

General Election 2019

A snapshot of key commitments from the main parties' manifestos affecting animal health and welfare, and other relevant issues

Green text highlights BVA manifesto pledges – see [BVA's 10 pledges](#)

Conservative

Full manifesto

Environment, animal welfare and agriculture

- Introduce tougher sentences for animal cruelty (p54)
- Crack down on the illegal smuggling of dogs and puppies (p54)
- Bring in new laws on animal sentience (p54)
- End excessively long journeys for slaughter and fattening (p54)
- Bring the ivory ban into force and extend it to cover other ivory-bearing species, and ban imports from trophy hunting of endangered animals (p54)
- Ban keeping primates as pets (p54)
- Bring forward cat microchipping, giving cat owners peace of mind and increasing the measures to tackle cat theft (p54)
- Guarantee the current annual budget to farmers in every year of the next Parliament (p42)
- Farmers must farm in a way that protects and enhances the natural environment and safeguarding high standards of animal welfare (p42)
- Encourage the public sector to 'buy British' once Britain leaves the EU
- A legal commitment to fish sustainably and a legal requirement for a plan to achieve maximum sustainable yield for each stock (p42)
- Crack down on waste that destroys the natural environment and kills marine life by increasing penalties for fly-tipping, making those on community sentences clean up their parks and streets (p43)
- No changes to be made to the Hunting Act (p43)

Brexit and Europe

- Continued collaboration internationally and with the EU on scientific research including Horizon (p40)
- Northern Ireland to enjoy the full economic benefits of Brexit including new free trade arrangements with the rest of the world (p44)

Education

- Introduce a student visa to help universities attract talented young people and allow those students to stay on to apply for work here after they graduate (p22)
- A Conservative Government will also prioritise the environment in the next Budget investing in the infrastructure science and research that would deliver economic growth (p7)
- The party will review the interest rates on student loan repayments with a view to reducing the burden of debt on students (p37)

Trade

- They aim to have 80 per cent of UK trade covered by free trade agreements within the next three years, starting with the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Japan (p57)
- They will forge stronger trade links with the Commonwealth (p57)
- They aim to dismantle barriers to trade and retake the UK's seat at the World Trade Organisation (p57)

Labour

Full manifesto

Environment, animal welfare and agriculture

- Introduce a Climate and Environment Emergency Bill setting out robust, binding new standards for de-carbonisation, nature recovery, environmental quality and habitats and species protection (p22)
- Labour's Plan for Nature will set legally binding targets to drive the restoration of species and habitats (p23)
- Labour will maintain agricultural and rural structural funds but repurpose them to support environmental land management and sustainable methods of food production (p23)
- Set maximum sustainable yields for all shared fish stocks (p24)
- Introduce an animal welfare commissioner, prohibit the sale of snares and glue traps, end the badger cull and [ban the keeping of primates as pets](#) (p24)
- Work internationally to end commercial whaling, ban the importation of hunting trophies of threatened species and boost police resources to tackle rural and wildlife crime (p24)

Brexit and Europe

- [Labour will rule out a no-deal Brexit and will end the no-deal preparations process](#) (p89)
- Continued participation in EU agencies and funding programmes, including scientific research and culture (p90)

Education

- Abolition of university tuition fees and the reintroduction of maintenance grants (p41)

Trade

- Uphold the highest environmental and social regulations in all trade relations (p17)
- [Never downgrade standards as 'barriers' to trade](#) (p17)

Labour has also published a detailed [Animal Welfare manifesto](#) (August 2019) which includes [animal sentience](#) and [puppy smuggling](#)

Liberal Democrat

Full manifesto

Environment, animal welfare and agriculture

- Provide greater resources for international environmental cooperation on climate change and on actions to tackle illegal and unsustainable trade in timber, wildlife, ivory, and fish (p94)
- Reduce basic agricultural support payments to the larger recipients and redeploy the savings to support the public goods that come from effective land management (p45)
- Introduce a National Food Strategy (p45)

