

MAKING TRACKS



RABBIT FARM CRUELTY

A recent report from the Agriculture Committee in the European Parliament has called for higher welfare standards for rabbits. 320 million rabbits are slaughtered annually after a life kept in barren

wire cages where their natural behaviour is severely restricted. Many scientists have called for the cage system to be urgently replaced by one which allows for the natural needs of rabbits to be better taken into account. This is something Greens support.

Speaking on the issue **MOLLY SCOTT CATO** says “Our priority is

ending the inhumane conditions in which rabbits are kept, but the problems with intensive rabbit and chicken rearing extend beyond that. The current system also leads to the spread of disease and the subsequent overuse of antibiotics. Greens have always opposed factory farming and we will continue

working for the highest possible standards of animal welfare.”

All three Green MEPs voted in favour of the recent report put to the European Parliament on Minimum Standards for the Protection of Farm Rabbits and support the *End the Cage Age* petition, which calls for better protection for rabbits.

THE FIGHT TO DEFEND VITAL WILDLIFE SAFEGUARDS STARTS NOW



Keith visits RSPB Dungeness.

Humans have destroyed a tenth of the Earth's wilderness in 25 years, according to a stark study by academics at the University of Queensland. The planet is truly entering the Anthropocene era. The enormous scale of wilderness loss across the globe should be a clarion call to world leaders; the planet's remaining wildlife and habitats urgently need protection.

As a member of the European Union, British conservation efforts have benefitted from the largest single body of environmental legislation in the world.

The EU is responsible for about 80% of all environmental laws in the UK. Those laws, like the Habitats and Birds directives, are driving positive conservation action. Protected wildlife sites were being lost at a rate of 15% a year before EU action; now that rate has fallen to just 1% a year.

KEITH TAYLOR says “Wildlife and environmental issues were sidelined during an unedifying referendum campaign. But they are more important now than ever. A new report from Brighton MP Caroline Lucas’ reveals the cocktail of environmental threats

Britain now faces. Post-Brexit, Britain is in danger of being cut off from crucial environmental safeguards; key laws could become unenforceable, spending on crucial schemes could be cut and new trade deals could undermine existing regulations.

Leaving the EU must not be an excuse to strip away vital safeguards. Nobody voted to trash our precious wildlife and environment, whichever way they voted in the EU referendum. I'm calling on the Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom to commit to introducing an Environment Act that maintains and strengthens current vital EU protections.”

WHY THE CETA TRADE DEAL IS BAD FOR ANIMALS

Greens have been long-standing opponents of CETA, the Canada-EU trade deal. Like TTIP (the proposed but suspended agreement with the US), CETA has strong UK Government backing. In February, Green MEPs voted against CETA in the European Parliament, although a majority of MEPs, including UK Tory, Lib Dem and many Labour MEPs voted for it.

JEAN LAMBERT explains why CETA is bad for animals: “There are many reasons to oppose

CETA, but we mustn't forget its potential impact on animals. CETA aims to increase trade between Canada and Europe, but it also puts pressure on regulations which can be presented as 'barriers to trade'. CETA's Investment Court System (ICS) gives additional powers to multinational companies to sue governments in private tribunals which operate outside the domestic court system.

CETA says little about animal protection, but Canada's farmed

animal welfare laws are much weaker than those of the EU. Under CETA an additional 130,000 metric tons of beef and pork will be allowed to be exported from Canada to Europe and these will not need to meet EU animal welfare standards.

For these and many other reasons Green MEPs voted against CETA in the European Parliament. Regrettably a majority of MEPs didn't heed our concerns. But Brexit will certainly not solve the problem.



Jean protests against CETA

The UK Government is strongly committed to CETA and also wants to negotiate its own similar trade deal with the US.”

ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS MUST NOT FALL VICTIM TO BREXIT



During the 2017 Oxford Farming Conference, Andrea Leadsom promised to scrap so-called 'red tape' while protecting animal welfare. It is, however high-time, the foxhunt and badger cull supporting Minister acknowledged the key role EU membership has played in improving the protection of millions of British farm animals. After all almost 80% of UK wildlife and animal welfare protections have originated from Brussels.

The European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes has for example being a vital tool in the creation of a range of EU laws that have sought to ensure high welfare standards for farmed animals. Likewise laws relating to the protection of animals during transport and the ban on cat and dog fur in the EU have all emanated from Brussels.

Speaking on the issue of upholding commitments to animal protection **JEAN LAMBERT**

said "The 'red tape' the Minister is threatening to cut protects our rural environment, our biodiversity, our soil, and the welfare of farm animals.

In a post-Brexit Britain I want to make sure that all these vital protections are guaranteed. The closer the relationship the UK maintains with the EU, retaining animal welfare and wildlife protections through single market membership, the better the outcome for British animals."

Microplastics – tiny plastic beads, granules, fibres and fragments less than 5mm in diameter – are saturating our oceans and having a severe impact on marine life.

The government recently consulted on banning microbeads – one form of micro plastic – from cosmetics and personal care products. Molly Scott Cato responded to the consultation by calling for the inclusion of all products containing microbeads, not just cosmetics; no exemptions for so-called 'biodegradable' plastics – as they do not degrade in the marine environment – and a complete



MICROPLASTICS A SEA OF WASTE

An 0.5mm wide plastic microbead from an exfoliating facewash. Microbeads wash down the drain, pass through sewage works and into the sea to be ingested by marine animals.

Photo: Exeter University/Wikimedia Commons

ban on selling any product containing microbeads within two years.

An estimated 280 million tonnes of plastic products are produced each year but only around a third of this is recovered for reuse or recycling. Much of the remaining plastic debris makes its way to our seas and oceans. A wide range of marine life has now been found to ingest microplastic particles including mussels, worms, fish and even plankton, which underpins the whole marine food chain. As well as being toxic, the tiny particles can prevent animals from consuming their natural prey,

leading to starvation and even death.

MOLLY SCOTT CATO said: "Many other countries have banned cosmetic microbeads and our government must act comprehensively, not just on microbeads but on all microplastics. One Plymouth University study found 10% of sand from a beach was in fact tiny plastic particles.

We must tackle this scourge because it is having a devastating impact on marine environment food chains. Ultimately, a healthy coastal and marine environment is essential for the health and wellbeing of us all."

NEW EU ACTION ON SQUALID IVORY TRADE

MEPs have voted in favour of a report, drafted with the help of Keith Taylor, advocating for an immediate EU-wide ban on the trade in ivory and rhinoceros horn and calling for sanctions at EU level for wildlife crime.

Wildlife trafficking is worth an estimated €20 billion annually. It has grown in recent years, becoming one of the biggest and most profitable forms of organised cross-border crime.

KEITH TAYLOR said "This vote

shows that the EU is at the forefront of animal welfare and wildlife regulation. Where the EU leads, countries around the world can follow. Brexit cannot be an excuse for the UK not to uphold vital animal welfare safeguards."



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