preference to products from factory farmed animals.
- (d) End the importation of crops such as soya and wheat for animal feed.
- (e) Subsidise the costs to livestock farmers of switching part or all of their land to trees, grains, fruit, vegetables, pulses, nuts and seeds.
- (f) Invest in planting trees and stimulate sustainable recreation on former livestock land.
- (g) In cooperation with other political parties, redirect the billions of Euros saved each year from ending animal farming subsidies, into additional socially and environmentally-responsible programmes,

such as:

- (i) affordable housing
- (ii) improved pensions
- (iii) greater access to education
- (iv) economic stimuli such as enterprise grants, renewable energy and tax cuts
- (v) overseas aid

9. HOUSING

We have seen the devastating effects of multiple housing "bubbles" over recent years (in both the early 1990s and in early 200s) under successive Governments, causing excessive house price inflation, reducing the opportunity for young people and "key workers" (i.e., nurses and teachers) to be able to purchase their own homes. This has taken place at the same time as the deliberate Government policy to sell-off existing social housing stock, reduce their commitment to building new, quality social housing and increase the participation of the private sector in social housing provision and management, which has seen only a reduction in services provided and the mis-direction of public funds into private profit.

Animals Count would:

- (a) Reduce the influence of the private sector on the provision of housing.
- (b) Raise the standard, quality and quantity of social housing, and make low cost housing available to more people (not just to those unwaged or on minimum wage)
- (c) Improve newly built social housing (to go further than current minimum requirements in respect of living space and building materials used to create solidly constructed homes).
- (d) Ensure that newly built social housing uses sustainable, environmentally-friendly methods of construction and build genuine communities with simple and affordable access to shops, schools, public transport, work and play spaces.
- (e) Encourage the use of brown-field spaces in towns in preference to green-field sites outside of town to encourage habitation closer to places of work and encourage the development of communities within urban centres rather than "ghettoes of commerce" that empty at night.
- (f) Encourage low-build housing in urban centres rather than the current obsession with flats. Despite claims to the contrary (by those with a vested interest in "stacking" and "packing" people together into the smallest possible space) the United Kingdom has a low population density and can easily house all of its people in good quality, well-sized accommodation.
- (g) Draw up stricter guidelines and more critical evaluation of major

"out of town" retail developments which encourage car ownership, car use and the dissolution of communities as people travel far from where they live and work in order to buy essential goods.

The focus on urban housing closer to major centres of commerce and employment will also encourage more sustainable transport options for people. If people live closer to where they work and shop there is less requirement to use a car for so many journeys, but would be more easily able to either walk or cycle.

10. EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SCIENCE

Affordable education for all

In a progressive society, primary, secondary and tertiary (up to Bachelor's level) education must be free and accessible for all. The United Kingdom is one of the largest economies in the world and can afford to invest in future generations by providing quality education for everyone. This is an essential public service and it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure the education is run as a public service not as a market economy, and has excellence as its core value, not profit.

Nursery education to be universally available to ensure that all members of the community are involved in and can benefit from education from an early age.

Vocational

Our education system should recognise the diversity of interests of the young persons within the school environment and the subjects for study must reflect the different hopes and aspirations of those young people. The formal academic process is not suitable for everyone, and vocational and practical education in manual skills are equally as important and useful to society as more academic educational courses.

Such options should be available within the education system to youngsters from an early age. Students should be encouraged to pursue these interests after the age of 16 rather than the current narrow focus on University as the sole route for educational progression.

This will reduce the financial and logistic pressure on Universities who have been compelled over recent years to increase student numbers despite limited space and budget resources, and allow the expansion of a skills-based job market focused on engineering, manufacturing and essential practical services.

Compassionate curriculum for all

A well-rounded educational process would comprise not only formal skills in reading, writing and arithmetic but would stimulate and encourage an artistic and cultural understanding of the world. Teaching core values such as compassion and respect for others, and the explicit promotion of animal protection education should be integrated in curricula at every educational level.

There should be a reduction in the simplistic glorification of cruelty, violence and aggression, with a more critical approach to violent historical events such as wars and the role of oppression.

The science curriculum should have an ethical dimension that informs the debate and provides an understanding of the role of science in our society with an honest appraisal of the use on non-humans in scientific research.

Medical science education should promote a human-centric research focus based upon clinical observation, the evidence of epidemiology, the results of autopsy, and findings from human cell or tissue cultures and from relevant computer models. The current fixation of the replacement of human studies and analysis with animal substitutes is a system that is holding back scientific progress, and hinders the educational development and interests of future generations of medical practitioners (see also chapter 4 Animals in laboratories).

Re-evaluate further education

There should be a re-evaluation of the status of all Universities in the UK to reflect the different education options available to students. This should return to a historical approach which proved more successful than the current model and led to the UK's very high rank internationally in the quality of its tertiary education system. The system should reflect the different ambitions and interests of its students so that (i) Universities provide access to pure academic study, (ii) Polytechnics provide more vocational-based study, and (iii) General colleges provide skills-based practical training. This will help students to choose the best option for them, that most effectively meets their interests and skills, and will help to reduce the current – and increasing – "drop out" rate from University.