- Ensure that sustainability lies at the heart of fisheries policy (p45)
- Increase the budget for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, ensuring that agencies such as Natural England and the Environment Agency are properly funded (p45)
- **Enshrine the principle of animal sentience in UK law to ensure that due regard is paid to animal welfare in policymaking** (p49)
- Introduce stronger penalties for animal cruelty offences, increasing the maximum sentencing from six months to five years (p49)
- Ensure that the National Wildlife Crime Unit is properly funded (p49)
- Ban the sale of real fur (p49)
- **End the use of primates as pets** (p49)
- **Clamp down on illegal pet imports** (p49)
- Establish an independent regulatory body for horse welfare to prevent the abuse and avoidable deaths of racehorses (p49)
- Improve standards of animal health and welfare in agriculture, including a ban on caged hens, and promote the responsible use of antimicrobials (p49)
- **Develop safe, effective, humane, and evidence-based ways of controlling bovine TB, including by investing to produce workable vaccines** (p49)
- Minimise the use of animals in scientific experimentation, including by funding research into alternatives (p49)
- **Work within the EU to ensure that future trade agreements require high environmental and animal welfare standards** (p49)
- Legislate to ban the importing of hunting trophies where the hunting does not contribute to environmental protection (p49)

Immigration

- Stop Brexit and save EU freedom of movement (p77)
- Relocate policymaking on student visas and work permits from the Home Office to the Departments for Business and Education, and establish a new arms-length, non-political agency to take over processing application (p77)
- Replace Tier 2 work visas with a more flexible merit-based system (p77)
- **Create a new two-year visa for students to work after graduation** (p77)

Green

Full manifesto

Environment, animal welfare and agriculture

- Work with farmers to refocus farm subsidies to help farmers transition to more sustainable, diverse and environmentally friendly forms of land use, including organic farming, agroforestry and mixed farming, and away from intensive livestock farming (p21)
- Through changes to the planning system, encourage the 'rewilding' of spaces to provide new habitats for wildlife (p22)
- Maintain a moratorium on production and import of genetically modified (GM) foods, including food from animals fed on GM feed (p22)
- Establish a Food and Agriculture Research Council, promoting methods of food production and distribution (p22)
- Support research into the reduction of methane emissions from livestock and the conservation and development of high-quality soils (p23)
- Incentivise changes in food consumption based on locally and sustainably produced food and 'less but better' meat and dairy consumption (p23)

- Including clear labelling to indicate carbon emissions, high animal welfare and intensive production methods
- Support the transition to plant-based diets by phasing in a tax on meat and dairy products over the next ten years to reduce the UK's carbon emissions from methane produced by livestock (p23)
- The revenue from this part of the Carbon Tax will be recycled back into farming to help transition to more sustainable farming methods
- Promote initiatives to reduce food waste through education programmes and changing rules to allow food waste to be used for animal feed (p23)
- Invest in ecotourism and associated schemes such as rewilding, habitat recovery and species reintroduction, creating new job opportunities (p59)
- Demand a review of the Common Agricultural Policy as an EU member, advocating transition to sustainable farming (p59)
- investing in schemes such as street planting of native trees, compulsory hedgehog holes in all new fencing and bee corridors
- **Guarantee the principle of animal sentience** (p68)
- Ban all hunting including trail hunting; end artificial landscapes designed only for hunting and rewild the land; where necessary for ecological reasons humane culling will be licensed by Natural England; ban the use of lead ammunition and outlaw all forms of snaring (p68)
- End badger cull as it has proven ineffective; fund sensitive test to enable cattle vaccination and invest in better biosecurity and badger vaccination (p68)
- Work towards an outright ban on animal testing; stop the use of primates in labs (p68)
- Enforce tougher regulation on animal transportation e.g. limit maximum travel time to 8h (p68)
- Advocate for European legislation to end factory farming, prohibit the routine use of antibiotics and ban killing of animals for sport (p68)
- Call on nations to declare the waters under their control havens for whaling (p68)
- Ban completely all cages and close confinement and deliberate mutilation of farm animals
- Help shoppers choose cruelty free food with mandatory labelling (p70)
- Enhance regulation and controls on breeding, sale and import with compulsory licensing applying to everyone working with animals; ban all those on the animal cruelty register from ever working with animals again (p70)
- Encourage the use of companion animals in therapy and other treatments (p70)
- Create a new Commission on Animal Protection, responsible for overseeing all rules designed to protect animals from cruelty (p70)

