



Why Animal Welfare Sunday?

What is 'Animal Welfare Sunday'?

Animal Welfare Sunday is a day in the Church's calendar on which we take time to think more deeply about our fellow creatures, to address issues of the well-being of non-human animals. Animal Welfare Sunday provides an opportunity to think and pray about the suffering that human activity causes to our fellow creatures, and our responsibility as Christians to alleviate suffering and promote the welfare of all of God's creatures. Setting aside a Sunday to consider animal welfare also allows us to take time to think about the place of animals in God's Kingdom.

Why this particular Sunday?

Animal Welfare Sunday is the Sunday nearest St Francis' Day. St Francis is the patron saint of animals, and was well-known for his concern for all of God's creatures, both human and non-human, as can be seen in these excerpts from Thomas of Celano's Life of St Francis of Assisi:

"It is truly remarkable how even irrational creatures recognised his affection for them, and sensed the tenderness of his love. Once, for example, when he was staying at the hill town of Greccio, one of the brothers brought him a live baby hare that had been caught in a snare. When the saint saw it, he was moved with pity and said: 'Come to me, brother leveret, Why did you allow yourself to be caught out like this?' As soon as the hare was released by the brother that was holding it, it took refuge with Francis and without any coaxing lay peacefully in his lap, knowing it was absolutely safe...He was moved by the same compassion for fish. When people caught fish, if he had the chance he would throw them back into the water, warning them to avoid being caught next time...Francis overflowed with charity, and he felt pity not only for men in need, but also for dumb animals, reptiles, birds, and all other creatures, whatever their intelligence."¹

Animal Welfare – the facts

Human beings impact the welfare of other animal species in myriad, often negative, ways: we hunt, fish and farm animals to provide food and clothing; we keep animals as pets and companions; animals work for us, some doing dangerous work (animals used by the police and military, in particular); we use animals for sport, often violent or dangerous sport; we use animals for experimentation and research; we degrade the environment and damage or destroy vital habitats needed by our fellow creatures for their survival.

There is a long Christian tradition of concern for animal welfare – many saints are credited with caring for animals, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (later the RSPCA), the first of what would be many SPCAs in countries all over the world, was founded by Arthur Broome, an Anglican priest, and other concerned Christians (William Wilberforce being a founding member).

Despite the Christian tradition of involvement with animal welfare, today's Christians rarely, if ever, hear the subject preached or prayed about in church, and few include it regularly in their own private prayers or regularly support animal welfare charities.²

What does the Bible say?

And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you, to keep them alive. Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them. (Genesis 6.19–21).



Why Animal Welfare Sunday?

The story of Noah is a potent illustration of God's desire for all life to be preserved and cared for, and that this is one of the tasks that God has assigned to human beings.

If you come on a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs, with the mother sitting on the fledglings or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young. (Deuteronomy 22.6).

This passage acknowledges the need of the Hebrew people to use the animals of the land as a food source, but it lays down strict conditions under which they may do so – the mother bird must be left to care for whatever young are not taken, and to be available to breed again.

When you come upon your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you shall bring it back. When you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden and you would hold back from setting it free, you must help to set it free. (Exodus 23.4–5).

According to these commands, given in Exodus, the welfare of an animal is important enough to override even divisions between enemies.

For six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have relief (Exodus 23.12a).

This passage applies specifically to working animals, but it shows that the Bible recognises that animals have needs, such as the need for rest, and that the humans who keep animals are responsible for ensuring those needs are met. Jesus refers to the above passage (Matthew 12.11; Luke 13.15) to shame the leaders of the Synagogue – not because caring for animals on the Sabbath is wrong, quite the opposite. Jesus is emphasising that the rightness of caring for one's animals, even on the Sabbath, also implies a need to care for fellow humans. A truly godly person will have compassion for all.

The righteous know the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel (Proverbs 12.10)

The use of 'righteous', to be one who is 'after God's heart' is significant. To be truly godly, we must know and respond to the needs of the animals in our care.

What can Christians do?

- Celebrate Animal Welfare Sunday – make this a regular feature of your church's calendar as a witness to the value of all of God's creatures.
- Pray – regularly include animal welfare in both public worship and private prayer.
- Learn – become informed about animal welfare issues.
- Support – there are charities, such as ASWA and Catholic Concern for Animals that work to raise awareness of animal welfare issues in the Christian community.
- Spread the word – tell other Christians about the theology of animal welfare, and encourage them to make care for animals part of their own Christian discipleship.



Intensive Farming of Animals

What do we mean by 'intensive farming of animals'?

