



## AJP Policy Document

# Ensuring humane transport conditions

The Animal Justice Party (AJP) envisions a New Zealand where compassion, sustainability and ethical practices guide our treatment of animals. While we ultimately seek a complete transition away from animal agriculture towards plant-based and cellular systems, we recognise the urgent need to reduce the suffering of animals who are currently trapped in this system. One of the most severe and widespread breaches of the five freedoms<sup>1</sup> occurs during transport, particularly when animals are moved between farms, saleyards and slaughterhouses.

Every year, millions of animals in New Zealand endure long and stressful journeys that cause significant physical and psychological distress. The process of transport exposes animals to unfamiliar environments, loud noises, rough handling, overcrowding and prolonged confinement, often without adequate rest, food or water. Vulnerable groups such as bobby calves and dairy cows are especially at risk. Despite existing regulations, the current system prioritises cost-efficiency over animal wellbeing, with inadequate limits on journey length, stocking density and handling standards.

Live export is one of the most extreme examples of suffering associated with transport. Although New Zealand banned the export of livestock by sea for slaughter in 2023, this ban is under threat from Government proposals in 2025 to overturn it, a move AJP strongly opposes, see AJP Live Export policy. Furthermore, other forms of live export continue, including the export of farmed species like eels by air, which also subjects animals to prolonged and distressing journeys.

Transport regulations must be equally stringent for animals farmed for non-food products, including alpacas, angora rabbits and other fibre-producing animals. These animals often face similar or greater transport risks due to less established welfare protocols and monitoring systems.

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<sup>1</sup> Animal Humane Society. (n.d.). *The Five Freedoms for Animals*.  
<https://www.animalhumanesociety.org/health/five-freedoms-animals> Accessed May 2025

AJP calls for a complete overhaul of animal transport regulations to recognise the specific needs of each species, regardless of their intended use. While animal farming continues, we demand far stricter controls on journey times, space allowances, rest periods and handling practices, as well as the retention and strengthening of the live export ban. Our long-term vision remains the complete replacement of animal farming with ethical, sustainable alternatives, but until that is achieved, animals must be afforded the highest possible level of protection.

**Key Objectives:**

1. Implement comprehensive reforms to strengthen the Animal Welfare (Transport within New Zealand) Code of Welfare.
2. Establish stricter maximum journey times aligned with New Zealand's geographic and agricultural context, particularly for vulnerable animals like bobby calves.
3. Extend the current ban on live export by sea to include all live animal exports, including by air (noting the need for some exceptions, such as companion animals migrating with their guardians).