Brexit Party

Full manifesto

Brexit and Europe

- Maintain subsidies and grants paid by the EU to UK businesses such as farmers, fisheries, universities and research bodies (p14)

Education

- Abolish student loan interest (p20)

SNP

Full manifesto

Environment, animal welfare and agriculture

- Prevent the UK Government taking devolved powers over farming or fishing or attaching strings to any future funding (p39)
- Make the UK Government pay all the costs to Scotland's rural economy resulting from Brexit (p39)
- Should the UK leave the EU, the SNP will continue to fight to prevent damaging tariffs and for affected sectors like seafood, fisheries and red meat to be fully compensated (p39)
- Press for a future deal with the EU that protects and enhances Scotland's high value agricultural outputs (p39)
- Seek UK Government investment to improve the whisky industry's connectivity and sustainability, including funding for low carbon projects (p40)
- **SNP MPs will support the Scottish Government's efforts to maintain current EU standards and regulations over animal and plant health** (p40)
- Campaign to ban the import into the UK of any supposed trophy of any animal on the CITES list of endangered species (p40)
- Ensure funding over agriculture and rural policy is repatriated to Scotland if the UK leaves the EU and fight for fair funding for farmers (p40)
- Press the UK government to deliver the remaining £80m to Scottish farmers, and for the future funding due to Scotland of around £25m per year to be secured, no strings attached (p40)

Brexit and Europe

- Stop Brexit – if that isn't possible, SNP MPs will act to protect Scotland's place in the single market and customs union (p24)
- **Prevent a no-deal Brexit** (p39)

Immigration

- In an independent Scotland, the rights of EU nationals will be safeguarded and strengthened (p42)
- Continue freedom of movement (p44)
- Continue to call on the UK government to guarantee EU nationals' right to remain in the UK and for devolution of migration policy (p39)

Plaid Cymru

Full manifesto

Environment, animal welfare and agriculture

- Bring forward legislation to tackle the extinction crisis, placing a legal obligation on this and future governments to act for the recovery of nature (p62)
- Secure robust, independent governance and accountability processes to uphold the law and stand up for our environment (p62)
- Support greater transition to organic and other sustainable farming systems (p62)
- Plaid Cymru is calling for the devolution of powers relating to dog attacks on livestock (p69)
- Supports the introduction of new legislation to regulate the sale of pet animals online to ensure that animals are protected (p70)
- **Introduce legislation to fully ban the keeping of primates as pets** (p70)

- Implement the recommendations of the Westminster Parliament's Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee on ending the breed specific legislation, as it fails to protect public safety and results in the unnecessary destruction of hundreds of dogs (p70)
- Introduce an online harm regulator with the powers to require social media providers to ensure that animal cruelty content is not shared on their platforms (p70)
- **Strengthen legislation against illegal puppy imports** (p70)
- **Plaid Cymru will demand that future trade deals seek to strengthen rather than weaken animal welfare legislation** (p71)
- Invest in Overseas Development Aid that supports a transition to ecologically friendly farming. Require that imported palm oil comes from sustainable sources (p63)
- Ban imports of soy, beef and other agri-commodities from illegally deforested land (p63)
- **The party says that future trade deals undertaken by the UK, whether inside or outside the EU, should maintain and enhance environmental standards, minimise the environmental footprint of trade and make trade terms explicitly subject to environmental and human rights commitments.** Within this, there should be protections for vital global ecosystems and habitats such as the Amazon, and for indigenous people (p63)
- Publish a set of trade negotiation principles, including for labour and environment standards, and protection of the rights of cultural and language minorities (p86)
- Call for Welsh associate membership of UNESCO, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the International Maritime Organisation (p87)

Trade

- Ensure that future trade policy upholds social, health and environmental protections (p16)
- Ensure that all UK national parliaments are consulted throughout negotiations on future trade deals (p16)

Education

- Undertake a review of the funding offer for Welsh domiciled undergraduate and post graduate students in respect of both tuition fees and living costs (p40)
- Provide a subsidy to students resident in Wales who wish to study in Wales (p40)
- Target groups and those studying subjects vital to the Welsh economy and public goals will pay no tuition fees in Wales, including those taking up key healthcare posts, studying science, engineering and technology subjects and students from particularly challenging backgrounds (p40)
- Guarantee to replace EU funding which supported research in higher education in the event of Brexit (p41)
- Protect inward and outward student mobility post-Brexit, including participation in Erasmus+ or any successor schemes and cross-border study on the island of Ireland (p41)

