



2026 Election Scorecard: Animal Welfare Priorities Background Document

Overview

Animals are an important part of life in Aotearoa New Zealand, featuring in our families, communities, environment, and economy. The way we care for and manage animals reflects our values as a country. Almost two-thirds of New Zealand households share their home with at least one companion animal¹, while animals also contribute to food and fibre production, employment, trade, education, research, recreation, and other aspects of New Zealand life. New Zealand is also home to a diverse range of native animals, many of which are found nowhere else in the world.

New Zealanders have high expectations for animal welfare. 95% of New Zealanders surveyed agreed the welfare of farmed animals is important². These expectations are reflected in the growing interest in how animal welfare is considered in government policy and decision-making.

Animal welfare policy decisions can have direct and lasting impacts on animals, people, and communities. Effective policy can provide greater certainty for animal owners and industries, and strengthen public confidence in New Zealand's regulatory systems.

The 2026 general election provides an opportunity for political parties to set out their positions on animal welfare issues which may require government action during the next parliamentary term. The Government formed following the election will make decisions which influence the future direction of animal welfare policy and regulation in New Zealand.

SPCA developed our [2026 Policy Recommendations](#) to identify practical actions which could strengthen animal welfare during the next parliamentary term. The recommendations draw on animal welfare science, regulatory experience, evidence, and SPCA's positions.

The [2026 Election Priorities Scorecard](#) focuses on eleven priorities drawn from these recommendations and related SPCA advocacy work. SPCA asked political parties to respond to the same questions on each priority. The scorecard presents these responses in a clear and accessible format to help New Zealanders understand the positions parties have communicated to SPCA.

This background document accompanies SPCA's 2026 Election Priorities Scorecard. It provides information on each priority, explains SPCA's policy position, sets out the questions put to political parties, and provides the full responses received from participating parties.

¹ <https://www.companionanimals.nz/2024-nz-pet-data-report>

² Zobel G, Cote K, Vaughan A, McAninch MJ and Dale A (2026) Public perception, awareness, and attitudes toward live export of livestock by sea from New Zealand. *Front. Anim. Sci.* 7:1811575. doi: 10.3389/fanim.2026.1811575



SPCA is the preeminent animal welfare and advocacy organisation in New Zealand. The Society has been in existence for over 150 years with a supporter base representing over 100,000 New Zealanders across the nation. The organisation includes 27 Animal Welfare Centres across New Zealand and approximately 60 inspectors appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

SPCA is politically neutral. The scorecard does not promote or oppose political parties or candidates, and does not tell people how to vote. Its purpose is to provide factual, non-partisan information about political party positions on specific animal welfare issues, which New Zealanders can consider alongside other information when making voting decisions. To find out more about SPCA's advocacy work, visit spca.nz/advocacy.

How we created the scorecard

The scorecard builds on [SPCA's 2026 Policy Recommendations](#), which identify practical actions for the next government to improve animal welfare in New Zealand. The scorecard takes these recommendations, alongside other current animal welfare priorities, and translates them into specific questions for political parties.

The responses presented on the scorecard were collected from a survey sent to political parties across the political spectrum in September 2026: ACT New Zealand, Animal Justice Party Aotearoa New Zealand, The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand, New Zealand First Party, New Zealand Labour Party, New Zealand National Party, and Opportunity. The questionnaire was sent to parties that were represented in Parliament, considered likely to enter Parliament, or that have a significant policy focus on animal welfare issues relevant to SPCA's mission.

The information each party provided has been used to create the scorecard graphic, which provides voters with clear and comparable information about political party positions. Political parties were asked twelve questions. Eleven of these are presented on the scorecard graphic. A twelfth question on live animal exports was not included, as the issue is not currently a focus of the 2026 election.

The scorecard represents SPCA New Zealand's assessment of the party positions, and should not be relied upon as a sole source of information. It focuses on the specific priorities and questions selected by SPCA for the 2026 election. More information on party policies can be found on each party's website. In addition, the verbatim responses are included below for those who wish to read the full responses.

What can you do?

- **Find out where the parties stand**
Read our scorecard and the full responses to understand where political parties stand on key animal welfare priorities.
- **Engage with political parties**

Contact political parties and candidates to ask about their positions on animal welfare issues that matter to you.

- **Share the information**
Help others make informed decisions and make sure animal welfare remains part of the conversation this election by sharing the scorecard with your friends, whānau and community.
- **Make your voice count**
Make sure you are enrolled and understand how and when you can vote.
- **Stay informed**
Follow SPCA and sign up to our newsletter to keep up to date with our animal welfare advocacy work.

The priorities

SPCA sent the following background information to every party in September 2026 and included a link to our [2026 Policy Recommendations](#). We asked each party whether they supported these priorities, which were gathered from our policy recommendations document, SPCA's strategy and position statements, and our most frequently asked questions from supporters. See our [advocacy webpage](#) for more about SPCA's advocacy work.