Intensive farming of animals is the rearing of farm animals in large populations, primarily in enclosed environments, usually accompanied by grain feeding (rather than allowing grazing or foraging), with the intention of increasing the per-animal yield of meat, milk or eggs. In zero-grazing systems, animals are never put outdoors and are fed entirely on silage and/or grain. Meat animals in intensive systems are selectively bred for rapid growth and, in the case of poultry, larger breast muscles. Dairy cows in intensive systems are selectively bred for maximum milk production.

Intensive farming – the facts

More than 10 million dairy cows in the European Union are housed in tie-stalls (restrained by the neck) and/or zero-grazed.¹

Lameness is found in approximately 25% of the US dairy herd and in 20–25% of the EU herd.¹

In the USA, more than 90% of dairy cows are indoor reared, with fewer than 2% having any access to pasture.²

In Australia, the number of beef cattle being grain-fed (rather than on pasture) trebled between 1992 and 2004.³

At least 50% of all pigs reared in the world are in industrial systems (about 700 million pigs per year).⁴

Approximately 90% of pigs reared for meat in the EU are housed in barren systems (hard floors without bedding).⁴

Worldwide, more than 70% of chicken meat comes from industrial systems, with approximately 90% of broiler chickens in the EU, and around 72% in the UK, reared in indoor systems.⁵

The majority of egg-laying hens in the USA are still kept in battery cages.⁶

Breeding for maximum productivity results in breeds (and individual animals) that may be predisposed to poor health and welfare.⁷ Lameness and infection are more common in these animals than in lower-yield breeds.

Surgical mutilation (tail docking, debeaking, tooth trimming) is often used to curb harmful behaviours that develop as the result of stress caused by intensive rearing conditions.⁷

Farm animals are often highly social species, and suffer great distress when separated from companions or offspring⁸, something that happens frequently in intensive systems.

Intensive farming and disease

The risk of *E. coli* and *Salmonella* is greater in intensive production systems than in more traditional farming systems, and fast-growing poultry may be more susceptible to *Campylobacter* infection than slower growing breeds.⁹

Antibiotics are used in intensive systems as growth promoters and to prevent infection. This non-therapeutic use can lead to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria that, when they infect humans or other animals, result in infections that are untreatable with standard antibiotic therapy.¹⁰

Antibiotics given to farm animals orally (through feed, etc) reach the soil through urine and faeces (up to 72% of active ingredient given can be recovered from soil); the effect of these antibiotics on soil microbiology is unknown.¹¹

What drives intensive farming?

Despite the many problems associated with intensive farming, it is becoming more common. Why? Sadly, because farming is now big business, and intensive rearing of animals is seen as the easiest way to increase efficiency and maximise profit. Too often, profit often takes priority over ethics. But this runs contrary to a report commissioned by the UK government in 1995, which stated:

*Doubtless abolition of child labour in 19th century Britain could have been opposed on the grounds that it would have disadvantaged British manufacturers...but...the claims made upon us by ethical principles cannot simply be suspended where those principles seem to conflict with self-interest.*¹²



Intensive Farming of Animals

What are the alternatives?

Outdoor-reared, free-range and organic systems all provide greater animal welfare than intensive systems. But these systems are more labour intensive, and the resulting product more expensive than industrially produced meat, milk and eggs.

What does the Bible say?

The righteous know the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel (Proverbs 12.10)

The use of 'righteous', to be one who is 'after God's heart' is significant. If an animal's needs include an appropriate diet, rest, the ability to respond to their instincts and engage in natural behaviours, access to natural light and fresh air, and freedom from pain, then intensive farming of animals cannot be understood as anything other than ungodly and unrighteous. The Bible even demonstrates an awareness to allow animals to engage in their natural behaviours, and to have appropriate rest:

You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain (Deuteronomy 25.4).

The seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work – you or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns (Deuteronomy 5.14)

In intensive farming systems, the animals have no rest, and no opportunity to engage in their natural behaviours, including rest, recreation and social bonding.

The Bible also has something to say about putting money first:

You cannot serve God and wealth (Matthew 6.24).

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6.10)

To be faithful servants of God, we must learn to put the welfare of his creatures before wealth – whether that is profit or cheap food.

What can Christians do?