Immigration

- Change the settled status application into a registration system, ensuring that all EU citizens who are resident in the UK before exit day should have the right of permanent residence (p19)

DUP

Full manifesto

Brexit

- The UK must leave the EU as one country, with no border in the Irish Sea
- There must be unfettered access for Northern Ireland to and from the Great Britain market
- Work towards a Brexit deal in Northern Ireland's interests

Environment, animal welfare and agriculture

- Ensure agriculture is afforded protection in post-Brexit trade deals (p18)
- Keep the farming and food sector moving forward by having devolution restored and a local minister in charge of developing that new vision for agriculture (p18)
- The DUP will not support trade agreements that allow the UK market to be flooded with products that do not meet the high standards of food safety, environmental and animal welfare standards that are demanded of our farmers (p18)
- Currently direct support for farms under the CAP is linked to land holding. The DUP believe that this should change and that future government policy needs to reflect the national need for food security and rewarding productive, sustainable farming systems and proven environmental benefit.
- Funding allocations made to agriculture and related areas must be ring fenced in any future budget decisions; they should be directed at delivering efficiencies, adapting to changes in markets, increasing profitability on family farms and delivering high environmental and animal welfare standards (p18)
- Future agriculture support should be outside the Barnett formula – the significance and differences of farming communities across the UK cannot be reflected through a basic formula.
- Animal health schemes, like the BVD eradication scheme, provide an important vehicle to driving efficiency on farms. This should be widened out to include Johne's disease in cattle. Tackling TB also needs a holistic approach, continuing with the status quo will not solve the problem and is at a massive cost to the taxpayer.
- The DUP supports the creation of Environmental Protection based on the Food Standards Agency, which aims to provide the best use of resources and access to the highest degree of expertise (p23)
- The DUP has stated that it is committed to introducing further legislation to improve animal care. This includes the introduction of Private Member's legislation banning circuses that contain wild animals (p24)
- Introduce Finn's Law with the aim of preventing those who attack and injure service animals from claiming the right of self-defence (p24)
- Introduction of pet theft and pet kidnap as specific (p24)
- Support a centrally compiled "Banned Offenders" Register for Northern Ireland (p24)
- Increase the minimum sentence for animal cruelty to 5 years (p24)
- A new examination scheme for how a scheme to microchip cats can be implemented (p24)
- Create a public awareness campaign on the legislative protections for animals in Northern Ireland (p24)
- Development of dedicated school resources for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils on the hard work involved in pet ownership (p24)

Immigration

- The UK should develop a points-based immigration system that will be built around attracting the best of global talent to the UK and addressing the skills gaps within our labour market (p16)
- The system must also address localised labour needs through not only a national skills gap list but supplementary lists for the constituent parts of the UK (p16)

Trade

- While the DUP will work to secure a Free Trade Agreement with the EU in a post Brexit scenario if this is not realised we believe that the UK tariff schedule should ensure reciprocal tariffs are placed on all agri-food products which are imported from the EU. We would also place a much more sustainable Tariff Rate Quota and Tariff Rate on all imports from the rest of the world to ensure UK farmers have a level playing field for competition. (p18)
- DEFRA in particular must strengthen its ability to open new export markets for British produce across the world - we would urge the Government to build upon the work they have done in

recent years by employing more staff in this area, greater advertising presence and conduct significantly more trade missions. (p18)

Alliance

Full manifesto

Agriculture

- Securing membership of the Customs Union [and full participation in the Single Market] to minimise the adverse effects of Brexit to our farming and agribusiness sectors and ensuring that customers do not see price rises due to tariffs (p22)
- Ensuring UK farming continues to meet high standards of production such as food safety, environmental protection and animal welfare; these high standards need to be considered when negotiating any future trade deals (p22)
- Greening the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with increased responsibility given to the devolved nations (p22)
- Ensuring that immigration policy means that there is labour available for work on farms and in food processing (p22)
- Farming and agricultural supply chains make up a larger segment of the Northern Ireland economy in comparison to the rest of the UK - any agricultural and rural development strategy and resultant funding schemes should consider this proportional difference (p23)
- Supporting mechanisms that minimise disruption to the North-South supply chains in agri-food and maximise potential for sales into Great Britain, EU, and international markets (p23)
- Enhance the power of the NI Assembly in relation to the formulation and implementation of agricultural policy and associated environmental legislation (p23)