Issue	Description	SPCA Position
Strengthen laws to reduce dog attacks and roaming dogs.	Dog bite incidents have continued to rise, while longstanding issues with roaming dogs and inconsistent council enforcement remain. The Dog Control Act 1996 has not undergone a substantive review in 30 years and does not reflect current animal behaviour science, animal welfare standards, or evidence-based approaches to risk prevention. The current framework can result in inconsistent approaches between councils and a focus on responding to incidents after harm has occurred, rather than aiming at preventing them. A comprehensive review is needed to properly consider how the legislation can better address dog attacks, nuisance behaviour and roaming dogs.	Dog Control Advocacy Campaign Dog Safety Position Statement 2025 Dog Policy Recommendations
Improve regulation of dog breeding and commercial dog establishments.	Dog breeding and commercial dog establishments are not currently subject to regulatory oversight. Poorly regulated breeding can contribute to welfare concerns including uncontrolled breeding, inappropriate confinement, inherited health problems and inadequate early socialisation. Commercial establishments, such as dog daycares and boarding facilities, can also present welfare risks where welfare standards and oversight are	Puppies Before Profits Advocacy Campaign Breeding Companion Animals Position Statement

lacking. Introduction of regulation, including breeder licensing and minimum welfare requirements for breeding and commercial dog establishments, would provide greater oversight and support earlier intervention where welfare concerns arise.

[Boarding Establishments Position Statement](#)

[Doggy Daycare Position Statement](#)

Fund dog desexing to reduce overpopulation and dog attacks.

Uncontrolled breeding contributes to dog overpopulation, unwanted dogs and roaming dogs, increasing risks to animal welfare and community safety. Community desexing programmes are currently funded largely through charitable donations and limited local council support, despite their public benefit. Government funding would enable these programmes to be scaled up.

[Desexing Position Statement](#)

[2025 Dog Policy Recommendations](#)

End the use of farrowing crates.

Farrowing crates confine mother pigs to cages during and after birth, preventing normal behaviours for both sow and piglets. In 2025, the Animal Welfare (Regulations for Management of Pigs) Amendment Act 2025 changed the legislative framework for farrowing crates following the previous planned phase-out and will allow the use of farrowing crates for 7 days at a time after 2035.

[Cages in Farming Advocacy Campaign](#)

[Farrowing Crates Position Statement](#)

[Intensive Farming Position Statement](#)

[Farrowing Crates in Pig Farming Policy Brief](#)

End the use of colony cages for hens.

Colony cages confine hens in barren environments and prevent the expression of normal behaviours. While conventional battery cages have been banned, colony cages expose millions of hens to lifelong confinement.

[Cages in Farming Advocacy Campaign](#)

[Layer Hen Housing Position Statement](#)

[Intensive Farming Position Statement](#)

Uphold welfare standards on imported products.

New Zealand has domestic animal welfare requirements which prohibit or restrict some production practices, while imported products may be produced under different standards. Aligning imports with domestic rules would support local farmers, protect New Zealand's trade reputation, and uphold animal welfare.

[Cages in Farming Advocacy Campaign](#)

[Animal Welfare in Trade Position Statement](#)

Implement national cat management legislation.

New Zealand does not have national legislation supporting responsible cat ownership to address cat overpopulation. The Cat Management Bill would require companion cats to be microchipped and registered, but it is currently in the parliamentary ballot. SPCA supports the Bill and

[National Cat Legislation Advocacy Campaign](#)

[Identification of Companion Animals Position Statement](#)

	for it to include requirements for companion cats to be desexed.	Mandatory Desexing of Cats Position Statement National Cat Legislation Position Statement
Ban the private sale and use of fireworks.	Fireworks pose risks to animals, people, property, and the environment. They can cause fear, anxiety, distress, injury and death in companion animals, wildlife, and farmed animals. Harms are preventable through prohibiting the private sale and use of fireworks, while permitting controlled and notified public displays. SPCA prefers light and drone shows as alternatives to fireworks for public celebrations.	Fireworks Advocacy Campaign Fireworks Position Statement
Strengthen animal welfare protections in fisheries.	The Fisheries Amendment Bill was introduced in March 2026 and is currently before the Primary Production Committee. It proposes changes to fisheries management, including decisions about setting catch limits, returning or abandoning animals at sea, and the protection and disclosure of on-board camera recordings. SPCA has concerns aspects of the Bill could reduce transparency and accountability regarding the impacts of commercial fishing on aquatic animals.	Commercial Fishing Advocacy Campaign Commercial Fishing Position Statement
Protect incentives for charitable giving.	The \$100,000 annual cap on donations eligible for the donation tax credit, taking effect from 1 April 2027, may reduce incentives for major charitable donations. SPCA estimates its supporters could receive approximately \$810,000 less in donation tax credits each year. This risks reducing funding for animal welfare services and capital investment.	
Establish independent oversight of animal welfare.	New Zealand's animal welfare system lacks an independent body with a mandate to oversee animal welfare policy, regulatory processes and provide accountability. Existing advisory bodies provide technical advice but have limited functions. Independent oversight would strengthen confidence in the animal welfare system among trading partners and the New Zealand public.	Commissioner for Animals Position Statement

