

NSS: Labour animal welfare plan will not end unnecessary suffering

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The National Secular Society has welcomed Labour party proposals to introduce mandatory method of slaughter labelling but warned they are not enough to prevent animals suffering unnecessarily.

Labour said it would bring in the "mandatory labelling of meat, both domestic and imported" to include details on "method of slaughter (stun or non-stun)" in plans announced this morning. The party made the announcement as it [laid out](#) what it called a plan of "radical action" on animal welfare.

Its 50-point draft policy [document](#), 'Animal Welfare For The Many, Not The Few', also includes proposals to enshrine the principle of animal sentience in law, introduce mandatory CCTV in all slaughterhouses and appoint an animal welfare commissioner. The party is planning to submit the document for consultation until the end of May.

Sue Hayman, the shadow environment secretary, said the party was "making proposals for real, long-term progress".

"Our vision is one where no animal is made to suffer unnecessary pain and we continue to drive up standards and practice in line with the most recent advances and understanding."

Stephen Evans, the NSS's chief executive, said: "The labelling of meat to show method of slaughter is a welcome step because it would at least give consumers the opportunity to avoid non-stunned halal or kosher meat if that's their choice. Labour's plan will not, however, end the needless suffering caused to millions of farm animals in the name of religion.

"The scientific consensus is clear that non-stun slaughter causes unnecessary pain and suffering. The shadow environment secretary is therefore wrong to suggest that the plan will mean no animal is made to suffer unnecessary pain. The pain and distress caused during religious slaughter certainly should not be considered 'necessary'. We look forward to pointing this out during the upcoming consultation."

The NSS has long campaigned for an end the religious exemption to animal welfare legislation. In November the Government [told](#) the NSS it was considering introducing labelling requirements to ensure consumers know whether halal or kosher meat has been stunned before slaughter.

Ms Hayman also said: "With new trade deals on the horizon and the UK no longer subject to EU-wide rules on animal welfare, we want to ensure there is a comprehensive legislative agenda in place so that the UK becomes a world leader on animal rights."

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