



Animal Welfare.
Worldwide.

Animal Welfare Gathering
Bring Animals to Parliament

Memorandum of Pertinent Issues in Respect of the State of Animal Welfare
in South Africa

Dear Representative,

In support of the FOUR PAWS Animal Welfare Gathering under this year's theme *Bring Animals to Parliament* on World Animal Day, 04 October 2024, FOUR PAWS in South Africa alongside the signatories below, urge the South African government to fulfil their mandate to promote the welfare of animals in light of the below non-exhaustive considerations on key animal welfare issues in the country:

Submission:

WILD ANIMALS

- 1. Ending the captive keeping of lions for commercial purposes and closure of captive lion facilities¹** FOUR PAWS is ready to support Government's implementation of the progressive recommendations of the Ministerial Task Team's Report² and we urge the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment to publish an implementation plan, including time bound specific goals to follow up on the Cabinet approved policy position to end the captive keeping of lions for commercial purposes, close captive lion facilities, and include all big cat species in the implementation plan. Due to a global convergence in the legal commercial trade and illegal trade of big cats and their parts, the rationale for closing the lion industry applies to all big cat species and we strongly urge the prohibition of any further breeding and trading of not only lions but all big cats. Furthermore, the commercial exploitation of wild animals extends to circuses and interaction facilities that also act as conduits for illegal activities and legally sanctioned abuse³.

¹ "FourPaws-TheViciousCycleReport2021-FinalUpdated14.04.2021.Pdf."

² "Ministerial Task Team to Identify and Recommend Voluntary Exit Options and Pathways from the Captive Lion Industry | Department of Environmental Affairs."

³ "FourPaws-TheViciousCycleReport2021-FinalUpdated14.04.2021.Pdf."

COMPANION ANIMALS

- 2. The state of companion animal welfare in both urban and rural South Africa **calls for national, provincial, and local government to improve the health and welfare of owned and stray animal populations**⁴ by providing veterinary services, sterilization, vaccination, and education on responsible pet ownership. FOUR PAWS envisions more than just a rabies free South Africa, but a South Africa where every companion animal has access to a safe home, love and care, as a result of responsible and ethical population management programmes. With sustainable partnerships between animal welfare organisations, government, veterinary groups, and funders we can ensure sustainable funding for ongoing vaccination, spaying/neutering, and public awareness and education programs such as our Responsible Pet Ownership Program.**

FARMED ANIMALS

- 3. End Live transportation of Animals.** The cruel live export of animals by sea that the South African government has failed to prohibit, despite the numerous harms inflicted and growing public outcry against the practise. It is crucial for South Africa to elevate its reputation as a conscientious and responsible trade partner. We call for the end to the live transport of livestock by sea from South Africa to international markets, advocating for alternative methods that prioritize animal welfare, such as the export of chilled or frozen meat products instead. The February 19, 2024, Al Kuwait ship carrying 19,000 cows⁵ is evidence that transporting live animals over long distances subjects the animals to additional suffering that could be avoided by slaughtering the animals within our country's borders. During transport and at their destination, these animals might be handled in a manner that would constitute an offence under South African law. The South African government thus cannot be sure that the animal welfare standards of destination countries are sufficiently rigorous and enforced.
- 4. Promote food system change.** A shift in current farming models is needed to improve the well-being of the environment, humans, and animals⁶. The Government should put food production at the heart of urgent climate mitigation action and implement policies to enable this transition to sustainable, healthy, and diverse food systems in which animals are treated with respect and empathy⁷.

⁴ "Ending Stray Population of Animal Sin South Africa - Google Search."

⁵ "The Al Kuwait — a Timeline of Cape Town's Stinking Cattle Ship."

⁶ "WFO-Policy-Paper-on-Sustainable-Food-Systems_approved-by-the-WFO-2020-GA_EN.Pdf."

⁷ "Climate_Position_Paper_EN_web_221025.Pdf."

This transition is not possible under the current intensive factory farming model, which supports unsustainable stock densities. The government should furthermore set emission reduction targets for the agriculture sector and require producers of meat and other animal-derived products to document and make available their emissions data. These emission reduction targets should be publicized to enable comparison within the sector. At COP28, 160 countries signed the COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action⁸, committing to strengthening efforts to integrate agriculture and food systems into national climate plans, and revisiting their policies and public support related to agriculture and food systems. Addressing the food-climate nexus is essential for meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement and achieving food security, climate adaptation, and climate mitigation⁹. We call for the South African government to sign on the COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Food systems, and Climate Action.

5. Prevent the next pandemic. The government must acknowledge the link between animal welfare and increasing pandemic risk and follow a One Health approach on national, regional, and international level. South Africa and the rest of the world must commit to ending animal exploitation and suffering to stop future pandemics. Zoonotic disease and antimicrobial resistance are both amplified by the cruel conditions of factory farming and are a threat to human health¹⁰. If we don't change the system, the next pandemic could emerge in a factory farm in South Africa. FOUR PAWS calls for animal welfare to be prioritized in pandemic prevention strategies and legislations¹¹. Preventing pandemics at source is the key pillar of pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

6. Adopt higher animal welfare standards. South Africa's animal welfare legislation leaves much to be desired, especially regarding the humane management of farmed animals and the management of the companion animal overpopulation crisis. A comprehensive legal framework must be promulgated to regulate management practices and housing systems on farms, as well as animal populations, welfare, abuse, neglect, use, and commodification¹². Furthermore, for such a legal framework to include appropriate sentencing provisions upon

⁸ "COP28 UAE | COP28 Presidency Puts Food Systems Transformation on Global Climate Agenda as More than 130 World Leaders Endorse Food and Agriculture Declaration."

⁹ "New Analysis of National Climate Plans: Insufficient Progress Made, COP28 Must Set Stage for Immediate Action | UNFCCC."

¹⁰ "220323_FOUR PAWS & Pandemic Prevention - Coining a New Definition.Docx."

¹¹ "Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response Accord."

¹² Wilson A.P. and Gerrans A, A Manifesto for Transforming Animal Protection in South Africa: A Constitutional Imperative, Draft 1, Animal Law Project, 20 June 2024" or Animal Law Project, *A Manifesto for Transforming Animal Protection in South Africa: A Constitutional Imperative*, Draft 1, 20 June 2024

conviction, as the current sentencing provisions are insufficient and not a successful deterrent. The Government of South Africa is furthermore urged to make available free of charge all animal welfare standards developed by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS). At present, these various Standards need to be purchased and are therefore not readily available to members of the public.

The recognition of animal sentience, the commitment to the improvement of the existing animal welfare legislation, and the banning of harmful practices needs to start immediately. Through scalable changes of human behaviour and systems, animals can live their best lives possible.

Yours in Animal Welfare



Fiona Miles

Director at FOUR PAWS in South Africa

Endorsed by:

