

# Manifesto Animals Count

## European Parliament elections 2009

### (Eastern region)

*“Because better animal protection requires a European solution!”*

**Animals can't vote, but you can!**  
Election Communication

**Vote Animals Count on 4th June**  
animals count

**European Parliament Elections (Eastern Region)**



Jasviji de Boer, Leader  
Animals Count  
A political party for people  
and animals.



**Each year in the EU:**  
Hundreds of thousands of stray cats and dogs are inhumanely caught and killed.  
Over 12 million animals suffer in research, testing and education.  
Billions of farm animals are cruelly kept, transported and slaughtered.

**These practices are allowed in the EU by:**

Conservatives Labour Liberal Democrats and other parties

animals count because better animal protection  
requires a European solution!

[www.animalscount.org](http://www.animalscount.org)

The European Parliament election uses a proportional  
representation voting system, so every vote really counts!

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# **SUMMARY: Why animals are at the heart of our policies**

**This manifesto describes how Animals Count's policies offer benefits in four principal areas:**

- 1. Animal protection**
- 2. Human health**
- 3. Economy**
- 4. Environment**

## **1. Animal Protection**

Modern farms bear very little resemblance to the idealised images contained within story books for children, and industry advertising. Most farmed animals are kept in barren sheds, either in the dark or unnatural light, standing in their own filth and urine, unable to turn around, socialise, build a nest or raise their young. Even on free range or organic farms, animals are usually killed at a very young age, while in all egg and dairy production systems nearly all of the males are killed soon after birth.

Animals also suffer in laboratories, bloodsports, circuses and zoos, but the people responsible for such abuses do their very best to keep animal suffering from the eyes of the public. Companion animals such as dogs and cats suffer when their guardians cannot afford basic veterinary care, mistreat or abandon them.

## **2. Human health**

Major causes of the rising burden on health services and premature death in the EU are so-called degenerative diseases, such as obesity, heart disease, stroke, type II diabetes, and some cancers. Such degenerative diseases have been strongly linked to lifestyle and dietary factors, such as foods that are high in saturated fat, salt and sugar, but low in essential nutrients. Europeans are eating too much processed, refined carbohydrates, sugar, meat products and dairy foods. Over-production and subsidisation of these foods leads to unnaturally low prices, whilst healthier grains, pulses, fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds become relatively more expensive. Worst of all, national governments fund organisations that promote the very worst foods as being nutritious, for example through publicising the discredited 'four food groups.'

Meanwhile in the developing world, forests are cut down to grow feed crops for the farmed animals of Europe and China. In a world where 800 million people are under-nourished, 1.4 billion cows and billions more chickens, pigs and sheep are fed over 30% of the world's grain and over 70% of the soya, and these numbers are rising.

## **3. Economy**

45% of the EU budget is spent on agriculture and fisheries. Much of this is spent on subsidies for animal farming, particularly factory farming. The EU also subsidises sugar production. This results in epidemics of preventable diseases affecting over half of the population. Very significant human and economic costs, and considerable, preventable strain on public health services, also result.

## **4. Environment**

Farmed animals produce far more climate-warming emissions, especially methane, than all forms of transport in the world combined. Global meat production is predicted to double as the rest of the world attempts to emulate the consumption levels of affluent nations within Europe and America. Already, the UK uses 85% of its farmland for raising animals or growing animal feed, and imports even more feed, whilst in the Netherlands an area equivalent to four times the surface of the country is needed to grow all the animal feed. It is clearly impossible for the whole world to live like this. Plant-based diets require only one fifth as much land as meat-centred ones.

