



Animal rights marchers protest against live calf exports (extract)



Several hundred people protested today against live **calf**¹ exports, three days after a **decade**²-long **ban**³ on exporting British beef was **lifted**⁴. Waving placards, blowing whistles and beating drums, the demonstrators, who fear the return of sales to Europe will expose animals to unnecessary suffering, marched through Dover, Kent, to the Eastern Docks where the first consignment of **cattle**⁵ is understood to have been shipped out from yesterday.

The beef ban was brought in to stop the spread of mad cow disease in 1996 but EU vets agreed to lift it earlier this year due to the **plummeting**⁶ number of cases of **BSE**⁷ in the UK. The industry says renewed live cattle exports will help it claw back **trade**⁸ previously worth some £650million a year.

Viva!, which organised today's event, said it was concerned that the animals suffer during long journeys and are then kept in **pens**⁹ or in **veal crates**¹¹ where they don't even have room to turn around. Campaign manager Toni Vernelli told protesters : « It's a miserable fate and it's obviously why we have come out today to show the government and the public that we are disgusted that this trade has started again. »

Mr Johnson, who has been involved in CIWF for a decade, also addressed the crowd. He said before the event : « What we would like to see is the British government say, 'It's unacceptable for calves to go overseas to be **reared**¹² in conditions not acceptable in this country. If the EU Commission wants to challenge us, let them do so ». Ms Lane, who runs an animal sanctuary in Horsted Keynes, West Sussex, said : « It's just awful. To think that new calves are going out, it's so obscene to take a baby from its mother, to cram them in a truck and take it on a ship and then to drive it for miles to be put in a little crate. It's a cruel, terrible trade. I don't know how the government can ignore our voice. There are millions of people against this trade. »

The lifting of the beef ban means live cattle born on or after August 1, 1996 may be exported, along with beef from cattle **slaughtered**¹³ on or after June 15, 2005. Restrictions remain in place for beef containing vertebral material and for beef sold on the bone. The British beef industry expects exports to pick up gradually once contracts with buyers in Europe have been regained. The use of veal crates is already banned in the UK and is set to be stopped across the EU from January 1, 2007. The National Farmers' Union earlier called on British exporters not to send animals to buyers in Europe where veal crates are still in use.

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VOCABULARY

1. **a calf/calves** : young cow.
2. **a decade** : period of ten years.
3. **a ban** : official ruling that something must not be done, shown, or used.
4. **to lift** : if a law or rule that prevents people of doing something is lifted, it means people in authority put it to an end.
5. **Cattle** are cows, calves and bulls.
6. **to plummet** : to decrease quickly by a large amount. (to decrease = to become less in quantity, size or intensity.)
7. **BSE** : Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, best known as "mad cow disease", is a disease which affects the nervous system of cattle and kills them.
8. **trade** : it is the activity of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services between people, firms, or countries.
9. **a pen** : small area with a fence round it in which farm animals are kept.
10. **Veal** is meat from a calf.
11. **a crate** : large box used for transporting or storing things.
12. **to rear** : to rear a young animal means you keep and look after it until it's old enough to be used for work or food, or until it can look after itself.
13. **to slaughter** : to kill in a way that is cruel or unnecessary. To slaughter animals means to kill them for their meat.

QUOTATIONS FOR FURTHER DEBATE

Lisa : « **Do we have any food that wasn't brutally slaughtered ?** »

Homer : « **Well, I think the veal died of loneliness.** »

Matt Groening, *The Simpsons*, American cartoonist and the creator of the American animated television series *The Simpsons* and *Futurama*.

« **When it comes to having a central nervous system, and the ability to feel pain, hunger, and thirst, a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy.** »

Ingrid Newkirk, President & Founder of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

« **Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals.** »

George Orwell (1903-1950), *Animal Farm*, 20th century British author and journalist, best known for 2 famous novels : *Animal Farm* and *1984*.

« **Whenever people say 'We mustn't be sentimental,' you can take it they are about to do something cruel. And if they add 'We must be realistic,' they mean they are going to make money out of it.** »

Brigid Brophy (1929-1995), was an English novelist, essayist, critic, biographer, and dramatist.

« **The thinking [person] must oppose all cruel customs no matter how deeply rooted in tradition and surrounded by a halo. When we have a choice, we must avoid bringing torment and injury into the life of another...** »

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), German theologian, musician, philosopher, and physician. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953.