

Dear Supporter,

Please help our work by writing a letter to the new Agriculture Minister, Simon Coveney

We now have a new Government and, with it, maybe a chance to address some key farm animal welfare issues. Compassion in World Farming - Ireland (Compassion - Ireland) has asked the new Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, to meet with representatives of our organisation to discuss our concerns.

I know you, our supporters, have done wonderful work in writing to the last Agriculture Minister, Brendan Smith, and his predecessors. I hope you will now write to Minister Coveney (see overleaf for his address).

In your letter, please tell Minister Coveney about the farm animal welfare issues that concern you and what you would like to see changed. The issues that Compassion - Ireland considers to be vitally important are outlined below. You may want to bring all of these, or some, to the Minister's attention.

Key farm animal welfare issues:



Ensuring that all Irish farm animals transported to Continental Europe are given their legally-required rest periods, as laid down in EU law.

There is a long history of drivers failing to stop to unload and rest Irish animals (calves in particular, and cattle) after arrival in France. This is the subject of a joint Formal Complaint submitted to the European Commission last year by Animals' Angels and Compassion - Ireland, which the Commission is investigating. *Photo, left: calves in transit.*

Finding humane and practical ways of rearing young male dairy calves in Ireland instead of exporting them to the Continent in their thousands, many to Dutch veal farms. Last year, more than 145,000 Irish calves were exported to the Continent. *Photo, right: humane veal production in the UK, an alternative to exporting live calves.*



Ensuring any exports to non-EU countries are in the form of meat, not live animals. We are concerned about media reports of efforts to re-start live cattle exports from Ireland to North Africa and the Middle East. In the past, thousands of Irish cattle were shipped to the Lebanon, Egypt, Libya and Saudi Arabia. Once there, EU animal welfare protection laws cannot, in general, be applied and we know

that animal welfare standards in these countries can be very poor. *Photo, left: an Irish bull, his front leg tied high to a truck, struggles in a Lebanese slaughterhouse.*

Ensuring that all Irish pigs have access to effective enrichment material, such as straw, and that routine tail docking is not carried out. Both of these are legal requirements laid down in the EU pig welfare legislation. Most pig farming in Ireland is intensive and the vast majority of pigs are tail docked (about 95%); there is also widespread failure to provide effective enrichment material, i.e. material such as straw that allows the pigs to properly carry out their investigation and manipulation activities. These problems were the subject of a Formal Complaint by Compassion - Ireland to the European Commission in 2009. In light of new information that indicates the situation has not improved, we have recently asked the Commission to re-open our Complaint. *Photo, above right: a barren Irish pig farm.*



Continued over ...



We must continue to do all we can to end fur farming. In the meantime, we must ensure that all the recommendations of the Irish Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare (SACAHW) on the slaughter of fur animals are put into place without delay. The SACAHW report can be read on the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC) website at www.fawac.ie

Photo, left: Irish mink farm © Compassion in World Farming-Ireland/Respect for Animals

We welcome the ban on barren battery cages for egg-laying hens that comes into effect in Ireland and throughout the EU on 1st January 2012. We also welcome that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) has given grant aid for farmers moving away from barren battery cages. We must continue to encourage non-cage systems (indoor barn or outdoors free-range), and also to ensure that all battery cage farmers meet the 1st January 2012 deadline for changing to other systems.

We welcome that the FAWAC, which includes a representative of Compassion - Ireland, is finalising a Code of Practice for the Welfare of Laying Hens.

Photo, right: a de-feathered hen in a barren battery cage.



We welcome the ban on sow stalls for pregnant sows after the first 4 weeks of pregnancy, which comes into effect in Ireland and throughout the EU on 1st January 2013. Again, we welcome that DAFF has given grant aid to pig farmers changing to alternative systems. We must do all we can to ensure that pig farmers meet the sow stall ban deadline.

We welcome that the FAWAC has produced a Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs (this can be read at www.fawac.ie). *Photo, left, pregnant Irish sows in stalls.*

Compassion - Ireland believes that the way forward for Irish agriculture is to take advantage of our clean environment, green image and island status (which allows a high level of control over the environment and animal health protection) by producing food that is recognised as very high quality. High animal welfare standards are an integral part of high quality food production.



Free-range hens

Write to Minister Coveney at: *(a letter is better than an email, if possible)*

Minister Simon Coveney

*Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2*

Email: minister@agriculture.gov.ie

If possible, please send Compassion in World Farming - Ireland a copy of the reply you get from the Minister (no need to send copies of standard acknowledgement letters). Our address is below.



Free-range Irish pigs

Thank you to all our supporters!

Compassion - Ireland will be 20 years old next year and in that time you have all worked very hard to bring about many changes and a greater awareness of the importance of high farm animal welfare standards. We must continue our work to ensure that all farm animals are treated as the sentient creatures that they are.

We no longer ask for annual subscriptions, but all donations (of any size, it doesn't matter how small!) will help us to continue our work in Ireland.



Mary-Anne Bartlett
Director,
Compassion in World Farming - Ireland

*Together we can
make a difference to the
lives of farm animals*



Lamb © Colin Seddon

All photos on this page are © Compassion in World Farming except where stated otherwise