

# Animal Welfare Policy

## Vision

**All sentient animals (domestic or otherwise) within Papatūānuku and the domains of Tāne and Tangaroa are respected and held to have intrinsic worth, and their rights are upheld.**

## Values and Principles

Policy decisions relating to animal welfare must uphold the following values and principles:

- *Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi*: Respecting the mauri of all animals within Papatūānuku, and the domains of Tāne and of Tangaroa includes revealing and upholding the whakapapa tangata whenua have with te taiao. This means animals are due respect, love and rights.
- *Ecological Wisdom*: Reducing animal exploitation practices that drive environmental pollution, climate change, and zoonotic pandemics improves ecological and human wellbeing. Protection and restoration of indigenous biodiversity should be paramount.
- *Social Responsibility*: Ownership of animals, including companion animals, is a responsibility, not a right, that includes ensuring a high quality of life for all animals in people's care.
- *Appropriate Decision-Making*: The rights and wellbeing of sentient animals, who are not able to advocate their own needs and perspectives, should be given weight in all relevant decisions.
- *Non-Violence*: Animals should not be exploited or harmed for farm production, entertainment, or by human neglect, and their distress and pain should be minimised. Empathy and compassion towards all animals should be nurtured. Humans should remember our connections with other species and ensure that no cruelty occurs between us living together.

## Summary

A Green approach to animal welfare considers animals before profits, and provides the New Zealand public with the opportunity and knowledge to value, and engage with, animal welfare issues. We will do this by establishing an independent, parliamentary voice for animal welfare to hold our primary industries to account, and ensuring that animals do not get exploited for the purposes of entertainment. To increase public awareness of the importance of animal welfare issues, we will also support educational programmes and informed consumer choice as it relates to animal welfare.

## Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

*"Our laws and practices will respect the biological integrity of all life, while prioritising the health of indigenous species and ecosystems."*

Actions in this policy that work towards this goal include:

- Prohibit new, and phase out existing, factory farming of animals, including highly intensive outdoor facilities such as feedlots. (1.6)
- Limit the permissible journey length for transporting live farm animals for any purpose in consideration of their suffering while being transported. (1.11)
- Ensure that RNZSPCA is adequately resourced to undertake its animal welfare enforcement and education work. (1.21)
- Require non-animal methods of experimentation and testing to be used wherever they exist. (3.6)

## Connected Policies

In this policy, animal welfare is explored in the contexts of [Agriculture](#), [Food](#), [Recreation and Sport](#), and [Research](#). Other policies consider the wellbeing of animals in the wild - see our [Conservation](#), [Environmental Protection](#), [Land Use and Soils](#), and [Climate Change](#) Policies.

## Policy Positions

### 1. [High Quality Care for Domesticated Animals](#)

#### A. Independent, Parliamentary Voice for Animal Welfare

##### *Issues*

Animal welfare issues currently do not get treated with the level of importance that they should in New Zealand, because of overlaps in interest with our major industries. This is significantly problematic, and self-perpetuating, because not only does it frequently put animals in inappropriate conditions, but that we also have, and continue to have a very large number of animals within those industries.

##### *Actions*

- 1.1. Establish a Minister for Animal Welfare that is held separately to the portfolio for primary industries to prevent conflict of interest.
- 1.2. Establish an Office for Animal Welfare and ensure that it is fully resourced to:
  - 1.2.1. Carry out the relevant policy, monitoring, compliance and enforcement work that is currently part of Ministry of Primary Industries work.
  - 1.2.2. Work with the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) to develop, implement, monitor and recommend animal welfare codes.
  - 1.2.3. Monitor animal welfare in the racing and entertainment sectors.
- 1.3. Establish a Commissioner of Animal Welfare and ensure that it is fully resourced to:
  - 1.3.1. Stand independent of political parties and Ministries, and report to Parliament.
  - 1.3.2. Appoint members of the NAWAC and the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee.

- 1.3.3. Review and report on animal welfare codes and regulations to protect animals from suffering due to the direct or indirect actions of humans.
- 1.3.4. Proactively investigate and make recommendations on complaints regarding animal welfare.

## **B. Animals in Agriculture**

### *Issues*

New Zealand has a huge agriculture industry and desire to make profits often overrides considerations towards animal welfare. More specific regulations and changes to legislation are needed to address this.

### *Actions*

- 1.4. Support a continued ban on farrowing crates under the Animal Welfare Act.
- 1.5. Phase out painful agricultural techniques, such as the debeaking of hens and maceration of day-old chicks, in association with the development of alternative, humane practices, such as the prevention of pecking through improved rearing conditions and gender selection of fertilised eggs.
- 1.6. Prohibit new, and phase out existing, factory farming of animals, including highly intensive outdoor facilities such as feedlots.
- 1.7. Ensure that all agricultural animals are provided with appropriate, sufficient and readily accessible shade, shelter and comfortable resting areas.
- 1.8. Support the limited, regulated and ethical use of non-GE biotechnology and GE biotechnology in containment to improve the quality of life and welfare of animals, improve the heritable lineages of animals, and reduce our reliance on animal based production (see also our [Agriculture and Rural Affairs](#) Policy and our [Research, Science and Technology](#) Policy).
- 1.9. Discourage the use of breeds and the development of transgenic animals with inherent deformities or susceptibilities for agricultural research or other purposes.