- Pray – include farm animal welfare in both public worship and private prayer.
- Eat less (or no) meat – if we all reduce our meat consumption, the perceived demand for intensively reared meat would disappear. Eating less meat frees up money to buy more ethically produced meat. Try having meat-free Mondays or a Vegetarian Lent.
- Be selective in shopping – Choose only organic, free-range and RSPCA freedom food products. Check the labelling on products that include meat, eggs and dairy (e.g. lasagnes and quiches) – if the label doesn't indicate the welfare standard, don't buy it. Ask restaurants about where they source their meat, dairy and eggs, and what they know about the welfare of the animals. Avoid buying meat from fast-food outlets, especially chicken.
- Support – there are charities, such as Compassion in World Farming, the RSPCA, the RSPCA Australia and the HSUS, who are speaking with a prophetic voice and working to end suffering, and they deserve our support.
- Make your voice heard – write to your local and national representatives in government (EU residents can also write to their MEP) and ask them to support legislation that ends the cruel practices of intensive farming, including indoor-only rearing, battery cages, farrowing cages, etc. Write to your local supermarket requesting organic and free-range products, and asking that only products from animals reared to the highest welfare standards be included in their product ranges.
- Spread the word – tell friends, colleagues and others about the cruelty of intensive farming, the alternatives available when we shop, and ask them to get involved.

Live Exports

What do we mean by 'live exports'?

Live export is the transporting of living animals for slaughter or 'fattening' in another country.

Live exports – the facts

All varieties of farm animals, including sheep, pigs, cattle and horses are all transported across Europe for slaughter. Cattle and sheep are transported from Europe, Australia and the Americas to the Middle East for slaughter, often by ship, with transport taking up to 3 weeks.

Nearly three-and-a-half million live animals are transported annually from the EU to non-EU countries,¹ and 6 million live animals are transported annually across Europe, often travelling great distances in journeys lasting up to 70 hours²

The EU requires that animal welfare be considered in regulations relating to farm animals:

In formulating and implementing the Union's agriculture, fisheries, transport, internal market, research and technological development and space policies, the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals.³

And yet, animals suffer during these journeys^{1,2}:

- Food and water deprivation for 4 hours results in vigorous attempts by cattle to obtain food and water
- Cattle become too fatigued to stand after 6 hours of transport
- Pigs suffer from motion sickness and do not travel well
- Extreme heat is often a problem for animals during transport, regardless of species, but this is particularly detrimental to pigs, as they cannot sweat enough to regulate their body temperature effectively
- Sheep show an increase in motivation to feed after just six hours of food deprivation and can take up to 44 hours to recover from just 4 hours of transport
- Animals are often transported in overcrowded conditions, without adequate food, water and ventilation
- Rough handling adds to the stress experienced by animals during transport
- Animals can become injured from falls, and risk being trampled

As we know from our own experience with foot and mouth disease here in the UK, the transportation of animals can and does contribute to the spread of disease.

The recent horse meat scandal shows that the transportation of animals across borders for slaughter and processing creates dangerously long and convoluted supply chains, difficult to regulate.

England and the rest of the UK has strict regulations relating to the slaughter of farm animals and their treatment prior to slaughter.⁴ These regulations are not necessarily matched in other countries, and there is no way to guarantee humane slaughter in other countries.

What drives the live export trade?

Despite the many problems associated with live exports, including breaching of EU regulations, it continues to be a huge industry. Why? Sadly, because there is a lot of money in it and for both governments and business, profit often takes priority over ethics. But this runs contrary to a report commissioned by the UK government in 1995, which stated:

Doubtless abolition of child labour in 19th century Britain could have been opposed on the grounds that it would have disadvantaged British manufacturers...but...the claims made upon us by ethical principles cannot simply be suspended where those principles seem to conflict with self-interest.⁵



Live Exports

What are the alternatives?

Replace live export with the export of carcasses – animals slaughtered near to where they were raised do not have to face the problems associated with transport

If you are a meat-eater, consume more domestic, rather than imported, meat, thus reducing the need for farmers to export to make a profit

What does the Bible say?

A righteous know the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel (Proverbs 12.10)

The use of 'righteous', to be one who is 'after God's heart' is significant. If an animal's needs include food, water, rest, and freedom from pain, then live exports cannot be understood as anything other than ungodly and unrighteous.

And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you...also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them (Genesis 6.19, 21)

The Bible doesn't really deal with farm animal transport directly, as the movement of flocks and herds in biblical times would have been on foot, with human accompaniment, so the issues that we face today would not have arisen. The one exception is the story of Noah, in which animals have to be confined in a transport for their own safety. Noah is clearly instructed to keep them alive and to provide for their needs, and this should serve as the benchmark for how to care for animals in transport.

The seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work – you or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns (Deuteronomy 5.14)

The Sabbath commanded by God is to ensure rest for all – including domestic animals, recognising that they have needs and we have a responsibility to meet those needs.

Jesus' teaching in Luke 13.10–17 is also relevant here, as he uses the example of the welfare needs of animals taking precedence over Sabbath regulations to make the point that when we work to relieve suffering, we are doing the work of God.

The Bible also has something to say about putting money first

You cannot serve God and wealth (Matthew 6.24).

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6.10)

To be faithful servants of God, we must learn to put the welfare of his creatures before wealth – whether that is profit or cheap food.

