

# Making Tracks



Animal rights from Caroline Lucas, Green MEP for the South East – Spring 2009



*The last six months have seen unprecedented activity on animal protection in the European Parliament, which is likely to continue for several years. Two EU Directives governing animal slaughter and the use of animals in experiments are under review, each of which will affect millions of animals. In addition, the Parliament is gearing up to vote on a proposal to ban the trade in seal products. During my two terms as an MEP, I have worked extensively towards such a ban and so I hope this proposal will help to end the cruelty of commercial seal hunting on an international scale. As Vice President of the Parliament's cross-party animal welfare group, I am doing all I can to press for new measures to promote animal protection and, if re-elected, am committed to continuing my work in this area.*

## Animals in agriculture – now it's time for change

**While climate experts and animal protection organisations know all too well that a staggering 18% of harmful greenhouse gas emissions world-wide are produced by animal farming** (according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation), public awareness of the contribution to climate change of animal-based agriculture is low, and political activity almost non-existent.

I believe that the government should work to increase public awareness of the climate impact of our food products, through labelling schemes and publicity campaigns for example, and that measures to reduce consumption of animal products should be vigorously promoted. Rules on the procurement of food by public bodies such as the

NHS and local authorities should start to take account of the climate impact of food. I would also like to see support and encouragement for farmers to switch from intensive livestock farming to growing food crops for human consumption.

The European Parliament recently debated its legislation to address greenhouse gas emissions, and I was able to support the inclusion of new sectors, including agriculture, in the EU's new climate change package. Unfortunately, more progressive measures, like targets for reducing consumption of animal products, did not receive support from the majority of MEPs. I believe we need to step up efforts to achieve a more substantial commitment to these sorts of measures in future.



*Caroline calling for a ban on the import of seal products at a demo in Brussels organised by MEPs and animal welfare organisations.*

### EU ban on seal products

**Following a number of set-backs in two European Parliament Committees, I am delighted to report** that the lead Committee has now voted in favour of a complete ban on the trade of seal products. There have been several attempts to derail the proposals and we still have a huge amount of work to do, but I am hopeful that within just a few weeks, a full EU ban on the trade should be adopted. This would represent a significant milestone for EU animal welfare policy and, I hope, have a major impact on commercial seal hunting world-wide – bringing us a step closer to the elimination of this vile practice.

## Farm animal transport time limits

I have campaigned long and hard for reduced EU-wide journey time limits for farm animals, and to keep the pressure on both the European Commission and Defra (the UK's national enforcement body). Last year, after being contacted KALE (Kent Against Live Exports) about the dreadful conditions in which animals were being exported from Dover, I contacted the European Commission with my concerns. The Commission later sent an inspection team, which concluded that welfare standards were falling far short of legal requirements. I am delighted to have been able to work with KALE to bring Defra's failure to the

attention of EU regulators, and congratulate the campaigners on their diligent work in documenting the abuses taking place.

There should soon be a chance to discuss legislative changes at EU level, and I look forward to again taking up the fight to stop the animal suffering caused by long-distance transport.



## Revision of the Slaughter Directive

As an MEP, I have been able to support important proposals in the revision of this Directive, such as extending the number of animals protected under legislation, including creatures like crabs, lobsters, frogs and reptiles. I have also pressed for a ban on the electrocution of foxes raised for fur, and for stronger animal protection rules across the board. However, there is still resistance from the meat industry and some EU Member States, so I am continuing to work for regulation to reduce animal suffering during slaughter.

### In brief

I have recently tabled Written Questions to the European Commission on:

- progress towards use of non-animal test methods
- use of animal tests for analysis of marine biotoxins present in shellfish
- EU egg procurement policy
- food labelling to indicate climate-impact

You can view these questions, as well as updates of other campaigns, on my website (see below).



## Animal experiments – welfare gains opposed by industry lobbyists



Caroline has called for an EU Centre of Excellence to research new scientific methods to replace animal testing.

**The European Parliament's consideration of the proposal to revise Directive 86/609 on animal experiments is creating a political storm in Brussels.** Sadly, at the time of going to press, animal protection measures have been defeated in two Parliamentary Committees, and MEPs previously in support of phasing out the use of primates are being targeted by industry lobbyists who are pressuring them to change their position.

I have spoken out on the issue, and tabled amendments on primates and other animal protection policies, but so far the majority of MEPs are towing the industry line. They say that including more animals in the scope of the legislation is 'going too

far', and that phasing-out the use of the offspring of wild-caught primates (proposed by the European Commission) is 'too costly'. They even say that rules to authorise animal experiments following an ethical review are 'too burdensome'. I am appalled by the shameful nature of industry lobbying on this issue – can it really be the case that the pharmaceutical companies can't afford to support even the most basic improvements in animal welfare?

On a brighter note, an amendment I tabled that would see creation of a **European Centre of Excellence for Alternative Methods** was adopted by the Environment Committee. I will continue to seek support for ambitious plans to put replacement of animal experiments at the heart of the new legislation, and will re-table this amendment when the full Parliament votes.



## Keep working for animals – make a difference

For more information on my work [www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk](http://www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk)

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