11. HEALTH, COMMUNITY AND SPORTS

Health

The major killers of the 20th century – heart disease and stroke, diabetes, certain types of cancer, and underlying these, obesity – impose a vast and preventable burden on health services. The single greatest cause is poor diet; in particular, overconsumption of food ingredients such as animal and dairy fat, sugar and refined carbohydrates, which are rich in calories but low in essential nutrients. As with tobacco, the consequences of bad food choices should not be subsidised, and their promotion should not be state funded.

Yet understanding of animal agricultural can be low, especially amongst children, but also among many adult consumers, who may not know where their food really comes from, and what it does to their health. We no longer tell children they were brought by the stork. So why give children picture books of fairy-tale farmyard animals, which are nothing like the reality of modern farming, if not for dubious marketing purposes?

Animals Count would:

- (a) Reduce the influence of the private sector in the National Health Service (NHS), reduce the number of management personnel and external consultants within the NHS, increase clinician involvement in decision making at all levels and encourage research and clinical opportunities within the NHS for experienced doctors and surgeons to prevent an exodus to private practice
- (b) Increase subsidies into preventative health care (education) for all. A substantial financial and resource burden on the NHS is the ever-increasing incidence of "lifestyle diseases", such as heart diseases, some cancers, obesity, diabetes, which are largely the result of poor food choices in the diet coupled with inactivity.

An effective and practical response to the significant drain on limited NHS resources caused by preventable ill-health is the development and promotion of an educational programme of support at and within the community, GP practices and available in the workplace, to encourage physical activity and enhance good eating, by providing current, accurate nutritional advice.

This will help our NHS to be a genuine "health care" rather than "ill care" service as it is at present, by encouraging healthy living and keeping people healthy rather than only reacting to peoples' needs after the health is damaged by, mostly preventable, diseases.

11.2 Availability of plant-based meals

Animals Count would:

- (a) Remove VAT exemptions on meat, dairy products and eggs, and processed foods that are high in saturated fat or sugar, to more accurately reflect the burden their consumption imposes on public healthcare systems.
- (b) Ban products sourced from intensive farms, and provide plant-based options at every meal, within schools, hospitals, care homes, council premises, the armed forces and other public institutions.

11.3 Nutrition education

Animals Count would:

- (a) Ensure that government organizations promoting healthy eating provide clear, consistent, and evidence-based messages to the public, rather than conflicting messages.
- (b) End state funding of the promotion of unhealthy or unsustainable foods, such as meat, dairy and fish - for example fish oils or school milk - without stating the plant alternatives, and making explicit the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- (c) Fund non-governmental organisations that promote healthy eating.
- (d) Provide free NHS-funded support for those struggling to give up unhealthy foods - comparable to existing 'quit smoking,' alcohol and drug rehabilitation programmes - recognising the addiction issues involved in giving up 'comfort' foods.
- (e) Clearly label the proportion of calories as fat within processed foods, eliminating misleading food claims.
- (f) Ban the false promotion of fish oil as an 'essential' source of essential fatty acids (EFAs). Make explicit the major problems with fish oils (sustainability, mercury, dioxins and PCBs). Stimulate and fund the promotion of cheaper and sustainable plant based EFAs that can safely be consumed every day.

- (g) Ban the false suggestion in advertising that meat is 'essential' for acquiring adequate protein, iron, B vitamins or any other nutrients.
- (h) Ban the false suggestion in advertising that dairy products are 'essential' for acquiring adequate calcium, maintaining bone health, or to prevent osteoporosis.

11.4 World hunger and famine

The fact the nearly 1 billion people are profoundly under- and mal-nourished to the point of starvation and death in a world that creates enough food each year to feed everyone is a scar on the conscience of the UK and all other "rich" countries, and demands urgent attention at the national as well as international level.

It is a shocking statistic that one third of the world's grain and over 70% of the soya grown each year is fed to animals to eat.

Whether factory, free-range or organic farming, feeding grain and soya to livestock is like doing the food shopping and then throwing most of it away. Eating meat is taking food from the poor to feed the rich. By eating plant foods, we are not just helping animals, but the world and all the people in it.

Accordingly, Animals Count would:

- (a) Ban the import of grain and soya as animal feed.
- (b) Ban the import of soya from cleared rainforest land.
- (c) Increase the global emergency relief and development budget to support plant-based nutrition overseas, and decrease the budgets of the international financial institutions supporting animal agriculture in the global South.

11.5 Community services

Increase social security benefits to ensure that this meets the minimum standard for healthy living costs to provide food, clothing and warmth to those in need.

Closer collaboration between services: child protection, domestic violence support, animal protection, social workers and the police to reduce the potential

and incidence of violence in the home and community and social disruption.

Increase community projects and stimulate youth programmes (through arts, sports, Summer University, and voluntary work opportunities). This will help people to feel more of a part of and more responsible for the community around them, and investing time and energy in this way promotes social cohesion and a genuine sense of community.