What can Christians do?

- Pray – remember the suffering of God's innocent creatures in both public worship and private prayer.
- Get involved – join a peaceful, legal campaign, such as a petition, demonstration or boycott
- Support – there are charities, such as Compassion in World Farming and Animals' Angels (a Christian organisation), who are speaking with a prophetic voice and working to end suffering that deserve our support
- Make your voice heard – write to your MP and MEP to ask them to support bans on live exports
- Spread the word – tell friends, colleagues and others about the cruelty of live exports and ask them to get involved.

Companion Animals

What do we mean by ‘companion animals’?

Companion animals are pets, or animals kept for pleasure (rather than working animals). When we talk about companion animals, we mostly think about dogs and cats, but any animals kept as pets come into this category – rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs, pet reptiles, birds, even some horses and ponies.

Companion animals – the facts

It is estimated that 7.8 million dogs, 9.5 million cats and 1 million rabbits are kept as pets in the UK.¹ In the USA, there are approximately 70 million dogs, 74 million cats and 8 million horses kept as pets.² There are thought to be 33 million animals kept as pets in Australia, including 3.4 million dogs and 2.4 million cats.³

There are an estimated 2 million stray cats in the UK, though the true figure may be even higher.⁴ In 2006, there were estimated to be just over 100,000 stray dogs in the UK,⁵ the number today is probably higher. Approximately 7.6 million companion animals are taken into animal shelters in the USA every year.⁶ There are nearly 3,000 horses and ponies being cared for in rescue centres in the UK because they have been abandoned by their owners.⁷

In the UK, only 38% of pet owners are aware of the Animal Welfare Act and the five welfare needs for pets that it mandates.¹

Why do we keep companion animals?

Companion animals provide company and love, and they can be a source of joy and delight. Companion animals can help children learn about responsibility and caring for and relating to animals. Unfortunately, some people keep (often inappropriate) companion animals as status symbols.

Why do people abandon companion animals?

The costs associated with keeping animals can be very high, and this is often a reason that animals are abandoned. Most pet owners substantially underestimate how much a companion animal will cost over its lifetime.¹

What do animals get in return?

Where owners are responsible, companion animals receive love, care and companionship, together with a safe environment in which to live, a reliable supply of food and water, and veterinary care that ensures that they remain in good health or receive appropriate treatment when they fall ill.

What does the law say about companion animal welfare?

UK law specifies that people keeping animals have a responsibility to ensure that an animal's needs are met. These needs include, "the need for a suitable environment, suitable diet, the ability to exhibit natural behaviours, to be kept with or apart from other animals [as appropriate], and the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease."⁸

In the USA, laws relating to animal welfare differ from state to state, but most states have laws relating to the welfare of domestic animals.

Companion Animals

What does the Bible say?

The Bible has very little to say about companion animals. In most cases in ancient Israelite society, household animals would have been farm or working animals, so this is not surprising. But there are biblical principles expressed elsewhere that can be applied to companion animals.

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. (Genesis 9.8–10)

We often think of a covenant as a two-way agreement, with responsibilities on both sides (such as the covenant between God and the people of Israel). But the covenant God makes with Noah and all the creatures from the ark is different. In this case, God makes a covenantal promise without requiring any action or promise in return from his covenant partners, either human or animal. In taking an animal into our home and family, we do much the same thing. There is an implied covenant of care and responsibility.

For six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have relief (Exodus 23.12a).

This passage applies specifically to working animals, but it shows that the Bible recognises that animals have needs, such as the need for rest, and that the humans who keep animals are responsible for ensuring those needs are met. Jesus refers to the above passage (Luke 13.15) to shame the leaders of the Synagogue – not because caring for animals on the Sabbath is wrong, quite the opposite. Jesus is emphasising that the rightness of caring for one's animals, even on the Sabbath, also implies a need to care for fellow humans. A truly godly person will have compassion for all.

What can Christians do?

- Pray – include companion animals and their welfare in both public worship and private prayer.
- Be responsible pet owners – make sure that you are providing for your companion animal's welfare needs, including routine veterinary care (such as vaccinations). Instead of buying a companion animal, adopt from a rescue centre: overbreeding is a serious problem, and there are many stray animals in need of loving homes.
- Support – there are charities, such as the RSPCA, the RSPCA Australia, the ASPCA, and local animal shelters, that work to prevent cruelty and to care for abandoned animals, and they deserve our support.
- Make your voice heard – write to your representatives in local and national government to make them aware that you want animal welfare legislation to be robustly enforced. In the UK and other European countries, you can write to your MEP and ask him or her what they are doing to help stray and abandoned animals in the EU.
- Spread the word – tell friends, colleagues and others about the problems of overbreeding and stray animals, and encourage anyone thinking about getting a companion animal to adopt rather than buy. Gently remind those you know who have companion animals about the need to meet their animals' welfare needs.

