

NEWS RELEASE

08 March 2006

COMPASSION PLEA TO FARMERS AFTER LIVE EXPORTS BAN LIFTED

Leading farm animal welfare organisation, Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) has appealed to British farmers not to resume sending calves abroad following today's vote to lift the 10-year ban on beef and cattle exports from the UK by European veterinary chiefs.

The decision to revoke the ban, imposed in 1996 because of the BSE crisis, means that thousands of British cattle once again face harrowing journeys abroad - with calves possibly destined for European veal production systems that are outlawed here.

"The revoking of this ban by the EU's Food and Animal Health Committee could spell disaster for Britain's calves,' says Rowen West-Henzell, CIWF's transport campaigner. "In particular it gives the green light for calves to suffer once again the trauma of being taken from their mothers and sent on long, stressful journeys by land and sea. On arrival, some could end up in veal crates so narrow they can't even turn around, a system still legal on the continent until the end of the year.

"British farmers can voluntarily prevent the resumption of the live export industry and the misery it causes - we appeal to them to show compassion by refusing to export their calves."

CIWF is calling on the public to write to the National Farmers Union, the UK Dairy Association and to Ben Bradshaw MP, DEFRA's Animal Welfare Minister, asking them to encourage farmers not to be involved in calf exports. Unless farmers do so, CIWF fears that up to 500,000 calves a year may once again be sent from the UK to continental veal systems, as they were before the ban was imposed.

Veal crates are banned in the UK but remain legal in the rest of the EU until 2007. But even after this, any calves exported from Britain could still enter other veal systems that fall short of UK welfare standards.

CIWF is convinced that unless farmers opt voluntarily to prevent cattle or calf exports, mass demonstrations by an outraged public will result. Before the 1996 beef ban, public outrage against calf exports led to huge protests at ports and airports.

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http://www.ciwf.org.uk/campaigns/primary_campaigns/long_distance_resume.html

Editors' Notes

CIWF commissioned a National Opinion Poll in 2002 in which 78% of the British public stated their opposition to the long distance transport of live animals.

Currently EU legislation on animal transport states that young calves can be transported for up to 20 hours with a one - hour stop after nine hours while they are given water and fed if necessary.

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