## **Animals Count's Objectives**

Animals Count will work to raise awareness of these problems, right in the heart of the political arena. Our objectives include:

- **Ensuring effective enforcement of all EU animal protection and environmental regulations.**
- **Encouraging member states to take greater responsibility, and to exceed the minimum European standards, on animal protection issues.**
- **Ensuring that the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), that recognises animals as sentient (that is, feeling) beings, is properly implemented within European laws that respect and protect the interests of all animals.**
- **Supporting improvements in animal care, continually raising standards to the point where animals are no longer regarded as property.**
- **Tackling the serious, adverse consequences that the misuse of animals engenders for human health in Europe, for people in the developing world, for the economy, and the environment, as well as for the animals themselves.**
- **Increasing transparent and democratic EU decision-making, in which public consultations and referenda play a greater role.**

Animals Count's **key policies** in the four principal areas include:

### **1. Animals**

Animals Count believes in a Europe where animals are not exploited for any purpose. In the interim, animal welfare improvements should be supported:

- Large-scale factory farms are harmful to animals, people and the environment. European farming should transition towards a plant-based agricultural system. Intensive farming should be replaced with more animal-friendly, sustainable, small-scale and regional systems.
- Long distance transportation of live animals is unacceptable. Transporting live animals should be limited to a maximum of two hours, and shipping en masse for live exports is not acceptable.
- Large-scale outbreaks of animal disease should not be resolved by mass killing of healthy animals.
- Cruel traditions don't belong in a civilized Europe. Bullfighting, the consumption of foie gras and slaughter of animals without prior stunning, for example, should be banned.
- All bloodsports should be banned.
- The confinement of animals in circuses should be banned, and zoos should be turned into animal sanctuaries.
- Stray animals should no longer be neglected and mistreated. Europe needs a comprehensive and humane stray animal management action plan.
- Subsidised basic and emergency healthcare should be available for animals whose guardians are unable to afford private veterinary care.

- Significant state funding for rescue organizations, sanctuaries and charities dedicated to helping companion and wild animals should be provided.
- Animal experimentation is morally objectionable. Animal experiments should be banned and replaced by humane, modern techniques in which animals do not suffer. Whilst experiments continue public scrutiny should be increased, and an independent review of animal experimentation should be conducted.

## **2. Human health**

Healthier lifestyles require reduced meat consumption, which also benefits animals and can save up to 50% on costs of global climate policies. Europe must therefore fully commit to sustainable food consumption. Animals Count will work to:

- Promote healthy plant-based diets.
- Tax unhealthy and polluting food products.

## **3. Economy**

Animals Count will work to:

- End the belief that prosperity implies more meat-based meals.
- End subsidies for livestock farming.
- Help farmers switch some or all of their production into sustainable and healthier (agricultural) sectors.

## **4. Environment**

Animals Count will work to:

- Ban the import into the EU of livestock feed grown on cleared rainforest land.
- Return the land made available by reduced farming of livestock and animal feed to forest growth, nature conservation and recreation. Reduce the use of chemicals and pesticides.
- Subsidise organic vegetable farming.
- Introduce marine sanctuaries in which fish and other marine sea life are protected from unsustainable fishing practices. Europe must stop overfishing and polluting the seas.
- Establish a large European ecological network, including migration corridors, to help combat the adverse effects on wildlife populations of severe habitat loss.
- End the shooting of animals for 'conservation' purposes. This is a highly ineffective means of achieving sustainable, balanced populations, and is morally objectionable.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. A New Kind of Politics

How bad does it have to get for us to admit that we are the problem? That what we are doing is wrong? And that it is absolutely unsustainable? Because everybody is doing it, we think it must be OK. “*Should we be eating animals?*” is often one of the most thought provoking questions one can ask in a lifetime, because we have never even considered it. But when we stop and think about it, the answer is so straightforward. Should we eat animals? Is it in their interest to be confined, crammed in farms, castrated without painkillers or anaesthetics, transported for days and prematurely killed? The sooner we demonstrate serious consideration for the most fundamental interests of animals, the more civilised our society will become. It is time for a new kind of politics!

## 1.2. Taking responsibility

Many people look for someone or something to blame for the problems in our society. Examples include class inequality, the rich, the EU, growth, lack of growth. Animals Count believes in a different kind of politics, where we simply seize the opportunities in front of us to put things right. The EU has become too focused on short-term gain at the expense of animals, the environment and the citizens of the EU. Rather than just complain, however, we will implement sustainable, compassionate, responsible policies that will benefit everyone.