Full responses from each party

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**If elected, what will your party do to
create a better New Zealand for all animals?**

ACT New Zealand

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
Will your party reform the Dog Control Act to address dog overpopulation and improve measures to prevent and manage dog attacks and roaming dogs?	ACT supports the current Government's moves to reform the Dog Control Act to ensure it is fit for purpose, protects public safety, and ensures owners take responsibility for their dogs. We should be looking at whether Local Councils have the powers they need under the Dog Control Act, but also whether there is a need for greater national co-ordination to support councils. In Government, ACT's Brooke van Velden provided a grant of \$468k from the Lottery Minister's Discretionary Fund to the SPCA for dog desexing will help address irresponsible dog breeding and the dangers posed by dog roaming in New Zealand. We acknowledge SPCA's own contribution to this which will bring the total funding for this initiative to nearly \$1.2 million. ACT Minister Andrew Hoggard has also banned the prolonged tethering of dogs which we know causes them significant distress and can lead to aggressive behaviour. We are grateful to the SPCA for their support on these issues.
Will your party implement regulations under the Animal Welfare Act to improve regulatory oversight of dog breeding practices and commercial dog establishments?	Yes. In Government we have been looking into this and intend to take steps to improve regulation in these areas.
Will your party provide central government funding for dog desexing programmes to reduce dog	In Government, ACT's Brooke van Velden provided a grant of \$468k from the Lottery Minister's Discretionary Fund to the SPCA for dog desexing will help address irresponsible dog breeding and the dangers posed by dog roaming in New Zealand. We acknowledge SPCA's own contribution to this which will bring the total funding for this initiative to nearly \$1.2 million.

overpopulation, roaming dogs and dog attacks?	We remain open to further funding in the future where this can be demonstrated as the best value for money.
Will your party repeal the Animal Welfare (Regulations for Management of Pigs) Amendment Act 2025 and replace it with a phase-out of farrowing crates?	In Government, ACT has supported the introduction of regulations increasing the minimum spacing requirements for grower pigs by 13.3 percent, reducing the time sows are confined in farrowing crates from a maximum of 33 days to seven days, a requirement to provide manipulable and deformable materials to enable farrowing sows to engage in nest-building behaviours, and limiting the use of mating stalls to no more than three hours at a time, down from seven days. These changes will take effect for 2035 to allow farmers time to make changes to their practices without disrupting pork supply which would risk increasing imports from countries with lower animal welfare standards than New Zealand.
Will your party introduce regulations to phase-out the use of colony cages in commercial egg production?	The National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee is in the process of reviewing the poultry code. For those New Zealanders who can afford it, free range eggs are an option available, but we do not believe we should be imposing new regulations that would push up costs for almost all New Zealanders.
Does your party support requiring imported animal products sold in New Zealand to meet equivalent animal welfare standards to domestically produced animal products?	Our trading partners are looking for any excuse to ban or restrict imports from New Zealand as a way of protecting their less-efficient local producers from competition. This policy would give them the perfect excuse to respond in kind, for example by restricting imports from countries that don't lamb indoors. We export the vast majority of what we produce, New Zealand loses if we get into a trade war on animal products. Additionally, because of our high animal welfare standards, the risk of retaliatory trade measures would result in high-welfare New Zealand production being replaced by lower-welfare overseas production.
Will your party support national legislation requiring companion cats to be microchipped and desexed?	ACT will consider this bill if it is drawn from the Parliamentary ballot. We have not yet formulated a position on it.
Will your party prohibit the private sale and use of fireworks?	This is not an ACT policy.

Will your party maintain the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea?	While we believe that it can be done to a high level of welfare, there isn't the support in Parliament to progress it so we won't be campaigning on it.
Does your party support amending the Fisheries Amendment Bill to maintain transparency and accountability for commercial fishing impacts on aquatic animals before it progresses?	ACT does not support the Fisheries Amendment Bill in its current form. ACT's fishing policy includes establishing a distinct fisheries management area in the Hauraki Gulf to ensure catch settings reflect what is actually happening in the Gulf, preventing the stripping of rockpools, ending scallop dredging in currently-closed fisheries, ensuring fishing levies reflect the level of impact of different methods, increasing penalties for those who breach the rules, and manage important fish species for larger fish populations.
Will your party remove the \$100,000 annual cap on donations eligible for the donation tax credit?	Yes. ACT disagrees with the cap and is campaigning to overturn it. We recognise the extraordinarily generous New Zealanders who contribute to charitable causes every year and want to back them to continue to support this work.
Will your party take action to strengthen independent oversight and accountability of New Zealand's animal welfare system, and if so, what reforms would you support?	ACT is not persuaded that creating an additional statutory office would deliver better outcomes for animals. New Zealand already benefits from independent expert advice through the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) and the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee. New Zealand has a well-developed legal framework to support animal welfare, including the Animal Welfare Act 1999, the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018, and 19 codes of welfare. These codes are issued under the Act and failure to meet their minimum standards can support a prosecution for an offence. These standards are administered by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and enforced by animal welfare inspectors from both MPI and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The responsible Minister receives independent advice from NAWAC and the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee. These committees bring together people with expertise in veterinary science, the commercial use of animals, ethical standards and conduct, and animal advocacy. NAWAC develops guidance and codes of welfare, provides the Minister with independent advice, and makes recommendations on proposed regulations.