Animal welfare

- A UK-wide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses (p25)
- Phasing out the use of caged systems in farming and banning the building of any new caged systems on UK farms (p25)
- Improving food labelling and traceability in relation to welfare standards (p25)
- Mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses (p25)
- Ending the overuse of antibiotics in farming (p25)
- Supporting the extension of the 2004 Hunting Act to Northern Ireland and opposition to any attempts to repeal it in Westminster (p25)
- Using the UK's global influence to end 'trophy hunting' and the trade of illegal animal products (p25)
- Outlawing the use of snares (p25)
- Opposing the live export of animals and fattening for slaughter (p25)
- Better regulation of the sale of puppies and kittens, especially when sold on the internet or in pet shops (p25)
- Working to reduce and better regulate necessary animal testing and invest in developing alternative scientific methods and practices (p25)
- Bringing the rest of the UK into line with Northern Ireland's enhanced sentencing for animal cruelty (p25)

Immigration

- Provide a role for Northern Ireland in determining skills shortages for Northern Ireland in relation to Tier 2 visas (p29)
- Ensure regional flexibility is built into immigration strategy and legislation (p29)

- Guarantee the existing rights of EU citizens resident within the UK and the rights of UK citizens resident in the rest of the EU after Brexit (p29)
- Remove the cap on non-EU migrants (p29)
- Exempt international students from being counted as migrants during the course of their studies and introduce a two-year visa for students to work after graduation (p29)
- Ensure that any post-Brexit immigration policy remains open to workers in sectors that will have significant difficulty in functioning without migrant workers, such as the health service, agriculture and scientific research (p29)
- Make the visa system simpler and easier for legitimate sponsors to fulfil their role (p29)

Science, skills and innovation

- Continued access to competitive EU funds, such as Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ (p32)
- Increasing investment in science and research through the UK Research Councils (p34)
- Supporting Northern Ireland's universities in drawing down greater levels of science and research funding from both the Research Councils and the EU (p34)
- Specifically identifying where gaps exist in both funding and infrastructure for science in Northern Ireland (p34)
- Ensuring that any immigration system implemented after Brexit enables those who are highly-skilled in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and related disciplines to continue to migrate to the UK to work (p34)

SDLP

Full manifesto

Protecting our peace, stopping borders, banking the backstop

- The Irish border, which has been the subject of the debate throughout the Brexit process, yet while conversation has dominated about our futures, there really has been little real understanding about the consequences any border would have on the island. The border is 500km long, has over 300 crossings. Over 4.6million goods vehicles cross the border every year. There is no technology anywhere in the world capable of securing an economic frontier of this nature without customs checks and controls. There is no check and control operation that could secure the entire border without a military style operation. People living in Northern Ireland know we cannot go back to those days. That is why it is imperative that we remain.

UUP

Full manifesto

Brexit

- Ensure Northern Ireland is not left a place apart in any final Brexit deal. We won't support trade barriers East-West or North-South. (p14)

Environment, animal welfare and agriculture

- Support closing the loophole in existing legislation which prevents the DPP referring unduly lenient sentences for animal welfare abuses in the Magistrates' Court to the Court of Appeal (p15)

- Support a new Environmental Protection Act, which would include for the first time Northern Ireland specific legal targets for net zero emissions by 2035, the establishment of a new Environmental Protection Agency and a renewed emphasis on tackling environmental crime (p16)
- Introduce a new statutory duty on tackling invasive species, as well as a target to halt the rate at which local species and habitats are declining (p16)
- Seek to provide farmers with certainty by guaranteeing CAP payments at the current level up until the end of the next 5-year term (p18)
- Ensure in the imminent trade negotiations that the UK does not compromise on the quality, traceability and high animal welfare standards of its agri-food produce (p18)

Sinn Féin

Full manifesto

- There are no mentions of animal health or welfare issues in the manifesto.