This manifesto lists the issues and easy steps that EU governments and people can take together to fix those problems in ways that benefit everyone.

## 1.3. EU Background

The European Economic Community (EEC) was intended to develop a ‘single market’ – with common policies on product regulation. It also aimed to ensure freedom of movement of production factors (capital and labour), and of enterprise. As such, economic development is central to the development of the European Union. Animals are merely regarded as ‘goods’, or property; as a means to an end – particularly in farming.

However, millions of EU voters consider the poor treatment of farm animals and animal experimentation to be important issues, although governments often promote the interests of animal industries over those of people and the environment.

## 1.4. Using more resources than is sustainable

The causes of the crises related to climate change, loss of biodiversity, animal diseases, food, the economy and oil/energy are all interlinked. They can be summed up as corporate greed and lack of awareness of consequences by consumers. Not only have we been borrowing from future generations by living in a credit society, by destroying the remaining forests to make way for grazing and growing feed, we are selling out the legacy of our ancestors and the future of our children.

Animals and natural resources are being exploited to the point of irreversible damage. The agricultural sector has gone off the rails. Forests in South America are disappearing because Europe demands huge amounts of animal feed. The production of 1kg of beef is just as bad for the environment as driving around in a car for three hours, while leaving all your lights on at home. If all people in the world started eating as much meat as we do, then we’d need about three planets to feed them all.

That this is unsustainable has been recognised by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN (FAO), and other institutions. Corrective measures are available, but unfortunately most politicians prioritise the short-term needs of their corporate sponsors above the issues that really matter: clean air, clear water, a thriving earth, and a respectful relationship between people and animals.

## 1.5. 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 European Parliament (MEPs) may simply sign a Written Declaration<sup>1</sup> on animal issues, Animals Count will constantly take initiatives in this field. Animals Count is the first UK political party 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.

**Europe 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.

## 1.6. Advancing animal issues politically

**Our first and most fundamental principle is that animal abuse must end.** The false perception that prosperity is associated with consumption of meat, dairy and eggs, also needs to end. The livestock industry currently contributes 18% of greenhouse gases, 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**<sup>2</sup>. 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 European election manifesto includes four strategies for advancing our aims politically:**

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

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<sup>1</sup> The EU equivalent of an Early Day Motion

<sup>2</sup> The Five Freedoms, revised by the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) in 1992, include: 1. Freedom from hunger and thirst; 2. Freedom from discomfort; 3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease; 4. Freedom from fear and distress; and 5. Freedom to express normal behaviour. The concept of Five Freedoms originated with the ‘*Report of the Technical Committee to Enquire into the Welfare of Animals kept under Intensive Livestock Husbandry Systems*,’ the Brambell Report, December 1965 (HMSO London, ISBN 0 10 850286 4).

## 2. ANIMALS IN FARMS

### 2.1. Animals kept for meat and their products

About 80% of the EU agenda is occupied by, and 45% 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 pets?

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 Europe where animals are not exploited for any purpose. In the interim, animal welfare improvements should be supported, as follows.

#### **Ending farming systems with poor welfare consequences:**

- Large scale, intensive farms have the worst animal welfare potential. The establishment and development of new intensive farms must be banned.
- 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.
- Member states that are front-runners in making these changes should receive incentives, whilst those that are not transforming their intensive farming systems should be sanctioned.
- Countries that do not comply with the present European legislation on animal welfare should be sanctioned through fines and other penalties.
- Best husbandry practice should become the norm, rather than a niche in the market.
- Foie gras (goose/duck liver) production, import and trade should be banned.
- Labeling 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 which is in accordance with ecological principles.

Standards for farm animals should be continually raised to the point where animals are no longer regarded as property. Husbandry standards should at least include the following minimums:

- Chickens should have access to free range outdoor runs which include naturalistic shelters. Beak trimming should be prohibited.



- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Calves should be kept with their mothers until they separate naturally. Keeping calves in small pens on an iron-deficient diet to produce veal should be banned.
- 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-muscling beef cows who cannot give birth naturally, requiring caesarian sections) should be banned. Breeding policies should focus on improving welfare.
- Unnatural and often painful methods of reproduction in cows, such as embryo lavage, embryo transfer and hormonal fertility treatments, should be banned. Development of new reproduction methods should not be allowed if the integrity and the welfare of animals are adversely affected.
- Cloning of animals for production purposes should be prohibited. (See also 4.1 'Scientific Animal Use and Biotechnology').

#### **Reducing live animal transport:**

- Animal journeys should be minimised, and limited to a maximum of two hours.
- Transport of live animals to countries where EU standards of animal protection do not apply should end.
- Misleading information about the source of animal products should be prohibited.
- 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 genuine treatment of animal patients. They should not be used as growth promoters, or used prophylactically for long periods.

**Slaughter:**

Billions of animals are slaughtered within Europe each year. Apart from the ethical questions surrounding killing healthy animals to satisfy our taste preferences, many animals suffer prior or during slaughter. In addition, all faiths demonstrate a concern for animal welfare in their sacred texts, and Animals Count would like to engage in dialogue with faith communities to see how these concerns can be brought to bear against the economic imperatives that drive animal exploitation.

- 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**

Fish numbers continue to fall. For example, there are now only one third as many cod in the North Sea as in 1975. Furthermore, fish suffer the cruellest catching and killing methods. Yet the welfare of fish is rarely considered.

**Restoring marine life:**

- Fish should not be caught in areas where stocks are low. Marine sanctuaries should be created.
- A major European network of nature reserves at sea should be developed by strictly enforcing the Birds and Habitats Directive and the OSPAR Convention.
- Deep sea fishing should be banned.
- Destructive fishing methods, such as trawling, should be banned.
- 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:**

- By-catches in fishing should end.
- In the interim, only fishing methods that prevent marine mammals being trapped in fishing nets should be used.
- Penalties for fishermen violating conservation regulations should increase significantly.

**Methods of killing fish:**

- Fish should be protected from suffering before being killed. Fish should be included within EU Directives on killing and slaughter of animals.
- Alternative killing methods that reduce pain and stress prior to death should be used.
- Killing eels in salt baths should be banned immediately.

**Fishing outside the European Union:**

- European fishermen should not catch fish outside EU territory.
- All existing EU contracts for fisheries outside EU territory should be screened for environmental sustainability. Unsustainable contracts should be terminated.

**2.3. 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 be banned.

#### **2.4. Animals kept 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.

- Keeping, breeding and killing of animals for their fur should be banned.
- The trade and import of all fur products into Europe should be banned.
- Existing regulations should be strictly monitored and enforced, such as the import ban on dog and cat fur.

#### **2.5. City farms and sanctuaries, large animal companions, and working animals**

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.

- Allowing rescued animals to live out their lives should be the main focus of city farms, together with education.
- Those who keep farm animals for non-production purposes should have an ownership licence (see chapter 3 below, 'Companion animals').
- Providing sustainable support to owners of working horses and donkeys, which includes community engagement programmes about responsible care of animals, should be encouraged and supported.
- Sanctuaries caring for retired working animals should be financially supported.

## 3. COMPANION ANIMALS

### 3.1. Stray animals

Hundreds of thousands of dogs, cats and other companion animals are neglected and abandoned across Europe each year. Many are left on the streets of EU member states, forced to fend for themselves. Stray dogs and cats 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.

Tens of thousands of stray cats and dogs are caught by authorities and kept in overcrowded pounds before being killed, due to lack of suitable homes. Yet certain individuals continue to profit from the commercial breeding and sale of companion animals. 'Puppy farms' 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:

- Introduce an EU-wide effective and humane stray animal management action plan.
- 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.

