

AJP Policy Document

Animal breeding and reproduction reform

The Animal Justice Party Aotearoa New Zealand (AJP) is committed to transforming animal breeding and reproduction practices to uphold the rights, personhood and welfare of animals. While our long-term vision is to end all forms of animal agriculture, we recognise the urgent need to reform current breeding practices, which often prioritise production and profit at the expense of animal health, dignity and wellbeing. This policy addresses the ethical, legal and welfare concerns associated with genetic manipulation, reproductive control and growth-promoting technologies used in modern farming.

There are pressing issues arising from intensive breeding programmes and reproductive technologies that have often prioritised productivity at the expense of animal health and well-being. A prime example of this is the breeding of broiler chickens, who have been genetically selected to grow at an unnaturally rapid rate, leading to severe health problems such as skeletal disorders and heart failure. Our policy advocates to reverse these trends.

Current breeding practices often involve invasive and problematic procedures, including forced artificial insemination and semen collection. These practices subject animals to significant psychological stress and physical manipulation without their consent. In dairy farming, cows are repeatedly impregnated through artificial insemination to maintain milk production. Similarly, in pig farming, boars are subjected to forced semen collection for artificial insemination programs. These practices reduce animals to reproductive machines, ignoring their sentience and dignity.

Bobby calves are a direct result of dairy industry practices. These male calves, typically separated from their mothers within 24 hours of birth, face severe welfare concerns including premature maternal separation, inadequate nutrition and early slaughter. AJP has identified this as an inherent systemic issue requiring immediate reform. While working towards the complete abolition of dairy farming, we will advocate for strict interim measures alongside transparent reporting of bobby calf statistics, enhanced monitoring of welfare standards and significant penalties for non-compliance.

The breeding of animals for fibre and skin products, such as sheep for wool and cows for leather, presents similar ethical concerns. Selective breeding for traits like increased wool yield or specific hide qualities often compromises animal welfare. For example, merino sheep bred for fine wool production frequently suffer from increased flystrike risk, leading to the cruel practice of mulesing.¹ AJP calls for the end of breeding practices that prioritise product qualities over animal wellbeing across all farming contexts.

We aim to create a paradigm shift in animal agriculture towards methods that respect the rights, personhood and welfare of animals. This policy represents a crucial step towards a more compassionate and sustainable future in animal farming, one where the welfare of animals is given equal consideration to agricultural output.

AJP supports urgent reform of animal breeding and reproduction practices to reflect a rights-based approach that recognises animals as sentient beings, not commodities. We call for the phasing out of invasive and exploitative technologies, greater transparency and accountability in the dairy and livestock industries, and investment in alternatives that do not rely on animal exploitation. These measures are essential to reducing current harms and progressing toward a future where animals are no longer farmed, but respected as individuals with their own interests, autonomy, and right to live free from harm.

Key Objectives:

1. End harmful and invasive reproductive practices that violate animal autonomy, including routine artificial insemination, forced semen collection and other procedures that reduce animals to reproductive tools.
2. Reform breeding systems to prioritise animal health and dignity, phasing out genetic selection for extreme traits that compromise wellbeing (e.g. rapid growth, excessive milk yield).
3. Protect the rights and welfare of animals born as by-products of the farming system, including bobby calves, through enhanced care standards, transparent reporting, and investment in non-lethal alternatives.
4. Ban technologies that compromise animal welfare, including growth hormones, chemical growth promotants and unregulated genetic engineering, and establish independent ethical oversight for any emerging biotechnology involving animals.

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¹ Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V. (German Animal Welfare Federation). (2022) *Merino sheep suffer from breeding and painful mulesing*.
<https://www.tierschutzbund.de/en/animals-topics/animal-welfare-in-everyday-life/merino-wool/>