

## Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill

### The Bill - *Prohibit the export of certain livestock from Great Britain for slaughter.*<sup>1</sup>

- It will be an offence to send, transport or arrange transport (or attempt any of the aforementioned) for the export of livestock for fattening or slaughter (f/s).
- This includes exports **from, and through**, England, Wales, and Scotland (Great Britain -GB) **to countries outside the British Isles** (UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man).
- The aim is to prevent suffering, risk of injury and distress experienced by animals on long journeys, which could easily be subject to significant delays i.e. from inclement weather, and prevent the lack of control in maintaining the welfare of these animals once they are transported overseas to another country.<sup>2</sup>
- Exceptions:
  - Live exports will still be **permitted for breeding, competitions, and races.**
  - The legislation **does not apply to Northern Ireland (NI).**
  - The live export of **poultry is not** included in the legislation.
- The bill passed through the House of Commons unamended.

### Background to the Bill

- Legislating the ban on live export of animals has been a Conservative manifesto commitment since 2017.<sup>3</sup>
- There have been no reports of live exports for f/s from GB since December 2020:
  - This is due to no Border Control Posts approved for accepting and exporting onwards livestock between the UK and EU since Brexit.<sup>4</sup>
  - In 2020 – 44,300 sheep were exported to the EU for f/s.<sup>5</sup>
  - In 2018 – 40,000 cattle and sheep were exported to the EU for f/s.<sup>5</sup>
- Provisions for imports
  - There has never been a significant import of live animal trade between mainland EU and the UK:
    - Between 2019-2021, 91 cattle and 41 sheep were imported from the EU for slaughter in the UK.<sup>4</sup>

### WTO Considerations:

- Under WTO rules (Article XI of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), countries are not allowed to ban exports to other countries and **cannot normally** discriminate between their trading partners.<sup>4</sup>
- Article XX – lays out member **exemptions** from WTO rules:<sup>4</sup>
  - *Subject to the requirement that such measures are not applied in a manner which could constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries where the same condition prevail or a disguised restriction on international trade, nothing in this agreement shall be construed to prevent the adoption of enforcement by any contracting party of measures:*
    - **Necessary to protect public morals**
    - **Necessary to protect human, animal, and plant life and health**
      - The government believes that the banning of live exports will fall under this exemption.

<sup>1</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0017/230017.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://consult.defra.gov.uk/transforming-farm-animal-health-and-welfare-team/improvements-to-animal-welfare-in-transport/supporting\\_documents/fawcopiniononthewelfareofanimalsduringtransport.pdf](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/transforming-farm-animal-health-and-welfare-team/improvements-to-animal-welfare-in-transport/supporting_documents/fawcopiniononthewelfareofanimalsduringtransport.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/lln-2024-0001/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9912/CBP-9912.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2023/11/10/Exports-of-livestock-for-slaughter-on-the-chopping-block-in-UK>

## Poultry Exclusion:

- *Clause 1 – Prohibition of export of livestock for slaughter*

(4) *Relevant livestock for the purpose of this clause is defined as:*

- Cattle and other bovine animals*
- Horses and other equid animals*
- Sheep*
- Goats, or*
- Pigs and wild boar.*

- Currently, there is minimal export of poultry for f/s – only for breeding and competition<sup>4</sup>.
  - 2016 data from the FAWC report on welfare at transport:<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1 The volume of trade in live animals for slaughter, fattening<sup>12</sup> and breeding from the UK to Republic of Ireland and the rest of the EU in 2016.**<sup>13</sup>

Purpose	Volumes of live exports to:	Livestock species				
		Sheep	Cattle	Pigs	Poultry	Horses
Slaughter	EU	385,099	10,464	8,916	-	-
	RoI	380,909	10,464	8,916	-	-
	<b>EU excl. RoI</b>	<b>4,190</b>	-	-	-	-
Fattening	EU	93,778	25,433	2	13,291,141	-
	RoI	50,529	888	-	3,861,919	-
	<b>EU excl. RoI</b>	<b>43,249</b>	<b>24,545</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9,429,222</b>	-
Breeding	EU	4,978	6,453	1,695	3,689,957	468
	RoI	1,334	2,104	18	1,075,223	-
	<b>EU excl. RoI</b>	<b>3,644</b>	<b>4,349</b>	<b>1,677</b>	<b>2,614,734</b>	<b>468</b>
Other purposes <sup>(a)</sup>	EU	-	-	-	-	16,461
	RoI	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>EU excl. RoI</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>16,461</b>
<b>Total live exports to EU (excl. RoI)</b>		<b>51,083</b>	<b>28,894</b>	<b>1,679</b>	<b>12,043,956</b>	<b>468</b>