### 3.2. Companion animals

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'. In the UK alone, thousands of affected animals are confiscated by the authorities each year, and animal charities are frequently required to provide the material and financial resources for such interventions – including prosecution of animal abusers – without governmental assistance.

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:

- The provision of a basic 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.
- A companion animal licensing system should be established. Mandatory requirements would include lower age limits for licence-holders, and the successful completion of a responsible animal care certificate, appropriate to the species in question. Annual maintenance of the licence would require mandatory neutering of all companion animals 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.

- Legislation and regulations against animal neglect and abuse should be strengthened, through a range of measures, including:
  - increased powers of inspection and seizure for police and licensed inspectors,
  - mandatory completion by offenders of a responsible animal care certificate (see above) appropriate to the species in question, regardless of any prior certification,
  - increased penalties for offenders.
- Resources for the implementation and enforcement of such legislation and regulations against animal neglect and abuse should be increased.
- 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.
- Whilst companion animal overpopulation persists, breeding 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 such breeding, and establishments in which breeding occurs, must be independently inspected and tightly regulated.
- A complete ban on the sale of puppies and kittens in shops of any kind should be introduced.
- 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.

### **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, 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

### 4.1. Scientific animal use and biotechnology

Enormous numbers of animals are killed or harmed within fundamental and clinically-applied biomedical research, toxicity testing, and biomedical education. Over 12 million animals were used for these purposes in the EU in 2005 – 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 EU member states 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 very 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:

- An immediate ban on the harmful use of all primate species.
- An immediate ban on the genetic manipulation of animals (including cloning).
- An immediate ban on the use of animals for xenotransplantation.
- 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 veterinary students via participation in 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.
- Immediate, quantitative, binding targets for reductions in animal use in all countries using animals, with the aim of eventually replacing all harmful animal use with non-harmful or non-animal alternatives.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- Mandatory prompt, public sharing of all experimental results, to minimize experimental duplication.
- Increased funding for the further development, scientific validation and implementation of alternative methodologies.
- The establishment of well-funded national Centres of Excellence in the Development of Alternatives to Animal Use, in all countries where such animal use exists.
- Increased, compulsory training and continuing professional development in experimental best practice standards and alternative methodologies, for all animal researchers and technicians.
- 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 animal use**

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 other species. Such 'recreational' activities have no place in a civilised society.

In 2008 most EU member states, including the UK, undemocratically ratified the Lisbon Treaty, which included the intensification of agriculture as a key objective, and enshrined the continuation of traditional uses of animals such as bullfighting and foie gras production. The Lisbon Treaty is similar in content to the EU Constitution, which was rejected in 2005 by the citizens of The Netherlands and France voting in referenda. In the case of The Netherlands, the rejection was partly because of concerns that animals would continue to be used in harmful ways.

Hence, Animals Count believes that:

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

### **5.2. Bloodsports**

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.

Organisations that promote the use of guns to school children should be banned. The aforementioned 'violence link' 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 cruelty through guns), and occasionally people are accidentally shot.

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.

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':

- All bloodsports should be banned, without loopholes. The existing Hunting Act should be strictly enforced.
- EU subsidies for breeding bulls used in bullfighting should be redirected to fund animal protection efforts.

### **5.3. 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.

#### **5.4. 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.

#### **5.5. 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:

- State-of-the-art non-animal zoos within Europe should be established, and existing zoos should be turned into animal sanctuaries. Zoos, aquaria and 'entertainment' establishments which have animals on display should be phased out, and new such establishments should be prohibited.
- 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.
- Breeding of species kept in zoos that are not included within conservation or reintroduction programmes should be banned.
- 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 should be monitored more strictly, and penalties for offenders should increase. Wildlife crime units at borders should be expanded.