Alongside those youth programmes, to encourage and promote more activities for the 60+ age group, recognising the value and considerable wealth of experience and wisdom held by the older members of our society. We would promote their role in the voluntary sector, ask for their support and help in managing community projects and encourage locally-based group meetings, to limit the social isolation felt by some within the older community.

11.6 Sports

Animals Count would:

- (a) Increase sports facilities and sports education including access for all schools, and encourage participation in sports and other physical activities in the community.
- (b) Ensure that public subsidies for the Olympic Games 2012 are matched by private sector investment, including for all transport infrastructure improvements, which will benefit all business in society.

12. LAW, POLICING AND SECURITY

Ensure that the focus of our law enforcement agencies is on local, community-based engagement with people, providing a visible presence of the police on local streets.

We would scrap ID cards as a fundamental waste of public funds, which would be much better invested in providing community support and help for the disadvantaged in our society. ID cards are recognised even by the security services as an inappropriate measure in terrorism prevention and would not have made any difference historically with past events if they had been available, and it has never been demonstrated how ID cards would make a practical difference in the future.

We would call for immediate electoral, democratic institutional reform. Our Parliamentary system is discredited, and the "first past the post" voting process should be consigned to history, replaced with a comprehensive proportional representation system to encourage democratic engagement with the political process. People would then feel that their vote can make a difference, and that all political parties can have a chance to influence the future direction of our society.

We would call for a fully or indirectly elected second chamber in the Houses of Parliament, putting an end to the patronage and privilege of a self-supporting elite, and also call for a ban on un-elected peers to assume a position of Secretary of State. There would also be a five-year moratorium between Ministers leaving their Office of State and being able to assume a role within the private sector, together with a ban on the concurrent occupation as both a Member of Parliament or Peer and paid consultancy work with private business.

Civil rights, freedom of speech and protests, and protection of privacy are core values in any democratic state. These fundamental rights may not be altered - not even under the guise of fighting terrorism.

13. TRANSPORTATION

Animals Count would increase Government support for public transport including an integrated rail network and public ownership of London Underground. Reduce and where possible remove the number of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts which currently dominate the transportation landscape and yet have proven to be very poor value for money, with vast sums of public money being diverted into private hands rather than being directly invested in supporting our transportation infrastructure.

We need to encourage and develop an affordable and accessible public transport system with investment in modernising the rail network, and encouraging much more cycle use with a massive increase in the availability, suitability and safety of cycle lanes in our cities. All education institutes (whether at primary, secondary or tertiary level) should be easily accessible and very well serviced by effectively integrated public transport services.

We would focus attention on improving road safety in urban centres by extending the pilot schemes that "re-merge" the public space of pavement and road, removing all road markings, which has been proven to be safer for all road users than the current system of partition with barriers, railings and footpaths, and encourages safer driving and reduces the traffic delays ordinarily experienced by car users.

We would need to tax pollution to discourage car use wherever possible and limit the number of car journeys undertaken. This will be done with a taxation on a "per mile" basis, according to transport type, use and environment-friendliness of the vehicle. All such proceeds to be directly and immediately reinvested in the development of more sustainable transportation systems and infrastructure.

A refocus on social urban development and encouraging people to live closer to work together with tighter regulations on and limits to "out of town" retail developments would reduce the requirement to use a car for so many journeys, to and from work or simply for going shopping.

14. FOREIGN POLICY

The United Kingdom has always shown itself to be a forward-thinking, progressive society, which has welcomed immigration as a necessary part in our economic and social development and supported those fleeing persecution elsewhere in the world. This needs to be encouraged and we should not allow ourselves to be swayed into a dismissive and vengeful position by those who see immigration as only a negative.

A multi-cultural environment is one that has great benefits for everyone in our society and is the natural and ordinary consequence of migration. Many thousands of British-born people emigrate from the United Kingdom each year and are welcomed in those countries to which they move, and it is to the UK's credit that we have historically done the same in reverse, by welcoming those moving to the United Kingdom.

We need to provide increased support for asylum seekers and refugees, who are seeking to escape from persecution, war, famine, social collapse or personal, domestic situations of abuse and outright slavery. While we believe that the UK should provide adequate financial and logistical support to countries with internally displaced refugees or to neighbouring countries that provide shelter, the United Kingdom does receive a very small number (compared to many other nations) of refugees, and we need to help them to adjust to life in a country that is very different to the one they have left behind. The Government must encourage such persons to come forward with information about their skills and qualifications, and allow them access to the workplace and the social support structure whilst their application is being evaluated. Those who abuse the system will not be granted the rights afforded to those genuinely needing help. We further believe that the 'Life in the UK' test should include animal issues and basic legislation.

We would encourage and extend the close working relationship with our local economic neighbours in Europe, including through our vitally important membership of the European Union. The United Kingdom can no more separate itself from Europe any more than Essex or Royal Berkshire could separate from the United Kingdom. Our focus therefore should be on partnership and co-operation with our economic neighbours to fully support and open up opportunity for local industry in the UK.