

Press Release

23 September 2020

Compassion in World Farming welcomes a halt to cruel live calf exports, following legal challenge against the Scottish Government

After much pressure from leading farm animal welfare organisation Compassion in World Farming, the Scottish Government has finally stopped live calf exports. Having spent six months defending the inhumane export of unweaned calves to Europe, the Scottish Government has now conceded that this trade was being conducted in breach of the legislation on the protection of animals during transport.

Up until this landmark decision, the Scottish and UK Governments have allowed vulnerable, unweaned calves to be exported for over a thousand miles via Ramsgate to Spain. Compassion strongly opposes the export of animals for fattening and slaughtering, which subjects them to distressing conditions and great suffering.

Over several decades, millions of British calves have been forced to endure long, inhumane journeys to Europe for slaughter and fattening. Compassion has fought this all the way. The ending of calf exports from Britain represents a turning point in the battle to stop this horrific trade.

In February of this year – and with strong backing from its supporters – Compassion launched Judicial Review proceedings to challenge the legality of this practice. Both the Scottish and UK Governments resisted for several months – wasting taxpayers' money – shamefully defending a trade which can see calves go for 23 hours without food and often water. In a major U-turn, the Scottish Government has now instructed the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) – responsible for approving export journeys – not to approve any further applications for unweaned calf exports that breach the time limits in the regulations.

“The Scottish Government’s conduct during this dispute has often fallen far short of that expected from a responsible authority,” said Peter Stevenson, Compassion in World

Farming's Chief Policy Advisor. *"They have neglected to disclose key information, run misleading arguments and, despite export journeys exceeding the maximum permitted travelling time since at least April 2019, they failed to act and did not issue an instruction to halt the trade until over a year later. Above all, they have vigorously defended this cruel and unnecessary trade."*

This decision to halt these exports could benefit thousands of calves each year – calves who would otherwise suffer tremendously from the stress, overcrowding and exhaustion of transport, often resorting to suckling on the metal bars of their truck in the absence of feed and sufficient water.

"We welcome this decision that means thousands of calves could be spared such gruelling journeys every year," said Natasha Smith, Senior Campaigns Manager at Compassion in World Farming. *"However, it is outrageous that it took legal action and years of argument to bring the Scottish Government to this point."*

Whilst this is a major victory for the welfare of Scottish calves, the policy now needs to be secured by legislation. The Scottish government has promised a public consultation on banning journeys over 9 hours for calves, and the UK government has previously committed to a separate consultation on live exports. Similar consultations in the past have yet to yield results.

"More consultations and empty promises are not enough," Natasha continued. *"We need new legislation to protect animals from this cruel and unnecessary practice once and for all."*

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For more information please email media.team@ciwf.org or call 01483 521 615

Accompanying images can be downloaded [here](#).

Notes to Editors

1. In November 2019, shortly after Compassion in World Farming first wrote to the Scottish Government arguing that calf exports were being carried out illegally, the trade dried up. We believe exports were halted to try to prevent the trade being challenged in the Courts. Despite this, Compassion went ahead with its action as the

Scottish Government refused to acknowledge that calf exports were being carried out illegally and we feared the trade could resume at any moment.

2. The Scottish government accepted on 21st August 2020 that the trade of unweaned calves was being conducted in breach of EU Regulation 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport as maximum permitted journey times were being exceeded. As a result, Compassion has stopped its Judicial Review proceedings against the Scottish Government.

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.

To find out more about Compassion in World Farming visit: www.ciwf.org