Animals Count believes that:

- The European Union should adhere to international agreements on the protection of endangered species, and the restriction of trade in these animals (CITES). Member states should strictly enforce these agreements in order to end large-scale trafficking in wild animals. Additional control at EU borders is essential, and international cooperation and integration of data on wildlife crime should be enhanced.
- Wild animals should be protected within their countries of origin, and local authorities should be supported in combating illegal trade.
- Organisations that confiscate (wild) animals, provide sanctuary, or prosecute animal abusers should receive government funding.
- All whaling activities should be rejected. The EU should push for a total ban, and should take measures against countries that do not respect the current moratorium.
- Member states should be supported in finding 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

Within the EU, 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.

Worldwide, large areas of tropical rain forest and other vulnerable areas are cleared each year to grow animal feed, further increasing the impact of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, due to the diminishing number of trees that can absorb CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. This is also resulting in massive biodiversity loss.

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 most of Europe 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. Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature and biodiversity policy. It is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

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:

- An action plan containing tangible objectives and (financial) measures should be created to effectively halt the loss of biodiversity. Member states should be held accountable on an annual basis for the achievement of intermediate goals.
- Europe should set annual targets which member states are accountable for, to encourage the rapid implementation of Natura 2000 (network of nature protection areas). Sanctions should be applied to member states not implementing the necessary steps or meeting annual targets.
- UK and EU 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.
- Nature reserves, parks and green corridors should be preserved and expanded, to facilitate green recreation and wildlife protection.
- Farmers should be encouraged and supported to return some of their land to wildlife and recreation.
- Member states should be required to take rapid and effective measures to protect surface and groundwater, as stipulated by the Water Framework Directive.
- An active policy strategy should be developed to reduce the carbon footprint of European citizens.
- Importation of products such as unsustainably-managed timber and palm oil, which adversely affect biodiversity internationally, should be banned.
- Natural reserves and ecosystems protection programmes in sensitive parts of the world should be financially supported by the European Union.

## 7. HUMAN HEALTH

The major killers of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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, that are nothing like the reality of modern farming, if not for dubious marketing purposes?

Animals Count would:

### 7.1. Availability of plant based meals

- 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.
- 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.

### 7.2. Nutrition education

- Ensure that government organizations promoting healthy eating provide clear, consistent, and evidence-based messages to the public, rather than conflicting messages.
- 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.
- Fund non-governmental organisations that promote healthy eating.
- 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.
- Clearly label the proportion of calories as fat within processed foods, eliminating misleading food claims.
- 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.
- Ban the false suggestion in advertising that meat is 'essential' for acquiring adequate protein, iron, B vitamins or any other nutrients.
- Ban the false suggestion in advertising that dairy products are 'essential' for acquiring adequate calcium, maintaining bone health, or to prevent osteoporosis.

### **7.3. Famine**

800 million people are under-nourished, and 25,000 die each day from hunger, in a world where there is actually a huge surplus of food, especially grain and soya. However one third of the world's grain and over 70% of the soya is fed to animals.

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:

- Ban the import of grain and soya as animal feed.
- Ban the import of soya from cleared rainforest land.
- 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.

## 8. ECONOMY

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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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 Euro-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.

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.

Hence, Animals Count would:

- Promote sustainable, environmentally-friendly businesses generally, for the long-term benefit of society.
- End all subsidies for animal farming and fisheries.
- 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.
- Encourage locally produced, higher-welfare animal products, in preference to products from factory farmed animals.
- End the importation of crops such as soya and wheat for animal feed.
- Subsidise the costs to livestock farmers of switching part or all of their land to trees, grains, fruit, vegetables, pulses, nuts and seeds.

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<sup>3</sup> Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations. 2006. *Livestock's Long Shadow*. Rome, Italy: Agriculture and Consumer Protection.

- Invest in planting trees and stimulate sustainable recreation on former livestock land.
- 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:
  - affordable housing
  - improved pensions
  - greater access to education
  - economic stimuli such as enterprise grants, renewable energy and tax cuts
  - overseas aid



## 9. ENVIRONMENT

**Farmed animals produce more greenhouse gases (18%) than all forms of transport in the world combined (13.5%).**

### 9.1. 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.

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, that 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:

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

### 9.2. 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:

- 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.
- Reduce the use of chemicals and pesticides.
- Make European companies, including supermarkets, accountable for the impact on people and the environment abroad.
- End export subsidies for dumping surpluses abroad.

