Ahead of a General Election, the British Veterinary Association is calling on all political parties to sign up to key pledges to enhance animal health and welfare, support the veterinary profession, and protect public health.

**Reject a no-deal Brexit**
Our analysis of a no-deal Brexit shows there could be serious consequences for animal health and welfare, trade, and our veterinary workforce. Although a lot of work has been done by Defra and others to prepare, we’re not convinced that enough has been done to mitigate the potential negative impacts.

**Protect all animals in law**
Animal sentience must be enshrined into UK law as a priority, covering all animals. This principle, captured in the Lisbon Treaty, recognises that animals are sentient and puts a duty on the state to have due regard for animal welfare in the development and implementation of policy.

**Protect the welfare of animals at slaughter**
Slaughter without pre-stunning compromises the welfare of millions of animals. Ultimately, we want to see an end to non-stun slaughter, but in the short term we want a limit on the number of animals affected through, for example, a system to match supply and demand and a ban on the export of non-stun produce.

**Commit to evidence-based disease control**
Poor animal health leads to welfare problems. It also results in economic costs for UK agriculture and can contribute to climate change as reduced productivity lengthens the production cycle. Programmes to tackle bovine TB and other endemic diseases must use all the available tools in the toolbox, whilst funding research into more effective options.

**Ban primates as pets**
Primates are long-lived, intelligent, and socially complex animals. It is almost impossible for private owners to meet the requirements for care that primates need as defined under animal welfare legislation. The government should ban the keeping of primates as pets.

**Boost the veterinary workforce**
We are facing a veterinary workforce crisis. We’re working hard to increase retention in the profession, but we need government to boost supply. We need an immigration system that ensures qualified vets can live and work in the UK, ongoing mutual recognition of qualifications, increased funding for vet school places, post-study work visas, and attractive salaries for vets undertaking government work.

**Protect UK welfare standards in future trade deals and agri policies**
Animal health and welfare underpins the reputation of UK PLC and our standards must not be compromised by future trade deals. The government mustn’t accept chlorinated chicken or products from systems where standards are lower. Public money to replace CAP should incentivise and support animal health and welfare outcomes as public goods.

**Strengthen legislation against illegal puppy imports**
Criminal gangs are exploiting legislative loopholes to import puppies for sale so we need to strengthen controls. We want to see an increase to the waiting time for entry to the UK and tapeworm treatments to protect all pets. The government should introduce mandatory health testing for stray dogs entering the UK to prevent these ‘Trojan dogs’ introducing new diseases.

**Introduce a single database for microchip registration**
Vets trying to rehome lost or stolen dogs have to grapple with around 14 different databases to find the owners. Individual pets are registered on more than one database leading to heart-breaking ownership disputes. A single microchip database would mean pets could be reunited with their owners quickly and safely.

**Put animal welfare on the national curriculum**
UK animal welfare legislation puts a duty of care on individuals to provide for the five welfare needs of animals. It is essential that children learn about the welfare needs and the concept of a duty of care to ensure animals have good health and welfare and a life worth living.

bva.co.uk/manifesto