Animal Justice Party Aotearoa New Zealand

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
Will your party reform the Dog Control Act to address dog overpopulation and improve measures to prevent and manage dog attacks and roaming dogs?	Yes. AJP supports a review of the Dog Control Act, informed by current animal behaviour science and focused on preventing harm before it occurs. Reform should include nationally consistent standards, early intervention, education, accessible training and desexing, stronger action against irresponsible breeding, and better support for guardians. Councils must be properly resourced and held accountable for humane, evidence-based enforcement. It is completely unacceptable that the Dog Control Act allows dogs to be “destroyed” for human failures. Dogs cannot understand or follow legislation, people must be held accountable, and every decision must prioritise the dog’s welfare and best interests. The current system is too reactive and inconsistent. Dogs should not pay with their lives for failures in breeding, guardianship, education or enforcement. AJP supports a prevention-first approach that protects animals and communities and ensures dogs are not killed.
Will your party implement regulations under the Animal Welfare Act to improve regulatory oversight of dog breeding practices and commercial dog establishments?	Yes. AJP supports licensing and effective regulation of dog breeders, boarding facilities, daycares and other commercial establishments responsible for dogs. Minimum standards should cover breeding frequency, inherited health conditions, accommodation, enrichment, socialisation, staffing, recordkeeping and veterinary care. Breeders should be traceable and accountable for the animals they produce. Regulation must be supported by inspections, meaningful penalties and enforcement. We also support measures to stop intensive and irresponsible breeding and the sale of animals through channels that make accountability difficult. Animals must never be treated simply as products for profit.
Will your party provide central government funding	Yes. AJP supports sustained central government funding for accessible dog desexing programmes.

for dog desexing programmes to reduce dog overpopulation, roaming dogs and dog attacks?	Desexing is an important upstream intervention that can reduce unwanted litters, roaming, pressure on shelters and pounds, and the number of dogs ultimately killed. Funding should be delivered alongside microchipping, registration assistance, education and access to veterinary care. Councils, iwi, veterinarians and animal welfare organisations should be supported to develop programmes suited to their communities. Preventing unwanted breeding is more humane and effective than repeatedly impounding and killing dogs after the system has already failed them.
Will your party repeal the Animal Welfare (Regulations for Management of Pigs) Amendment Act 2025 and replace it with a phase-out of farrowing crates?	Yes. AJP supports repealing the Animal Welfare (Regulations for Management of Pigs) Amendment Act 2025 and introducing a genuine, time-bound phase-out of farrowing crates. Confining a mother pig so tightly that she cannot turn around or properly care for her piglets is incompatible with her behavioural and welfare needs. AJP's broader goal is to end animal farming and support a fair transition toward a plant-based food system. Until then, the Government must prohibit the most harmful practices, establish enforceable welfare standards and support affected workers and producers through the transition. Allowing farrowing crates to continue after 2035 is not an acceptable solution.
Will your party introduce regulations to phase-out the use of colony cages in commercial egg production?	Yes. AJP supports regulations to phase out colony cages. Replacing conventional battery cages with another form of lifelong confinement does not meet hens' physical, behavioural or psychological needs. Hens must be able to move freely, forage, dust-bathe, perch, nest and interact naturally. The transition must have a firm and credible deadline, with no replacement by another intensive confinement system. AJP ultimately seeks to end the exploitation of animals for food and transition towards a plant-based economy. Ending colony cages is an essential and immediate step toward that goal.

Does your party support requiring imported animal products sold in New Zealand to meet equivalent animal welfare standards to domestically produced animal products?	Yes. Imported animal products should, at a minimum, meet standards equivalent to those legally required in New Zealand. New Zealand should not prohibit or restrict cruel practices domestically while allowing products created through those same practices to enter our market. Clear labelling, traceability and independently verified standards are necessary so consumers are not misled. However, equivalent standards should be regarded as a minimum safeguard, not the end goal. AJP supports progressively strengthening animal protections while helping farmers, workers and communities transition away from extractive and animal-dependent production systems.
Will your party support national legislation requiring companion cats to be microchipped and desexed?	Yes. AJP supports nationally consistent cat-management legislation, including microchipping, registration and desexing of companion cats, with appropriate veterinary exemptions and accessible financial assistance. Any requirements must be introduced alongside affordable or free desexing, effective registration systems, education, breeder regulation and support for rescue organisations and lower-income guardians. AJP strongly opposes treating killing as the automatic response to cat overpopulation or wildlife protection. Humane, non-lethal population management must be the foundation of national policy. Responsible guardianship and properly funded prevention will protect cats, wildlife and communities far more effectively than continuing the cycle of uncontrolled breeding followed by mass killing.
Will your party prohibit the private sale and use of fireworks?	Yes. AJP supports an immediate ban on both private and public fireworks. Fireworks cause severe and preventable fear, distress, injury, displacement and death among companion animals, farmed animals and wildlife. They also pollute our air, land and waterways, create dangerous waste and increase the risk of fires. Safe, animal-friendly alternatives such as drone and light shows are readily available. Entertainment does not justify harming animals or our environment.

