

Scrap Factory Farming

From David Finney, Jane Tredgett and Peta Watson-Smith on [Catholic Concern for Animals](#)
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Scrap Factory Farming is the story of a “David and Goliath” legal challenge that could shape the future for people, animals, and planet. It is being led by David Finney, Jane Tredgett and Peta Watson-Smith, volunteers at Humane Being, a not-for-profit enterprise whose vision is to encourage people to live in a way that is kind to animals and protects the planet.

We are all vegan animal rights/environmental campaigners and have come together with a few other dedicated grassroots volunteers to challenge the Government over their failure to address the issues associated with Factory Farming. We have created the *Scrap Factory Farming* campaign:

Suffering – sentient and social animals cruelly confined in tiny spaces

Climate chaos – greenhouse gas emissions coming from farmed animals

Ravaging the planet – forest fires in Brazil linked to feed for UK farmed animals

Antibiotic resistance – superbugs thriving on intensive farms

Pandemics and disease – 3/4 of diseases coming from animals

Legal Challenge

We are launching our legal challenge aimed at getting these hell holes for animals scrapped for good. Of course such a ban would not be the end of the journey, but an amazing and hugely significant step nevertheless.

Background to SCRAP



Steve Jobs talked about joining the dots backwards to see how people and events connect across time. An intriguing line of dots linked people to result in the launch of a legal challenge against the British government.

David was on the *Green Party Animal Rights Policy Working Group* that had produced several policies including the phasing out of factory farming, explicit food labelling and enshrining animal sentience into British law. David met animal rights / environmental campaigner Peta Smith at a conference and she recommended a book called *Chickens' Lib* by Clare Duce (2013, ISBN 9 780957549722).

David was knocked out by Clare's incredible persistence over the years to raise awareness of what she believed to be the illegality of factory farming. In a call to Clare, David joked about taking legal action. The seed was sown.

Peta then introduced David to Jane, a former RSPCA Trustee, who had recently formed *Humane Being*, a not-for-profit organisation established "to encourage people to live in a way that is kind to animals and protects the planet". Jane had already manned stalls, given talks and, produced materials to get people to make the link between the climate and ecological crises and the consumption of animal products. Peta, David and Jane started exploring whether we could challenge the *Animal Welfare Act* on the basis that factory farms do not allow animals to behave normally and do not protect them from pain or disease.

We tried to get legal uptake but were told by several lawyers that we stood more chance of helping the animals through a less direct route. So we started to gather together the evidence on the climate crisis, environmental problems, pandemics, antibiotic overuse and human rights.

It was obvious that the future looked very bleak for Jane's 10-year-old step-daughter – "like she is looking down the barrel of a gun with 4 bullets in it – the climate crisis, environmental collapse, deadly pandemics and illnesses we won't be able to treat. And all of these are linked to factory farming and eating animal products".

It is also clear that there is much need for the Government to show decisive leadership and protect the planet, minimise risk of pandemics and stop the build-up of antibiotic resistance. And protect the animals as the Government has pledged.

SCRAP's Approach



Michael Mansfield QC, human rights lawyer

We approached renowned human rights lawyer Michael Mansfield QC (Jane has a philosophy that if you don't ask you don't get) and were delighted when he said he would take the case. Michael is best known

for cases like Hillsborough and Grenfell Towers and will be supported by barristers Philip Rule and Lorna Hackett. It's a powerful team and we – and the animals – could not be better represented.

After months of planning and researching we are now launching with a letter from our barristers to George Eustice, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We can build on the horrors of Covid, the recent Avian flu outbreaks and the irrefutable science. We aim to show that pandemic risk is *here* and *now* and the Government must *Scrap Factory Farming* to protect us all.

We can't say at this point how we intend to build on the letter our barristers will send, as it depends on the response we get. However, we are hoping to raise £60,000 in readiness for further action if needed and Jane has said she will put her house on the line if necessary, to help animals and leave a legacy that shifts perspectives. This is that chance.

Inspiration of Clare Druce of Chickens Lib



Clare Druce

We owe all of this to the inspiration of Clare Druce, so we thought it right to include a few words from her: “I realise now that we in Chickens’ Lib were unduly optimistic when, fifty years ago, we launched our campaign against the battery cage system. Billions of animals continue to live and die amid conditions of shocking cruelty and deprivation. The dangers arising from the routine and excessive use of antibiotics on farms were known about and understood decades ago but antibiotics ‘of last resort’ in human medicine remain available to farmers. Society is now paying a heavy price for tolerating decades of cruelty to non-human animals. Recent pandemics can, without exception, be traced to human contact with other species, most or all of that contact connected with human exploitation. The urgent need now is for a worldwide ban on the intensive farming of animals.”

Well said Clare. We couldn’t agree more.



Factory Farmed Chicken

Human Health

Although we are only just launching, the SFF Campaign has already attracted strong support and endorsement from Dr Alice Brough, veterinary surgeon, Dr Shireen Kassam, founder of *Plant-Based Health Professionals* (which has 560 members) and environmental group *Feedback Global*. Dr Shireen Kassam says:

“There is no doubt that consuming animal-derived foods is [not necessary](#) for humans to thrive. In fact, there is [international consensus](#) that we all need to drastically reduce meat and dairy consumption. This will not only benefit human health but is crucial to halt the climate and ecological crisis we are facing. The continued support of factory farming goes against all our scientific knowledge. As a doctor in the NHS I see on a daily basis the impact of factory farming on human health. Not only are [unhealthy diets](#) a leading cause of illness, meat consumption, particular red and processed meat, contributes to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers and early death. The vast majority of this meat comes from factory farmed animals. The cramped and squalid conditions the animals endure necessitates the use of antibiotics, which is contributing to growing concerns over [antibiotic-resistant infections](#). The current pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable we are to new epidemic and pandemic infections, which are inevitable unless we change the way we interact with animals and their habitats.

An [Avian influenza virus](#) is the most likely candidate for the next pandemic infection. Human health is inextricably linked to the health of the planet and all its inhabitants. As a doctor, my duty to therefore advocate for human and non-human animals alike. This is why I and plant-based health professionals UK are supporting the scrap factory farming campaign”.

How to Support SCRAP

We hope you will support us too. Imagine what a victory it will be if we can get Factory Farms scrapped. You can support us by donating but just as importantly by using this as an opportunity to expose the horrors of Factory Farming. Please use the case as a launch pad to deafen the media and social media with pictures, videos, podcasts and stories about those horrors. Explain that people are taking this case because the next pandemic is likely to start as avian flu, and that factory farms are the perfect breeding grounds for the virus that could hit us next and which could be far, far worse than the one we are in right now that is killing people. Lobby your MP, contact your local press. Help us demand that the Government address these issues and protect the animals, people and the planet. Thank you. Every share counts, every tweet is a step.

We know some of you may want to talk about all farms. We totally understand that. But we think we can unite a lot more people if we tackle factory farming because this is what is having the most devastating effect right now on everyone’s safety and presents the most risks to our future health and the health of the planet.

Finally – we want to say thanks to you for sharing our story. We are just a small group of volunteers with big goals but small reach. Together we can achieve SO MUCH MORE for the animals. Thank you.

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