Animals in Laboratory Experiments

What do we mean by 'laboratory experiments'?

Laboratory experiments are those in which animals are kept captive (usually in cages) and are used for medical or other research. The most common experiments are those in which animals are exposed to substances, such as new drugs, cosmetics or cleaning products. This exposure can involve being dosed with the substance, either orally or by injection, to test for toxicity, or direct contact with the skin or eyes to test whether or not the substance is an irritant. Other experiments involve invasive procedures to the brain or other parts of an animal's body. Animals are also used for a variety of psychological experiments, some of which are unlikely to cause distress to the animal (such as tasks that demonstrate ability to learn or remember) and others which may cause stress and anxiety.

Laboratory experiments – the facts

In July 2013, *The Daily Mail* reported that the number of animal experiments conducted in the UK had risen to 4.1million in the previous year, including experiments on 2,186 primates.¹

It is estimated that 18.5 million animals are used in experiments in the USA each year, and 10.5 million in the EU.² In the UK in 2013, 2.1 million genetically-modified animals (some intentionally bred to have harmful genetic modifications) were bred for research.³

More than 6 million animals are used for research annually in Australia and New Zealand.⁴

It is now known that the animals used for laboratory experiments (mainly rodents, rabbits, cats, dogs, primates and other vertebrates) are sentient, capable of experiencing both physical pain and fear, anxiety and depression. Although humans and other mammals share many physical characteristics, each species differs from others to some degree physiologically, which means that the response to diseases, drugs and other agents shown in one species does not always accurately predict what will happen in humans.⁵

- *An example of this is the case of TGN1412, a cancer drug that was tested in five healthy volunteers in 2006 (a sixth volunteer received a placebo). Those that received the drug became seriously ill and suffered multiple organ failure. The company that produced the drug defended itself by saying this was unforeseeable as the drug had been extensively tested in rats and mice, and also tested in monkeys, with no ill effects.*⁶

What drives animal experimentation?

The primary driver of animal experimentation is the law. Most, if not all countries, require new drugs to be tested on animals before they can be tested in humans.

- *As noted above, these laws are based on the false premise that animal testing guarantees that a drug is safe to use in humans.*
- *The European Union also requires the testing of new chemicals to be introduced into commercial use (and some chemicals that have been in use for some time, but never previously tested).*⁷

What are the alternatives?

Several alternatives to animal testing exist, although which alternative will be most appropriate will depend on the type of research being done. Cell cultures, using cells from human tissue, computer modelling, non-invasive imaging (such as MRI), micro-dosing (giving very small doses of a drug to human volunteers), and the use of human cadavers, donated for medical research, to trial and refine new surgical techniques can all be used as alternatives to animal testing.^{5,8,9}



Animals in Laboratory Experiments

What does the Bible say?

Not surprisingly, the Bible does not have anything to say on animal experimentation, as this was not something that existed in biblical times. There are, however, passages that can help us to consider what the Christian response to the use of animals in experimentation should be.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' (Genesis 1.26).

The concept of 'dominion' has often been used to justify human use and exploitation of the earth's resources and our fellow creatures. But dominion is not domination. It is the responsibility to exercise authority on God's behalf. Such 'rule' must therefore be a reflection of God's rule over the earth – one that comes from love, is caring and nurturing, and recognises the inherent goodness of the whole of creation.

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. (Psalm 24.1).

The animals that we use in laboratory experiments are not ours, they belong to God and to God alone.

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father...So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10.29–31; see also Luke 12.6–7).

Don't these verses show that humans are of greater value than animals, and that sacrificing animals to improve human health and save lives is justified? No. What Jesus is pointing out to his disciples is that God cares about and watches over even those things which humans deem of little value, so they should trust God to care for them, too. Although in human society, humans are valued more highly than sparrows, there is nothing in what Jesus says to indicate that this is also how God views the world. Remember what God says through his prophet, Isaiah: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." (Isaiah 55.8). God sees and notes the suffering of the animals in the world's labs. Further evidence of human–animal equality is seen in Genesis

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark..." (Genesis 9.9–17).

God sees not only the humans, but animals, as covenant partners, and there is no distinction made between humans and animals in the covenant that God makes with them.

What can Christians do?