Will your party maintain the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea?	Yes, unequivocally. AJP supports retaining the ban on live export by sea and opposes any attempt to weaken or reverse it. AJP helped campaign for the ban and will continue defending it. We also support stronger protections for animals transported domestically and a just transition away from animal-intensive agriculture. New Zealand must move forward on animal protection, not reinstate a trade built on suffering.
Does your party support amending the Fisheries Amendment Bill to maintain transparency and accountability for commercial fishing impacts on aquatic animals before it progresses?	Yes. AJP supports strengthening the Fisheries Amendment Bill, but we must go much further. Our oceans are in crisis, and the only genuinely sustainable and compassionate future is one in which we leave marine animals in the sea. Commercial convenience must never override animal welfare, ecosystem protection or public accountability. On-board cameras and independent oversight must be strengthened, not weakened, and footage must remain available for enforcement and legitimate public scrutiny. Fish and other aquatic animals are sentient beings capable of suffering. They are not products or “stock.” AJP supports enforceable protections now, alongside a just transition away from commercial fishing and toward restoring our oceans and allowing marine life to recover.
Will your party remove the \$100,000 annual cap on donations eligible for the donation tax credit?	Yes. AJP supports removing the \$100,000 annual cap on donations eligible for the donation tax credit. Animal charities provide essential rescue, shelter, veterinary and advocacy services, often filling serious gaps left by central and local government. Tax settings should encourage, not discourage, legitimate charitable giving. Safeguards should remain to ensure transparency and prevent misuse, but these should not unnecessarily reduce support for registered organisations undertaking vital public-interest work. This must also sit alongside adequate government funding. Animal welfare services should not be forced to rely primarily on public generosity to carry out work that protects animals and benefits communities.
Will your party take action to strengthen independent oversight and accountability	Yes. Establishing an independent Commissioner for Animals is a central AJP policy. The Commissioner should be independent of agencies responsible for promoting or regulating industries that use

of New Zealand's animal welfare system, and if so, what reforms would you support?	animals. The office should monitor legislation and regulatory performance, investigate systemic concerns, review enforcement, advise Parliament and publicly report on the state of animal welfare. It should also promote recognition of animal sentience, represent animals' interests in government decision-making and ensure Māori perspectives, including kaitiakitanga, are meaningfully incorporated. AJP also supports stronger enforcement, meaningful penalties and ultimately recognising that animals are sentient beings with interests of their own, not merely property or economic units. Independent oversight is essential to provide the accountability currently missing from New Zealand's animal welfare system.
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The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
Will your party reform the Dog Control Act to address dog overpopulation and improve measures to prevent and manage dog attacks and roaming dogs?	Yes.
Will your party implement regulations under the Animal Welfare Act to improve regulatory oversight of dog breeding practices and commercial dog establishments?	Yes.
Will your party provide central government funding for dog desexing programmes to reduce dog overpopulation, roaming dogs and dog attacks?	Yes.
Will your party repeal the Animal Welfare (Regulations for Management of Pigs) Amendment Act 2025 and replace it with a phase-out of farrowing crates?	Yes.

Will your party introduce regulations to phase-out the use of colony cages in commercial egg production?	Yes. We would also phase out the debeaking of hens.
Does your party support requiring imported animal products sold in New Zealand to meet equivalent animal welfare standards to domestically produced animal products?	Yes, and we have introduced the <i>Animal Products (Closing the Welfare Gap) Amendment Bill</i> to create regulations requiring imported products to meet the same standards as animal products produced in New Zealand.
Will your party support national legislation requiring companion cats to be microchipped and desexed?	Yes. We are proud that the proposed <i>Cat Management Bill</i> was drafted and introduced by the Green Party to require cats to be registered and microchipped, and we would also support legislation requiring cats to be desexed.
Will your party prohibit the private sale and use of fireworks?	Yes.
Will your party maintain the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea?	Yes, and we would extend the ban to include live exports of farmed animals by air and wild-caught animals such as endangered tuna longfin eels.
Does your party support amending the Fisheries Amendment Bill to maintain transparency and accountability for commercial	Yes, and we do not support progressing the Fisheries Amendment Bill because it also weakens environmental protections and threatens the long-term sustainability of fish populations.

fishing impacts on aquatic animals before it progresses?	
Will your party remove the \$100,000 annual cap on donations eligible for the donation tax credit?	The Green Party would review the limits on tax-deductible donations to registered charities.
Will your party take action to strengthen independent oversight and accountability of New Zealand's animal welfare system, and if so, what reforms would you support?	Yes. The Green Party would create a new Commissioner for Animals to independently monitor and advocate for the rights of animals, and an independent ministry. We would also resource the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee to ensure all animal welfare codes genuinely comply with the Animal Welfare Act.

