

# Manifesto Animals Count

## European Parliament elections 2009

### (Eastern region)

*“Because better animal protection requires a European solution!”*

**Animals can't vote, but you can!**  
Election Communication

**Vote Animals Count on 4th June**  
animals count  
European Parliament Elections (Eastern Region)

Jasmin de Boo, Leader  
Animals Count  
A political party for people  
and animals.



**Each year in the EU:**  
Hundreds of thousands of stray cats and dogs are inhumanely caught and killed.  
Over 12 million animals suffer in research, testing and education.  
Billions of farm animals are cruelly kept, transported and slaughtered.

**These practices are allowed in the EU by:**  
Conservatives Labour Liberal Democrats and other parties

animals count because better animal protection  
requires a European solution!

[www.animalscount.org](http://www.animalscount.org)

The European Parliament election uses a proportional  
representation voting system, so every vote really counts!

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# **SUMMARY: Why animals are at the heart of our policies**

**This manifesto describes how Animals Count's policies offer benefits in four principal areas:**

- 1. Animal protection**
- 2. Human health**
- 3. Economy**
- 4. Environment**

## **1. Animal Protection**

Modern farms bear very little resemblance to the idealised images contained within story books for children, and industry advertising. Most farmed animals are kept in barren sheds, either in the dark or unnatural light, standing in their own filth and urine, unable to turn around, socialise, build a nest or raise their young. Even on free range or organic farms, animals are usually killed at a very young age, while in all egg and dairy production systems nearly all of the males are killed soon after birth.

Animals also suffer in laboratories, bloodsports, circuses and zoos, but the people responsible for such abuses do their very best to keep animal suffering from the eyes of the public. Companion animals such as dogs and cats suffer when their guardians cannot afford basic veterinary care, mistreat or abandon them.

## **2. Human health**

Major causes of the rising burden on health services and premature death in the EU are so-called degenerative diseases, such as obesity, heart disease, stroke, type II diabetes, and some cancers. Such degenerative diseases have been strongly linked to lifestyle and dietary factors, such as foods that are high in saturated fat, salt and sugar, but low in essential nutrients. Europeans are eating too much processed, refined carbohydrates, sugar, meat products and dairy foods. Over-production and subsidisation of these foods leads to unnaturally low prices, whilst healthier grains, pulses, fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds become relatively more expensive. Worst of all, national governments fund organisations that promote the very worst foods as being nutritious, for example through publicising the discredited 'four food groups.'

Meanwhile in the developing world, forests are cut down to grow feed crops for the farmed animals of Europe and China. In a world where 800 million people are under-nourished, 1.4 billion cows and billions more chickens, pigs and sheep are fed over 30% of the world's grain and over 70% of the soya, and these numbers are rising.

## **3. Economy**

45% of the EU budget is spent on agriculture and fisheries. Much of this is spent on subsidies for animal farming, particularly factory farming. The EU also subsidises sugar production. This results in epidemics of preventable diseases affecting over half of the population. Very significant human and economic costs, and considerable, preventable strain on public health services, also result.

## **4. Environment**

Farmed animals produce far more climate-warming emissions, especially methane, than all forms of transport in the world combined. Global meat production is predicted to double as the rest of the world attempts to emulate the consumption levels of affluent nations within Europe and America. Already, the UK uses 85% of its farmland for raising animals or growing animal feed, and imports even more feed, whilst in the Netherlands an area equivalent to four times the surface of the country is needed to grow all the animal feed. It is clearly impossible for the whole world to live like this. Plant-based diets require only one fifth as much land as meat-centred ones.

## **Animals Count's Objectives**

Animals Count will work to raise awareness of these problems, right in the heart of the political arena. Our objectives include:

- **Ensuring effective enforcement of all EU animal protection and environmental regulations.**
- **Encouraging member states to take greater responsibility, and to exceed the minimum European standards, on animal protection issues.**
- **Ensuring that the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), that recognises animals as sentient (that is, feeling) beings, is properly implemented within European laws that respect and protect the interests of all animals.**
- **Supporting improvements in animal care, continually raising standards to the point where animals are no longer regarded as property.**
- **Tackling the serious, adverse consequences that the misuse of animals engenders for human health in Europe, for people in the developing world, for the economy, and the environment, as well as for the animals themselves.**
- **Increasing transparent and democratic EU decision-making, in which public consultations and referenda play a greater role.**

Animals Count's **key policies** in the four principal areas include:

### **1. Animals**

Animals Count believes in a Europe where animals are not exploited for any purpose. In the interim, animal welfare improvements should be supported:

- Large-scale factory farms are harmful to animals, people and the environment. European farming should transition towards a plant-based agricultural system. Intensive farming should be replaced with more animal-friendly, sustainable, small-scale and regional systems.
- Long distance transportation of live animals is unacceptable. Transporting live animals should be limited to a maximum of two hours.
- Large-scale outbreaks of animal disease should not be resolved by mass killing of healthy animals.
- Cruel traditions don't belong in a civilized Europe. Bullfighting, the consumption of foie gras and ritual slaughter of animals without prior stunning, for example, should be banned.
- All bloodsports should be banned.
- The confinement of animals in circuses should be banned, and zoos should be turned into animal sanctuaries.
- Stray animals should no longer be neglected and mistreated. Europe needs a comprehensive and humane stray animal management action plan.
- Subsidised basic and emergency healthcare should be available for animals whose guardians are unable to afford private veterinary care.

- Significant state funding for rescue organizations, sanctuaries and charities dedicated to helping companion and wild animals should be provided.
- Animal experimentation is morally objectionable. Animal experiments should be banned and replaced by humane, modern techniques in which animals do not suffer. Whilst experiments continue public scrutiny should be increased, and an independent review of animal experimentation should be conducted.

## **2. Human health**

Healthier lifestyles require reduced meat consumption, which also benefits animals and can save up to 50% on costs of global climate policies. Europe must therefore fully commit to sustainable food consumption. Animals Count will work to:

- Promote healthy plant-based diets.
- Tax unhealthy and polluting food products.

## **3. Economy**

Animals Count will work to:

- End the belief that prosperity implies more meat-based meals.
- End subsidies for livestock farming.
- Help farmers switch some or all of their production into sustainable and healthier (agricultural) sectors.

## **4. Environment**

Animals Count will work to:

- Ban the import into the EU of livestock feed grown on cleared rainforest land.
- Return the land made available by reduced farming of livestock and animal feed to forest growth, nature conservation and recreation.
- Introduce marine sanctuaries in which fish and other marine sea life are protected from unsustainable fishing practices. Europe must stop overfishing and polluting the seas.
- Establish a large European ecological network, including migration corridors, to help combat the adverse effects on wildlife populations of severe habitat loss.
- End the shooting of animals for 'conservation' purposes. This is a highly ineffective means of achieving sustainable, balanced populations, and is morally objectionable.