## **C. Transport of Animals**

### *Issues*

The transport of animals particularly for export currently does not have sufficient consideration for animal welfare, often leading to deaths, injuries, and inhumane circumstances for those animals.

### *Actions*

- 1.10. Require animals to be slaughtered as near as possible to the location of rearing, support the development of more localised slaughter houses, and require specific transport conditions to minimise stress for animals.
- 1.11. Limit the permissible journey length for transporting of live farm animals for any purpose in consideration of their suffering while being transported.
- 1.12. Significantly strengthen protection for bobby calves who are particularly vulnerable to rough handling and mistreatment during transport.

- 1.13. Live export of animals by sea involves high casualty rates and stress for the animals involved.
- 1.14. Continue to support a prohibition on the export of animals for slaughter, and tighten the current rules to prevent the export of animals for slaughter under the guise of export for breeding.
- 1.15. End the export of live animals for breeding to countries without acceptable animal welfare regulations, including a humane death.
- 1.16. Encourage the exchange of breeding material, such as through semen and egg import-export.

## **D. Companion Animals**

### *Issues*

Domestic animal owners in New Zealand are often ill-equipped to take care of their animals. This is primarily due to lack of access to the right knowledge about the extent of adequate care required for domestic animals.

### *Actions*

- 1.17. Incentivise and educate about responsible pet ownership.
- 1.18. Support education around dog safety, particularly in at-risk areas.
- 1.19. Ban the life-chaining of animals, such as dogs and goats.
- 1.20. Oppose the expansion of breed-specific legislation for dogs because it unfairly penalises responsible dog owners and dog breeds: any dog can be dangerous.
- 1.21. Increase funding to the RNZSPCA so that it is adequately resourced to undertake its animal welfare enforcement work.
- 1.22. Require council pounds and animal rescue shelters to provide a good standard of care for animals.
- 1.23. Investigate the primary causes of overbreeding of companion animals (e.g. 'backyard breeding') and develop a strategy to address this, including requiring breeders to be registered.
- 1.24. Require pet dogs and cats to be registered and microchipped.
- 1.25. Fund free spaying and neutering for pets.
- 1.26. Encourage owners to ensure that their animals do not cause harm to other animals or people.

## **E. Animals in Entertainment Industries**

### *Issues*

Animals are often put into, and bred specifically for, entertainment industries that force them into inhumane conditions, usually for the purposes of making money.

### *Actions*

- 1.27. Ban the use of animals in rodeo events, as these events inherently result in some animals experiencing pain and distress.
- 1.28. Require all racing codes that use animals to make publicly available the numbers of animals bred, raced, injured, euthanised and re-homed or retired from racing, through birth-to-death reporting.

See also our [Recreation and Sport](#) Policy.

## **2. Widespread Understanding of Animal Welfare Issues**

### *Issues*

Currently in Aotearoa New Zealand public knowledge of animal welfare issues and their importance has significant room for improvement. Better public awareness would necessitate more frequent and faster action towards positive animal welfare in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### *Actions*

- 2.1. Encourage and support educational programs that promote respect and empathy towards animals, at all levels of education.
- 2.2. Support informed consumer choice by:
  - 2.2.1. Requiring the presence of animal products to be clearly indicated on labels.
  - 2.2.2. Requiring all producers of animal products to label their animal products according to strict criteria concerning the methods by which the animals were raised.
  - 2.2.3. Requiring all consumer products to carry labels indicating whether they have been tested on animals.
- 2.3. Promote dietary choices that support high standards of animal welfare.

## **3. Animal Experimentation and Research**

### *Issues*

The extent of animal experimentation should be drastically decreased with the ultimate aim of minimising animal suffering. Animal ethics committees play an important role in safe-guarding the welfare of animals in institutions and must be representative, accountable and well informed.

### *Actions*

- 3.1. Ensure that animal ethics committees have strong guidelines, are committed to minimising animal use and have a thorough knowledge of non-animal methods of research.
- 3.2. Require animal ethics committees to make records of all their deliberations available to the public.
- 3.3. Make a legal presumption that non-animal methods of product testing will be used.
- 3.4. Develop a public database of alternatives to animal testing and require that these methods are used wherever suitable.
- 3.5. Fund research and development of non-animal methods for research, testing and teaching (see our [Research, Science and Technology](#) Policy).
- 3.6. Require non-animal methods of experimentation and testing to be used wherever they exist.
- 3.7. Where non-animal methods do not exist, experiments and research on animals are limited to situations where:
  - 3.7.1. It is endeavoured that no animal suffers unnecessarily as a result, with end points agreed and pain managed; and

- 3.7.2. The study can show the potential for overwhelming benefit to animals or humans.
- 3.8. Require all research on animals to recognise the principles of reduction, refinement and replacement, with the eventual aim of eliminating suffering, distress or pain to animals involved in animal experiments.
- 3.9. Require all educational institutions to provide non-animal alternatives, wherever they exist, for course work.
- 3.10. Require all experiments involving animals to be reported to the Office for Animal Welfare, and for this information to be publicly available.
- 3.11. Prohibit animal cloning except to save a species from extinction.

## End of policy