New Zealand First Party

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
Will your party reform the Dog Control Act to address dog overpopulation and improve measures to prevent and manage dog attacks and roaming dogs?	Support New Zealand First supports reviewing and updating the Dog Control Act to protect public safety while promoting responsible pet ownership. The party prioritizes community protection against roaming dogs and dangerous attacks, advocating for stronger enforcement powers for local councils and frontline police. NZ First believes dog control laws must be practical, evidence-based, and focused on early risk prevention and owner accountability without penalizing responsible dog owners.
Will your party implement regulations under the Animal Welfare Act to improve regulatory oversight of dog breeding practices and commercial dog establishments?	Support New Zealand First supports introducing targeted, commonsense regulation under the Animal Welfare Act to oversee dog breeding and commercial establishments. The party opposes puppy mills, irresponsible breeding, and poor welfare conditions that cause animal suffering. NZ First favours establishing basic welfare standards and breeder accountability to ensure commercial facilities and daycares operate safely, while avoiding excessive bureaucratic red tape for legitimate, high standard breeders.
Will your party provide central government funding for dog desexing programmes to reduce dog	Support New Zealand First supports community-based desexing initiatives to reduce dog overpopulation, roaming dogs, and bite risks in high-need regions.

overpopulation, roaming dogs and dog attacks?	The party advocates for collaborative funding models where central government works alongside local councils and community organizations to target desexing grants where overpopulation poses severe public safety and animal welfare challenges.
Will your party repeal the Animal Welfare (Regulations for Management of Pigs) Amendment Act 2025 and replace it with a phase-out of farrowing crates?	Opposes Unworkable Bans (Supports Balanced Science-Based Welfare) New Zealand First supports animal welfare standards grounded in sound science, practical farming reality, and economic viability. The party opposes sudden statutory bans that undermine local farming competitiveness or force reliance on lower-standard imported pork. NZ First advocates reforming the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) to include 50% farmer representation, ensuring welfare transition timelines are realistic, science-driven, and protect both animal wellbeing and domestic food security.
Will your party introduce regulations to phase-out the use of colony cages in commercial egg production?	Opposes Unworkable Bans (Supports Balanced Science-Based Welfare) for the same reasons outlined in Q4.
Does your party support requiring imported animal products sold in New Zealand to meet equivalent animal welfare standards to domestically produced animal products?	In principle, we support it - subject to robust investigation regarding potential trading partners retaliation For a small exporting national like ours, the economic consequences in terms of market access and trade barriers could be significant.
Will your party support national legislation requiring	Support

companion cats to be microchipped and desexed?	New Zealand First supports a nationwide cat management framework, including compulsory microchipping and desexing for companion cats, to promote responsible pet ownership and protect native biodiversity. Uncontrolled cat populations pose a direct threat to New Zealand’s native birds and wildlife. NZ First aligns cat management with its commitment to native predator control, habitat restoration, and pest eradication
Will your party prohibit the private sale and use of fireworks?	Yes. New Zealand First introduced the Fireworks Prohibition Legislation Bill in November 2025 to ban the retail sale, manufacture, and importation of fireworks for private use.
Will your party maintain the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea?	Not a priority. The economic case for live exports is no longer compelling
Does your party support amending the Fisheries Amendment Bill to maintain transparency and accountability for commercial fishing impacts on aquatic animals before it progresses?	Supports Transparency & Accountability New Zealand First supports fit-for-purpose onboard cameras, electronic monitoring, and transparent reporting across the commercial fishing fleet. The party committed to managing fisheries under the Fisheries Act to ensure sustainable stock management, eliminate illegal fish dumping, and maintain public confidence. NZ First supports robust, transparent oversight that protects aquatic ecosystems while maintaining the economic viability of commercial quota holders
Will your party remove the \$100,000 annual cap on donations eligible for the donation tax credit?	Supports

	New Zealand First supports charitable giving and voluntary community organizations like SPCA. The party opposes tax policies that penalize or cap philanthropic donations, advocating instead for enhanced tax incentives for corporate and individual donors (including 50% tax benefits for community givers).
Will your party take action to strengthen independent oversight and accountability of New Zealand's animal welfare system, and if so, what reforms would you support?	In the Coalition Agreement, New Zealand First committed to reforming the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) to ensure its mandate and structure are balanced and fit for purpose. NZ First policy advocates for 50% farmer representation on NAWAC alongside animal welfare experts, ensuring national welfare oversight is transparent, evidence based, clinically sound, and free from ideological bias.

