



Marie Rimmer CBE, MP
Member of Parliament for St. Helens
South & Whiston
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 4847/01744 752075

Animal Welfare:

Strengthening animal welfare laws is a priority for me. I believe all animals deserve protection. I support a comprehensive review of animal testing practices with a view to phasing it out entirely. I want to see the ending of severe suffering permitted in UK law and of the opaque project licence applications process.

I am concerned the Government's National Food Strategy, published in June 2022, does not constitute a serious plan with concrete proposals to tackle the major food issues, including animal welfare's role within them.

In the negotiation of post-Brexit trade agreements, I want to see the Government specify how it will maintain robustness of animal welfare protections and how it will prevent farmers from being sold short for upholding high standards. I am proud of the farmers who keep these high standards.

Although I welcome the passing of the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021, which increases maximum penalties for some animal cruelty offences, I am concerned by its lack of provisions for wild animals. It creates a two-tier system when they all feel pain and suffer, and those harming them should feel the full force of the law.

The Government pledged in May 2021 to pursue the licensing of animal sanctuaries and rescue and rehoming centres. It recently stated it is monitoring trends in the sector and that any proposals will be subject to consultation. I will monitor this issue for developments.

Firework displays run by local groups and charities can provide a safe, predictable and organised space for firework displays, as well as a sense of place, community cohesion and fundraising opportunities. However, it is right for MPs to consider how we can better protect people, animals and the planet from the particular circumstances of firework misuse.

I support a ban on the export of live animals for fattening and slaughter and have real concerns about what many animals experience in being transported for a long time. I also believe there are alternatives to cages in farming and that we must make changes in a sensible, measured way. The Government states it is considering ways to further improve the welfare of animals at the time of killing.

I want to see action to protect dogs from abhorrent criminal activities such as ear cropping, which often happens alongside other forms of mutilation, mistreatment and abuse, and puppy smuggling.

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Constituency Office:

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP, 2nd Floor, Century House, Hardshaw Street, St. Helens WA10 1QU, 01744 752075,
marie.rimmer.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.marierimmer.co.uk