- Pray – include laboratory animal welfare in both public worship and private prayer.
- Be selective in shopping – There are cruelty-free alternatives for many household products. Choose products that carry BUAV (British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection) approval. When choosing cosmetics, ask if the product or its ingredients have been tested on animals and choose those that haven't.
- Support – there are charities, such as the BUAV and the European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE), that speak out against animal experimentation. There are also charities, notably the Dr Hadwen Trust and FRAME that do research into alternatives to animal testing, particularly for medical research.
- Make your voice heard – write to your local and national representatives in government (EU residents can also write to their MEP) and ask them to support changes in legislation to reduce or remove the requirements for animal testing.
- Spread the word – tell friends, colleagues and others about the cruelty involved in animal experimentation and the drive to find alternatives, and ask them to get involved.



Endangered Species

What do we mean by 'endangered species'?

Endangered species are those whose population numbers have become so low that they are threatened with extinction. Although endangered species refers to both plants and animals, in this context, we are referring to animals.

Endangered species – the facts

According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, there are 6,114 endangered and critically endangered animal species worldwide.¹

Habitat loss and fragmentation of habitat are the two most factors in species endangerment, with habitat loss the most important factor.²

The illegal trade in animal wildlife and wildlife products, whether live animals or products such as ivory and rhino horn, has been estimated to be worth up to as much as \$23 billion, annually.³

Overfishing has resulted in populations of large ocean fish dropping to just 10% of pre-industrial-era population sizes.⁴

What drives extinction and endangerment of animals?

In many places, increasing human populations and the expansion of human settlement results in habitat loss that affects both plant and animal species.

Human greed is another key driver – governments sell logging rights to companies that, in turn, clear vital forest habitats, and the basic motivating factor for both is profit. The clearing of rainforests to plant palm oil plantations or provide grazing for beef cattle is also driving habitat loss and a resulting loss of species in South America and Asia. The potential for large corporate profits also drives much overfishing.

Human ignorance is also driving species towards extinction – the demand for products such as rhino horn for use as 'traditional medicine' is based on folklore, not fact, as these products have no efficacy. Tourists can be tempted to buy souvenirs while on holiday, not knowing that they are made from protected or endangered species (plant or animal).

What does the Bible say?

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1.24–25)

The diversity of creation is pleasing to God, and part of the goodness of the world.

For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them.' (Genesis 6.17–21)

This passage shows that the preservation of species is important to God, and is one of the things that God has tasked humans to do.

Endangered Species

For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knows whether the human spirit goes upwards and the spirit of animals goes downwards to the earth? (Ecclesiastes 3.19–21).

We should remember our similarity with other animal life, that we are all of the earth. All, therefore, are entitled to their share of the earth. This passage makes clear that we should not be arrogant or presumptuous about human life after death. It is also a reminder that humanity does not, and cannot, live in isolation. Our well-being is connected to that of other life on the planet.

The Bible also has something to say about putting money first

You cannot serve God and wealth (Matthew 6.24).

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6.10).

If we are to be faithful to our calling as Christians, we cannot put profit above caring for the earth and its creatures.

And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. (Mark 16.15).*

We are called to proclaim the good news to all creation – for this to be genuine, we must also be good news, and that means living in ways that protect creation and allow all of God's creatures to flourish.

What can Christians do?

- Pray – include wildlife and endangered species in both public worship and private prayer.
- Shop wisely – make sure that wood and paper products come from sustainable sources; avoid products containing palm oil (or, if unavoidable, use those that contain sustainably sourced palm oil); do not buy products that may contain products produced from endangered species.
- Support – there are many charities, such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Friends of the Earth, Defenders of Wildlife and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) that work to prevent habitat loss and to protect endangered species, and they deserve our support.
- Make your voice heard – write to your representatives in local and national government to make them aware that you want laws prohibiting the trade in protected wildlife, and those protecting vital habitats, to be robustly enforced. In the UK and other European countries, you can write to your MEP and ask him or her what they are doing to prevent the illegal trade in wildlife, what they are doing to prevent habitat loss and overfishing.
- Spread the word – tell friends, colleagues and others about the problems affecting endangered species, and encourage them to get involved in protecting the world's vulnerable wildlife.

Badger Cull

What do we mean by 'badger cull'?

The 'badger cull' refers to the policy of shooting wild badgers in selected counties in England (Gloucestershire and Somerset) in an effort to reduce the incidence and spread of bovine TB among cattle.

The badger cull – the facts

1558 badgers have been killed in the culls, many of which were likely to have been disease free.^{1,2}

The pilot culls in Gloucestershire and Somerset were found to be ineffective and inhumane.³

The original randomised badger culling trial in 2003 found that culling badgers where TB was already present in cattle resulted in a 27% **increase** in bovine TB; where badgers were culled proactively reduced the incidence of bovine TB by 19% within the cull area, but **increased** the incidence of TB by 29% up to 2km outside the cull area as a result of perturbation (badgers moving from one area to another because of the disturbance caused by culling).⁴

In Wales, plans for culling were replaced with a programme of vaccination.⁴

The way in which the disease may be transmitted from badgers to cattle is, as yet, not known.⁵

Cattle-to-cattle transmission is a significant factor in the spread of the disease.⁶

What drives the badger cull?