New Zealand Labour Party

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
Will your party reform the Dog Control Act to address dog overpopulation and improve measures to prevent and manage dog attacks and roaming dogs?	Labour is concerned with the number of horrific dog attacks in recent times. Everyone should be able to walk themselves, their kids and their dogs through our parks and neighbourhoods and not have to worry about dangerous dogs. We believe our laws should be modern, help our streets be safe and give councils the ability to police nuisance and dangerous behaviour. Labour supports the Government's decision to reform the Dog Control Act and will continue this work.
Will your party implement regulations under the Animal Welfare Act to improve regulatory oversight of dog breeding practices and commercial dog establishments?	Labour believes that regulations should be modern and fit for purpose and address welfare concerns. Labour will release our full animal welfare policy prior to the election. <i>Labour added a response on 6 October 2026 to clarify their support for this question.</i>
Will your party provide central government funding for dog desexing programmes to reduce dog overpopulation, roaming dogs and dog attacks?	Labour is concerned by the large increase in puppies in parts of New Zealand because there are so many dogs that haven't been desexed. We are also concerned with increased risks to animal welfare and community safety that uncontrolled breeding contributes too. Labour will release our animal welfare policy prior to the election. <i>Labour added a response on 6 October 2026 to clarify their conditional support for this question, depending on funding availability.</i>

Will your party repeal the Animal Welfare (Regulations for Management of Pigs) Amendment Act 2025 and replace it with a phase-out of farrowing crates?	Labour believes we need a better long-term solution to improve pig welfare and provide certainty to industry. Labour strongly opposed the Government's law to confine pigs to farrowing crates for a further 10 years.
Will your party introduce regulations to phase-out the use of colony cages in commercial egg production?	While the Labour Party is yet to release all its policies related to animal welfare, we are committed to a system that supports improved welfare for all animals.
Does your party support requiring imported animal products sold in New Zealand to meet equivalent animal welfare standards to domestically produced animal products?	During our time in Government, Labour included animal welfare provisions in our Free Trade Agreements with the UK and the EU. We also banned the export of live cattle by sea, which the National-led Government overturned. Labour will continue our work to improve animal welfare through trade agreements.
Will your party support national legislation requiring companion cats to be microchipped and desexed?	While the Labour Party is yet to release all its policies related to animal welfare, we are committed to a system that supports improved welfare for all animals.
Will your party prohibit the private sale and use of fireworks?	Labour is concerned that private use of fireworks can cause distress and harm to animals. While the Labour Party is yet to release all its policies related to animal welfare, we are committed to a system that supports improved welfare for all animals.

Will your party maintain the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea?	A re-elected Labour Government would reinstate the ban.
Does your party support amending the Fisheries Amendment Bill to maintain transparency and accountability for commercial fishing impacts on aquatic animals before it progresses?	Labour voted against the Bill at first reading and will discharge the Bill if we are elected in November. We were proud to introduce cameras on boats and make other changes to improve the sustainability of our fisheries sector. We believe in a sustainable fishery for future generations to enjoy. Labour will introduce a code of welfare for farmed fish.
Will your party remove the \$100,000 annual cap on donations eligible for the donation tax credit?	Labour will commission Inland Revenue to report on the actual effect of the cap on philanthropy and make a decision about whether to retain or remove the cap based on that research.
Will your party take action to strengthen independent oversight and accountability of New Zealand's animal welfare system, and if so, what reforms would you support?	Labour will strengthen the role of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee to ensure it can continue its work as the independent advisory body for animal welfare.

New Zealand National Party

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
Will your party reform the Dog Control Act to address dog overpopulation and improve measures to prevent and manage dog attacks and roaming dogs?	Yes. The government is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the Dog Control Act to address rising attacks, roaming dogs, and outdated council enforcement powers, with the intention of reform. This was announced by National party Minister Simon Watts in March.
Will your party implement regulations under the Animal Welfare Act to improve regulatory oversight of dog breeding practices and commercial dog establishments?	National supports high animal welfare standards and continuous improvement. New Zealand has one of the strongest animal welfare systems in the world, backed by the Animal Welfare Act, independent advice from NAWAC and NAEAC, and regular reviews of welfare codes and regulations. The National Party's focus is on ensuring regulations are practical, enforceable, and deliver real welfare outcomes. We will continue to support strong animal welfare while backing New Zealand farmers who are already meeting high standards.
Will your party provide central government funding for dog desexing programmes to reduce dog overpopulation, roaming dogs and dog attacks?	Yes.
Will your party repeal the Animal Welfare (Regulations for Management of Pigs) Amendment Act 2025 and replace it with a phase-out of farrowing crates?	National supports the changes made in December 2025. Those reforms strengthened animal welfare requirements by substantially reducing the time sows can be kept in mating stalls, shortening the period farrowing crates can be used, and increasing space requirements for growing pigs. These changes were informed by independent expert advice and consultation with key stakeholders. National believe animal welfare policy should be practical and evidence based. It needs to be focused on delivering real improvements in welfare outcomes while providing certainty for farmers.

