

Press Release

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**Hypocrisy reigns: Defra hires QC to defend live exports of unweaned calves as
Compassion in World Farming's legal challenge progresses**



Leading farm animal welfare charity Compassion in World Farming has been granted permission by the Scottish Courts to proceed with its legal challenge against the Scottish Government, this week (20th May).

In February, the charity launched judicial review proceedings against the Scottish Government arguing that it is acting unlawfully in permitting the transport of unweaned calves on export journeys longer than eight hours. The judicial review will now move to a court hearing, scheduled for 4th August.

Shockingly, despite the UK Government's repeated indications that they wish to end live exports post-Brexit, Defra has now appointed a QC to contest the case.

"The UK Government claims they want to end live exports, yet Defra is defending this cruel trade," says Peter Stevenson, Chief Policy Advisor at Compassion in World Farming. *"This is hugely hypocritical. Rather than contesting the case – if they want to end live exports, Defra should be welcoming our argument that exporting unweaned calves on journeys over 8 hours is unlawful."*

The law states that journeys over eight hours are not permitted, unless after nine hours of travel the calves are given a one-hour break, provided with water, and fed with milk replacer. It is widely recognised – including in writing by the Scottish Government – that milk replacer can only be provided to calves if they are unloaded into an appropriate facility. However, in practice, the thousands of calves which are exported from Scotland to Spain each year are never unloaded during the one-hour break – and so are not fed.

Additionally, the Scottish Government's Minister for Rural Affairs recently defended these unlawful exports, explaining that it would not be practical for the unweaned calves to be fed on the trucks. This defence was presented, not as a reason to end calf exports, but as a reason not to enforce the law.

Despite the Government's failure to follow-through on their promise to end live exports, Compassion is optimistic the court case will have a substantial impact on the trade.

Peter Stevenson added: *"Should the judicial review prove successful, it will set a precedent across the UK, making it impossible for the export of unweaned calves to continue in its current form. It may even trigger similar legal action across Europe and bring this unnecessary trade in unweaned calves to an end in many other countries."*

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For more information please email media.team@ciwf.org or call 01483 521 886

Images can be downloaded [here](#).

Notes to Editors

1. This year's [Ban Live Exports: International Awareness Day](#) will take place on 14th June, when countries across the world unite against the cruel and unnecessary trade. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, UK campaigners will harness the power of social media to demand #JusticeForCalves and build pressure on the Scottish Government to Ban Live Exports.
2. EU law states that unweaned calves cannot be transported on journeys of over eight hours unless, after nine hours of transport, they are rested for a period of one hour, so that they can be given liquid (water) and 'if necessary fed'. For unweaned calves, feed takes the form of milk replacer and it is widely recognised that milk replacer cannot be provided to calves while they are on a truck. This can only be done if the calves are unloaded into an appropriate facility, but in practice the calves are rarely, if ever, taken off the truck during the one-hour break and so are not fed.

Compassion is arguing that as the legal requirement for undertaking journeys over 8 hours is not being met, the Scottish Government is not legally entitled to authorise the export of calves on journeys over 8 hours.

3. Compassion in World Farming was founded in 1967 by a British dairy farmer who became horrified at the development of intensive factory farming. Today Compassion is the leading farm animal welfare organisation dedicated to ending factory farming and achieving humane and sustainable food. With headquarters in the UK, we have offices across Europe, in the US, China and South Africa.
4. To find out more about Compassion in World Farming visit: www.ciwf.org