The badger cull is driven largely by desperation. Despite the scientific evidence that a cull won't be effective, and may make the problem worse, farmers are still demanding it. Why? Because bovine TB is extremely costly to farmers – the cost of dealing with a TB-infected herd can be as much as £27,000.⁷ Additionally, most farmers don't want to see their cattle suffer with what is a terrible illness, and they regret the need to slaughter infected animals. In their desperation, many see culling as the only way available to them to stop the spread of the disease.

What are the alternatives?

Vaccination is the primary alternative to culling

Lord Krebs has suggested that biosecurity, "keeping cattle away from badgers, badgers away from cattle, and preventing transmission [of TB] between cattle," should be the primary objective in the fight against bovine TB⁸

What does the Bible say?

The Bible does not speak to this issue directly, as the causes of diseases like bovine TB were unknown in biblical times. There are, however, some general principles that can be applied.

The righteous know the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel (Proverbs 12.10)

The use of 'righteous', to be one who is 'after God's heart' is significant. To be one who is righteous is to care appropriately for one's animals. On the face of it, this may be seen to favour culling, in order to protect the cattle that are in the farmer's care. But the facts show that culling is not only ineffective, it can make the problem worse and lead to disease being spread to a wider area, putting more cattle at risk. The righteous action, therefore, is to forego the 'quick fix' and instead look for a long-term solution that prevents disease in both cattle and badgers.

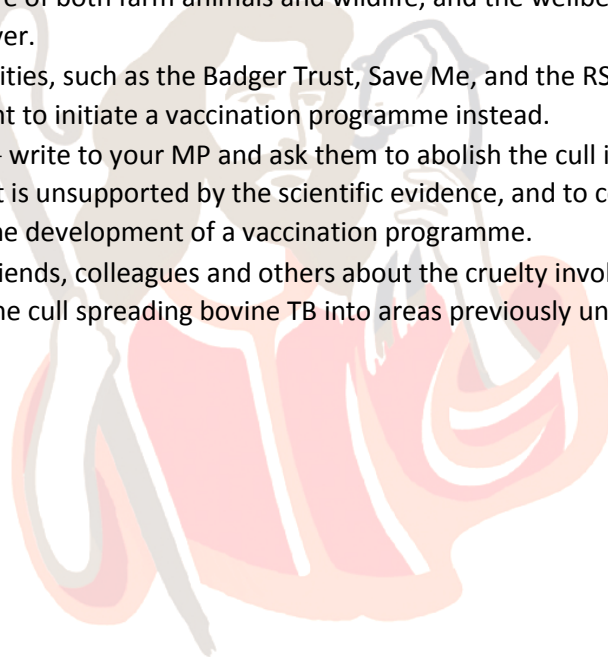
Badger Cull

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11.6–9).

This vision of the 'Peaceable Kingdom' is a vision of creation as God intends and desires it to be – this is the kingdom that Christians are called to create, so far as we are able, in our own lives, and it is a kingdom in which different species live together harmoniously in peace. No one species is singled out as more important than the others. Using the Peaceable Kingdom as a guide suggests that the proper way to solve the problem of bovine TB is not to kill one species in order to protect another, but to work for a solution, such as vaccination, that allows all to live safely and peacefully together.

What can Christians do?

- Pray – include the welfare of both farm animals and wildlife, and the wellbeing of farmers, in both public worship and private prayer.
- Support – there are charities, such as the Badger Trust, Save Me, and the RSPCA working to end the cull and convince government to initiate a vaccination programme instead.
- Make your voice heard – write to your MP and ask them to abolish the cull in Gloucestershire and Somerset, especially as it is unsupported by the scientific evidence, and to concentrate government efforts and funding on the development of a vaccination programme.
- Spread the word – tell friends, colleagues and others about the cruelty involved in the cull, its lack of efficacy and the risk of the cull spreading bovine TB into areas previously unaffected, and ask them to get involved.





Factsheet – Useful Quotes & Prayers

Quotations

General

When he [God] became man, and thus exalted man in the beauty of God, and consequently exalted all the creatures in him, since in uniting himself with man he united himself with the nature of them all. Wherefore said the same Son of God... 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.' And thus, in this lifting up of the incarnation of his Son, and in the glory of his resurrection according to the flesh, not only did the Father beautify the creatures in part, but we can say that he left them all clothed with beauty and dignity.

