

NEWS RELEASE

07 March 2006

MASS DEMONSTRATIONS LIKELY IF LIVE CALF EXPORT TRADE RESUMES

Thousands of British calves could again be sent on long and stressful journeys into veal production systems that are illegal in the UK. Today and tomorrow (7 and 8 March) the EU Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health (SCFCAH) is expected to vote in favour of lifting the 10 - year old ban on the export of live cattle from the UK, imposed in 1996 because of the BSE crisis.

Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) warns that such a decision could lead to immense suffering for up to 500,000 British-born calves - a concern supported by scientific evidence which shows that calves are particularly vulnerable to the effects of long journeys.

CIWF is also concerned about the rearing systems which may await calves at the other end of these journeys. Although veal crates were banned over ten years ago in the UK, they are still legal in the rest of the EU until the end of 2006.

British-born calves could therefore end up being reared for six months in small boxes which isolate them from other calves and severely restrict their movement. If they manage to avoid this fate they could still enter systems that would be illegal in this country on other welfare grounds.

Before BSE struck, up to half-a-million calves a year were sent from the UK to continental veal systems. The public outcry at the time led to mass protests at ports and airports and CIWF is expecting a similar response this time around.

"This trade is brutal and pointless - meat should be exported, not live animals," says Rowen West-Henzell, CIWF's transport Campaign Co-ordinator.

"Back in the Nineties people came out in force to try and halt the trade. Scientific evidence shows that calves travel badly and if this trade resumes, they will be sent on long and stressful journeys over land and sea, adding to the distress they feel after being taken away from their mothers. When they arrive, exhausted and terrified, they could be faced with spending the rest of their lives alone in veal

crates so narrow they can't even turn around.

"Patchy enforcement of the rules means that long distance transport, especially across borders, always poses serious risks to an animal's welfare. Long distance travel also risks spreading infectious diseases - a problem well documented in 2001 with foot and mouth disease."

CIWF advocates a maximum journey time of eight hours to help secure higher levels of welfare for animals during transport. This is crucial if young animals who are too vulnerable and ill-equipped to deal with longer journeys, are to be protected.

CIWF is campaigning world-wide to replace any transportation of live animals on journeys over eight hours with a trade in meat.