- Between February 2021-December 2022, there were 20 exports of poultry on Export Health Certificates:<sup>6</sup>
  - All for game restocking
    - 3 were from GB → NI
    - 17 from GB → Republic of Ireland (RoI)
    - Involved 16 pheasants, 3 ducks and 1 partridge.
  - There were **no exports** of poultry to NI, RoI, the EU, or the rest of the world for fattening or slaughter in this period.
- **Importance of excluding poultry:**
  - The export of day-old chicks from the UK is vital for global breeding stock supply of chickens, with **>70% of global poultry** (chicken egg type, chicken meat type, duck meat type, turkey meat type) deriving from high value UK breeding stock, exports of which are **worth £140 million/year to the UK economy.**<sup>7</sup>
    - Globally, UK breeding stock contributes to<sup>8</sup>
      - 90% broilers
      - 40% layers
      - 70% commercial ducks

<sup>6</sup> APHA FOI request for poultry exports from 2017-2022 between GB and NI, RoI, the EU and the rest of the world

<sup>7</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/122479/pdf/>

<sup>8</sup> British Poultry Council Brief to Lord Trees 2021

- 70% turkeys
- In the UK, 2 international poultry breeding companies, Aviagen and Cobb Europe, provide nearly all of the breeding exports of chicken from the UK.
- In 2018 – over 25 million chicks (including turkeys) and ducklings were exported from the UK.<sup>9</sup>
- The welfare of day-old-chicks is tightly controlled, given their value to the importing country depends on their physical condition.<sup>10</sup>

### Northern Ireland Exclusion:

- *Clause 1 – Prohibition of export of livestock for slaughter*

*(1) A person may not export relevant livestock from Great Britain for slaughter.*

*(2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence.*

*(3) A person “exports” relevant livestock from Great Britain if—*

- a) the person sends, or attempts to send, relevant livestock from Great Britain to anywhere outside the British Islands,*
- b) the person transports, or attempts to transport, relevant livestock from or through Great Britain to anywhere outside the British Islands, or*
- c) the person organises, or attempts to organise, the transport of relevant livestock from or through Great Britain to anywhere outside the British Islands.*

- **Reasons for the exemption:**

- Current legislation:<sup>4</sup>

- The terms of the Windsor Framework/Northern Ireland Protocol mean that live animals move freely between ROI and Northern Ireland.

- NI remains in the same Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures as the EU.
- The movement of animals from NI to other EU member states/non-EU country is covered under EU rules:

- The EU permits live animal exports to other member states and third countries provided certain animal welfare rules, including journey times, are met.

- Political and economical:

- There is a highly integrated agri-food system and economy with essential two-way movement of trade between NI and ROI.
- Any blocking of livestock movements would cause major disruption with significant political and economic ramifications.
- In 2022 - NI exported 3,500 cattle, 17,000 pigs and 337,000 sheep to the ROI for f/s.<sup>11</sup>
- In 2015 - the export of live animals from NI to ROI was worth £44 million and export from NI to the rest of Europe produced £19 million for the NI economy.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2023, NI accounts for 59% of the live export value industry for ROI.<sup>13</sup>

- Animal welfare:

- Some ROI slaughterhouses are closer than those in NI for NI farmers (and vice versa), therefore closing the border for live exports would increase journey times for animals for slaughter, possibly causing animal welfare issues.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/28/uks-trade-in-breeding-chicks-may-not-be-covered-by-planned-live-export-ban#:~:text=4%20years%20old-UK%27s%20trade%20in%20breeding%20chicks%20may%20not,by%20planned%20live%20export%20of%207ban%27&text=The%20export%20of%20tens%20of,trade%20is%20for%20breeding%20stock>

<sup>10</sup> British Poultry Association Brief to Lord Trees 2023

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.independent.ie/farming/news/uks-livestock-export-ban-makes-progress-despite-northern-ireland-loophole-fear/a1723697839.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Overview-of-NI-Trade-April-2023.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.agriland.ie/farming-news/value-of-live-exports-grows-by-13-to-e265m-in-2023/>

- Slaughterhouse availability:
  - A significant amount of NI red-meat processing ability was lost in the BSE outbreaks of the 1990s, therefore there are substantial movements of cattle and sheep to the ROI for slaughter and processing before movement back into NI.<sup>4</sup>
- **Concerns of a NI Loophole:**
  - There are concerns that animals from GB will be able to be exported to Europe via NI in a possible 'loophole' from the new legislation.
  - However, the government assures this won't be the case:
    - *Livestock exported for slaughter* from GB to NI - **must go directly to a slaughterhouse** and health certificates must be present to DAERA office on arrival. It is an offence to move the animal anywhere else other than the dedicated slaughterhouse.
    - *Livestock exported for fattening* from GB to NI – must remain at the place of destination for a **minimum 30 days waiting period**, reducing the economic viability of exporting for fattening via this route.
      - Livestock will also need to be re-tagged to comply with NI animal identification requirements.