

Animal Rights

End cruelty and exploitation

Every year in Britain over 3 million animals are used in experiments. They are poisoned, scalded, infected with diseases, crippled, blinded, starved and brain damaged in the name of science. They are even used to test toxic chemicals, from oven cleaners to paint strippers.

900 million animals are slaughtered every year in the UK for food. Most of these animals are farmed intensively, never breathing fresh air or seeing daylight. They are highly susceptible to disease and antibiotics are used routinely to suppress infection and promote growth. Their needs are ignored in the pursuit of profit.

Animals are capable of feeling physical pain and mental distress: they deserve to be treated with respect, and protected from cruelty. But today in Britain, their habitats are increasingly under threat, they are still used for 'entertainment' in circuses and zoos. Despite the welcome ban on hunting with dogs, much other hunting for sport continues.

The Green Party believes that animals have the right to live in safety, without fear or pain caused by human

exploitation. We seek a more peaceful world, where all life is respected and all cruelty challenged.

The Green Party would:

- End all animal experiments, replacing them with more reliable non-animal alternatives.
- End factory farming, stop promoting factory farming abroad and advocate a reduction in meat consumption. We would also ban live exports and the genetic manipulation of animals.
- Protect habitats, ban all bloodsports and end badger culling.
- Ban the use of animals in circuses and abolish zoos.

Surely people come first...

Believing that animals have rights doesn't mean that we put animals' needs ahead of our own. We believe that animals are worthy of respect. Human beings do not have the right to abuse animals for their own gain, any more than we have the right to abuse each other.

Why do you want to reduce meat consumption?

Much of the livestock industry relies on intensive farming methods, which are cruel to animals and harmful to the environment. Current levels of meat consumption are not sustainable. Globally the meat industry contributes to soil erosion, deforestation and climate change. It takes much more land and water to produce meat than it does to feed people on a vegetarian diet. In a world where 800 million people go hungry, reducing consumption of meat is necessary to protect human as well as animal rights.

Don't we need animal experiments to develop new cures and medicines?

Experiments on animals are unreliable as a guide to human biology. Different species react differently to drugs and toxic substances. Many drugs that cause damaging side-effects in people have passed animal tests. There are viable alternatives to animal testing including epidemiology, the use of cell cultures, human tissue and computer simulation. The Green Party would redirect research funding to such alternatives. We would also promote preventative health care. Illnesses such as heart disease and

cancer are more likely to be reduced by improving diet and environmental conditions than by using drugs tested on animals.

Are you associated with groups using violence to promote animal rights?

No. We campaign for a fairer world, where everyone is treated with respect. We are opposed to the use of violence or intimidation for any cause. We support non-violent direct action, and work with those groups using peaceful methods to publicise animal cruelty.

Shouldn't people have the freedom to go hunting if they want to?

Studies have shown that hunted animals can die from the simple stress and terror of the hunt. The question is whether individuals should be 'free' to inflict that on another living creature. While we welcome the ban on hunting with hounds, the Green Party believes that all hunting is barbaric and must be outlawed immediately.

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