### **9.3. A reduction in meat consumption**

Unlike most environmental organisations, which promote organic animal farming, 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 meat 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. It's very simple: less meat, less deforestation, less greenhouse gases. It is easy, cheap and it is good for you. 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 European 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 reduce consumer demand for meat and dairy, and increase demand for plant based options, through, for example:
  - Awareness-raising programmes.
  - Removal of VAT exemptions for animal products (which are luxury items).
  - Change public procurement policy to ensure healthy, sustainable, plant-based options are always available on menus at public institutions.
- 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.
- Subsidise organic vegetable farming.

## 10. HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE

Animals Count believes in the future of the European Union, which has helped peace, freedom, democracy, cooperation and prosperity to flourish across Europe.

We are in favour of continuing enlargement of the EU so that more people may share the benefits. However, Animals Count believes that Europe should first improve its internal organisation (including its democratic structure), before new members can join. In addition, strict compliance with existing regulations on animal protection, human rights and the environment must be in place before candidate countries gain accession to the EU.

Animals Count is not a political party of the left or right. As a party that achieves its aims on animal/human issues in cooperation with others, we will support socially progressive policies of other parties that benefit people, the economy, the environment and animals. The following are examples.

The billions of Euros saved each year by ending animal farming subsidies could be redirected into:

- Improved animal protection across all species and situations in which animals are kept, and for wild animals.
- Building affordable housing.
- Improved state pensions, honouring previous generations who have built the infrastructure of Europe.
- Greater accessibility and affordability of education for all sections of the community.
- Funding of essential services for vulnerable groups that should not have to rely on charitable donations, such as:
  - the elderly
  - those with physical disabilities
  - those with learning difficulties
  - those with mental health problems
  - child protection
  - victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse
  - those in refuges
  - the homeless
  - ex-offenders and those undergoing rehabilitation
  - internally displaced people and refugees who need assistance
- Sustainable economic stimuli, such as enterprise grants, backed by enterprise advisors with business experience, who are not limited to accountants and bankers.
- Renewable energy.
- Overseas aid, to ensure that all people of the world have access to:
  - clean water
  - adequate food
  - fair trade
  - housing
  - human rights
  - health care
  - education
- Tax cuts.

- Ending the exploitation of new immigrants by businesses that pay below the minimum wage, such as some restaurants, shops and seasonal labour employers. Mandatory prison terms should be introduced for repeat offenders, rather than fines that may be less than the profits illegally gained.

### **10.1. Democracy in Europe**

Animals Count is opposed to the Lisbon Treaty because it transfers some of the powers of member states to Europe, without actually improving the democratic process. Furthermore, the Treaty is focused on increased intensification of production targets within livestock farming, at the expense of the animals and the environment. Additionally, although animals are recognised as sentient (that is, feeling) beings in the Treaty, which is in line with the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, their welfare is subordinated to cultural traditions such as bullfighting.

Animals Count believes that:

- 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.
- The Lisbon Treaty should not be implemented in its current form, and must be improved to focus on sustainability. It must include improved animal protection measures.
- Transparent and democratic EU decision-making should be improved, and public consultations and referendums should play a greater role.
- The European Union only functions when its democracy is in order. The European Parliament should be allowed the right of initiative, and proper control of the European Council of Ministers and the European Commission should be in place.
- A parliament can only function properly when in it is located in one location. The EU should no longer spend money on moving between Brussels and Strasbourg.
- Fraud and corruption within the European Union must be combated with strict rules and sufficient resources.
- Safeguards should be introduced within employment policy for officials of the European Commission, which should rule out the possibility that officials can jointly work for the European Union and their own interest or lobby groups.
- A 'whistle-blowing' scheme should be introduced.