– St John of the Cross¹

Now what is it that moves our very hearts and sickens us so much as cruelty shown to poor animals? They are innocent and powerless, the victims of cowardice and tyranny. There is something so very dreadful, so Satanic in tormenting those who have never harmed us, and who cannot defend themselves, who are utterly in our power.

– John Henry Newman²

Live Exports

He [St Francis] met a man with two little lambs trussed up and hanging over his shoulder that he was taking to market to sell. When Francis heard the lambs bleating, he was moved to pity, and he went up and caressed them like a mother showing pity for her weeping child. And he said to the man, "Why are you carrying my brother lambs about trussed up like that and causing them such suffering?" The man replied, "I have to, for I need the money." ...he [St Francis]...instructed the man never to sell them or do them harm, but to feed them and care for them and do everything he could to ensure their well-being.

– Thomas of Celano's Life of St Francis of Assisi³

Intensive farming

A brute is an animal no less sensible of pain than a man. He has similar nerves and organs of sensation; and his cries and groans, in case of violent impressions upon his body, though he cannot utter his complaints by speech, or human voice, are as strong indications to us of his sensibility of pain, as the cries and groans of a human being, whose language we do not understand. Now, as pain is what we are all averse to, our own sensibility of pain should teach us to commiserate it in others, to alleviate it if possible, but never wantonly or unmeritedly to inflict it.

– Humphry Primatt⁴

Companion animals

The dog is not gifted with a share of reason; but with him instinct has the power of reason. The dog has learnt by nature the secret of elaborate inferences, which sages of the world after long years of study, have hardly been able to disentangle. ..Does not the gratitude of the dog shame all who are ungrateful to their benefactors?

– St Basil the Great⁵

Animal experimentation

We may feel that though objective superiority is rightly claimed for men, yet that very superiority ought partly to consist in not behaving like a vivisector.

– C.S. Lewis⁶



Factsheet – Useful Quotes & Prayers

Endangered species

It is necessary and urgent that following the example of the poor man (St Francis) one decides to abandon inconsiderate forms of domination, capture and custody with respect to all creatures.

– Pope John Paul II⁷

Badger cull

We must never do evil that good may come of it.

– William Penn

Prayers

O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things, our brothers the animals to whom thou hast given the earth as their home in common with us. We remember with shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of man with ruthless cruelty, so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to thee in song, has been a groan of travail. May we realise that they live, not for us alone, but for themselves and for thee, and that they have the sweetness of life.

– St Basil the Great⁸

A collect for Animal Welfare Sunday

Almighty and everlasting God, you are the creator and redeemer of all things, and have made us the stewards of the earth and its creatures:

guide and strengthen us by your Spirit that we may faithfully serve you

in our care of our fellow creatures and all that you have made;

through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Lord, we thank you for the world you have made and in which we live. Hear our prayers for your creation.

Lord Jesus, show us how to love and to look after the things that you have given into our care

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

Lord, teach us to see creation through your eyes and to recognise and to appreciate the works of your hands in the things around us.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

Lord, bless the earth and all its creatures. Comfort those that suffer and know fear or pain. Give wisdom to those in power, that the environment may be protected and the earth's resources used wisely and for the benefit of all.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

Lord teach us to be merciful, as you are towards us.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

Lord we thank you for the life you have given to this world. Help us to live in peace with our fellow creatures, that we might show your love to the whole world. **Amen.**

– from a collection by Jennifer Brown

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Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals (www.aswa.org.uk)
Compassion in World Farming (www.ciwf.org.uk)
Kent Action Against Live Exports (www.kaale.org.uk)
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (www.rspca.org.uk)
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Compassion in World Farming (www.ciwf.org.uk)

Humane Society of the United States (www.humanesociety.org)

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (www.rspca.org.uk)

RSPCA Australia (www.rspca.org.au)

World Society for the Protection of Animals (www.wspa.org.uk)

Meat-free Mondays (www.meatfreemondays.com)

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Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (www.rspca.org.uk)

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Defenders of Wildlife (www.defenders.org)

Friends of the Earth (www.foe.co.uk)

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (www.rspb.org.uk)

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European Coalition to end animal experiments (www.eceae.org)

Dr Hadwen Trust (www.drhadwentrust.org)

Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments (www.frame.org.uk)

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (www.peta.org OR www.peta.org.uk)

Badger Cull

Further reading

Team Badger (No date). *Backing the badgers: why the cull will fail*.

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Organisations and on-line resources

Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals (www.aswa.org.uk)

Badger Trust (www.badgertrust.org.uk)

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (www.rspca.org.uk)

Save Me (www.save-me.org.uk)

Factsheet - Additional Resources

A large, faint, stylized illustration of a man with a beard and long hair, wearing a red and white striped robe, holding a staff. A small white dog is perched on his shoulder. This is a larger version of the logo seen in the top left corner.

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