

## Key points from the Animal Welfare Strategy Published 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025

### Domestic animals

- 1) Imports: develop secondary legislation around the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Act 2025
- 2) Dog breeding:
  - a. Consultation on new registration scheme that will dovetail with licensing requirements – improve traceability and enforcement
  - b. Fertility clinics, stud dogs and whelping services to be under same licensing system
- 3) Cat breeding: improve uptake of licensing system, improve understanding of breeding practices
- 4) Rescue & rehoming: consultation on licensing domestic and international rescue centres, understand better the welfare issues present
- 5) Pet sales: mainly supporting work already underway
- 6) Public safety:
  - a. Reconvened the Responsible Dog Ownership taskforce
  - b. Will consult on whether to ban electric shock collars in pets
- 7) Microchipping: concerns about some providers – robust due diligence before recognising microchip provider as compliant
- 8) Pet ownership & housing: implement measures in Renters' Rights Act to make it easier for tenants to have pets
- 9) Tackling pet abuse and domestic abuse
  - a. Consider outcomes of research project of summer 2025 to look at the 'link' (between animal and human abuse)
  - b. Work with vets and charities, make reporting easier
  - c. Look at microchipping regime to prevent sharing personal info of victims with potential abusers
- 10) Animals in businesses: work with LAs to ensure enforcement consistent/effective

### Wild animals

- 1) Trail hunting: to be banned, consult in early 2026 to work out how to deliver this
- 2) Traps: ban snare traps, review use of other traps to trap wildlife
- 3) Close season for hares: will consider how to effectively bring about a close season during peak breeding season of hares
- 4) Welfare of decapod crustaceans and cephalopod molluscs:
  - a. Guidance on which methods of killing are compatible with WATOK – live boiling NOT acceptable

- b. Develop evidence base through research
- 5) Increase penalties for cruelty against wildlife – bring in line with domestic and farmed animals
- 6) Kept primates: work with LAs to ensure enforcement of primate licensing scheme – only those who can provide zoo-level standards can have a license to keep primates
- 7) Zoos - new Standards for Modern Zoo Practice in Great Britain published 2025, to take effect from May 2027:
  - a. Develop and provide training on new standards to panel of zoo licensing inspectors by 2027
  - b. Update guidance and inspection forms to make them easier to use
  - c. New biennial Elephant Welfare Group reporting to ultimately improve elephant welfare in zoos

### Farmed animals

- 1) Use of crates and cages:
  - a. In poultry: transition to non-cage systems and consult on phasing out enriched ‘colony’ cages
  - b. Work with pig farming industry to explore how to transition away from use of farrowing crates – flexible or free farrowing
  - c. Improve welfare code for cattle welfare – housing of calves
  - d. Improve understanding of welfare issues on gamebird rearing
- 2) At slaughter:
  - a. Ban high concentration CO2 stunning of pigs, with as short transition as possible – argon is higher welfare alternative
  - b. End routine culling of male chicks with sex determining technologies
  - c. Review WATOK Regs
- 3) Management practices: reduce prevalence of pig tail docking, end beak trimming of layers, implement advice and recommendations from AWC’s ‘Opinion on the Implications of Castration and Tail Docking for the Welfare of Lambs’
- 4) Fish: introduce humane slaughter requirements into legislation (following consultation), commission AWC’s advice on welfare of farmed fish prior to slaughter
- 5) Breeding: publish AWC's report on breeding practices, support voluntary move away from fast-growing meat chicken breeds, also general monitoring
- 6) Transport: prevent equines being exported for slaughter, monitor EU proposal for new welfare in transport regulation
- 7) Labelling: work with stakeholders to improve food labelling – including method-of-production labelling

- 8) Adaptation to climate change - concerns regarding extreme weather conditions – heatwaves, flooding, drought: publish and carefully consider reports from AWC regarding likely impacts of climate change on farm animals
- 9) Enforcement – 6 key themes, subject to tracking and review:
  - a. Ensure legislation sets a minimum baseline
  - b. Ensure enforcers are upskilled and have fit for purpose resources
  - c. Ensure regulators and enforcers take appropriate and proportionate corrective actions to encourage compliance
  - d. Ensure animal keepers understand their responsibility to ensure animal welfare
  - e. Ensure enforcers and policy makers can intervene at an early stage
  - f. Ensure animal keepers have access to support to prevent problems escalating

### International

- 1) Trade: promote importance of high animal welfare standards and best practice
- 2) Fur trade specifically:
  - a. Publish evidence on fur trade and consider report from AWC
  - b. Bring together a working group on fur with various stakeholders
  - c. Engage with the EU
- 3) Animals abroad: explore legislative and non-legislative options to stop UK advertising low welfare activities abroad, work with industry and NGOs