Will your party introduce regulations to phase-out the use of colony cages in commercial egg production?	The National Government introduced an animal welfare code in 2012 that banned standard battery cages. National's approach is to rely on independent scientific advice and established animal welfare processes, including advice from the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), when considering future changes to housing systems for layer hens. Our focus is on improving animal welfare in a way that is workable for farmers, supports consumers, and maintains New Zealand's high animal welfare reputation
Does your party support requiring imported animal products sold in New Zealand to meet equivalent animal welfare standards to domestically produced animal products?	NZ relies on open, rules-based trade. Our food and fibre exporters rely on other countries treating New Zealand products fairly and not using their own domestic production rules as unjustified barriers against us. It would make it harder for New Zealand to push back when other countries seek to impose their own domestic production standards on our farmers and exporters. NZ champions high animal welfare standards internationally, via World Organisation for Animal Health and through animal welfare cooperation provisions FTAs with UK & EU.
Will your party support national legislation requiring companion cats to be microchipped and desexed?	National supports high animal welfare standards and continuous improvement. New Zealand already has one of the strongest animal welfare systems in the world, backed by the Animal Welfare Act, independent advice from NAWAC and NAEAC, and regular reviews of welfare codes and regulations. The National Party's focus is on ensuring regulations are practical, enforceable, and deliver real welfare outcomes. We will continue to support strong animal welfare while backing New Zealand farmers who are already meeting high standards.
Will your party prohibit the private sale and use of fireworks?	While we acknowledge the harms associated with private firework use, a ban would have a significant impact on the widespread lawful and responsible use of fireworks enjoyed by many. We think that it's important to go with an approach that maintains personal freedom and cultural traditions associated with fireworks use. The current framework continues to provide controls at the point of sale and mechanisms to address misuse, while allowing the Government to monitor whether further change is warranted.

Will your party maintain the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea?	Yes. The current National Government has decided not to progress the reinstatement of livestock exports by sea during this term of Parliament, meaning the existing ban remains in place. While we explored whether exports for breeding purposes could be undertaken under stringent animal welfare standards, that work has been put on hold. National's focus is ensuring New Zealand maintains high animal welfare standards and a strong international reputation, while continuing to support exports that can be undertaken safely.
Does your party support amending the Fisheries Amendment Bill to maintain transparency and accountability for commercial fishing impacts on aquatic animals before it progresses?	Yes. The National party supports more transparency and accountability for commercial fishing.
Will your party remove the \$100,000 annual cap on donations eligible for the donation tax credit?	The Treasury and Inland Revenue estimate that these changes would affect less than 1% of all charitable giving. This does not stop anyone from donating, including those who give more than \$100,000 a year. It simply caps the level of taxpayer subsidy attached to those large donations. Every dollar people give to charities will still go to charities. It is also worth bearing in mind that until 2008 people were only able to claim a credit for the first \$1890 they donated to charity. We have made changes that will likely increase charitable giving by allowing donors from 1 April 2028 to claim their tax refund during the year and have it paid directly to a charity through Inland Revenue.
Will your party take action to strengthen independent oversight and accountability of New Zealand's animal welfare system, and if so, what reforms would you support?	New Zealand already has independent statutory bodies, including NAWAC and NAEAC, that provide expert advice on animal welfare matters. Our focus is on ensuring the existing animal welfare system is effective, and science-based, and that organisations like the SPCA have the tools and resources they need, rather than creating an additional layer of bureaucracy.

Opportunity

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
Will your party reform the Dog Control Act to address dog overpopulation and improve measures to prevent and manage dog attacks and roaming dogs?	Yes.
Will your party implement regulations under the Animal Welfare Act to improve regulatory oversight of dog breeding practices and commercial dog establishments?	Yes.
Will your party provide central government funding for dog desexing programmes to reduce dog overpopulation, roaming dogs and dog attacks?	Yes.
Will your party repeal the Animal Welfare (Regulations for Management of Pigs) Amendment Act 2025 and replace it with a phase-out of farrowing crates?	Yes.

Will your party introduce regulations to phase-out the use of colony cages in commercial egg production?	Yes, with a multi-year phase out to enable industry to adapt and limit consumer price increases.
Does your party support requiring imported animal products sold in New Zealand to meet equivalent animal welfare standards to domestically produced animal products?	Opportunity is open to considering measures like these in light of the evolution of international trade law in this space. However, we would want to carefully assess our position with respect to our existing trade obligations and any potential impact on our export industry as a result of trade partners retaliating or imposing similar measures that may not accommodate New Zealand production practices. A preferable approach would be to move in concert with other jurisdictions. Domestic labelling rules to ensure consumers are informed about animal welfare standards are also an avenue that has not been fully pursued.
Will your party support national legislation requiring companion cats to be microchipped and desexed?	Yes.
Will your party prohibit the private sale and use of fireworks?	Yes.
Will your party maintain the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea?	Yes.
Does your party support amending the Fisheries Amendment Bill to maintain transparency and accountability for commercial	Yes. See our Healthy Oceans Policy for more.

fishing impacts on aquatic animals before it progresses?	
Will your party remove the \$100,000 annual cap on donations eligible for the donation tax credit?	Yes. See our statement .
Will your party take action to strengthen independent oversight and accountability of New Zealand's animal welfare system, and if so, what reforms would you support?	No policy.

Te Pāti Māori

As at the publication of the scorecard, Te Pāti Māori had not responded to SPCA's questionnaire. Te Pāti Māori policies can be found on their website:
<https://www.maoriparty.org.nz/policy>