



Position Statement

The Cape Animal Welfare Forum (CAWF) is a collective of animal welfare organisations united in the pursuit of a just and compassionate society for all animals. This Position Statement sets out CAWF's formal stances on key animal welfare issues. These positions reflect our commitment to the protection, ethical treatment, and dignity of all animals—companion, wild, farmed, and feral alike.

1. Companion Animal Welfare

1.1. Promotion of Sterilisation of Companion Animals

CAWF advocates for the sterilisation of all companion animals, ideally at an early age where safe and appropriate. Sterilisation reduces overpopulation, prevents unwanted litters, and contributes significantly to the reduction of stray animals and euthanasia rates.

1.2. Promotion of Adopt, Don't Shop

CAWF encourages the adoption of animals from registered welfare organisations and opposes the commercial sale of animals by breeders, pet shops, and online platforms.

1.3. Opposition to Euthanasia of Fit and Healthy Animals

CAWF is opposed to the euthanasia of fit and healthy, adoptable animals. However, we acknowledge the necessity of humane euthanasia in cases where overpopulation leads to suffering. When required, euthanasia must be conducted compassionately, by trained and registered professionals, using recognised humane methods.

2. Farm Animal Welfare

2.1. Support for Ethical Farming and Plant-Based Alternatives

CAWF supports farming systems that uphold high animal welfare standards like free-range and encourages the public to consider plant-based dietary alternatives to reduce animal suffering and environmental harm.

2.2. Opposition to the Export of Farm Animals by Sea

CAWF strongly opposes the live export of farm animals by sea due to the inherent suffering, stress, and welfare risks associated with prolonged voyages under substandard conditions.

2.3. Opposition to the Inhumane Transportation of Farm Animals

CAWF condemns any transportation of farm animals that causes overcrowding, exhaustion, injury, or death. Transportation standards must prioritise the animal's physical and psychological well-being.

2.4. Opposition to the Inhumane Slaughter of Farm Animals

CAWF opposes slaughter practices that do not render animals immediately unconscious and insensible to pain. All animals must be slaughtered humanely in accordance with the most stringent welfare standards.

2.5. Opposition to Inhumane Farming Practices and Animal Production Systems

CAWF opposes intensive and industrial farming practices that deny animals their natural behaviours and cause suffering, such as battery cages, sow crates, and feedlots. Ethical farming methods must be adopted to safeguard animal welfare.

3. Wild and Exotic Animal Welfare

3.1. Opposition to the Keeping and Breeding of Wild and Exotic Animals as Pets

CAWF opposes the private ownership and breeding of wild or exotic animals. These animals cannot have their welfare needs met in domestic settings, and their captivity often leads to physical and psychological suffering.

3.2. Opposition to Hunting and Fishing for Sport and Entertainment

CAWF strongly opposes hunting and fishing when conducted for sport, competition, or entertainment, as these practices cause unnecessary suffering and death.

3.3. Opposition to the Use of Dogs for Hunting Other Animals

CAWF opposes the use of dogs for hunting and blood sports, as these practices promote cruelty, injury, and distress for both the hunted and the dogs used.

4. Animal Management

4.1. Support for Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) of Feral Cats

CAWF supports the responsible implementation of TNR programs in areas where feral cats are tolerated and cared for. TNR helps control population growth and reduces euthanasia rates.

5. Animals in Research, Testing, and Entertainment

5.1. Opposition to the Use of Animals for Research and Cosmetic Testing

CAWF opposes the use of animals in cosmetic testing and any form of scientific research where alternatives exist. We call for the adoption of non-animal testing methods and technologies.

5.2. Opposition to the Use of Wild Animals in Circuses and Entertainment

CAWF opposes the use of wild animals in circuses, shows, or displays, where they are denied the ability to express natural behaviours and often subjected to coercion, confinement, and abuse.

5.3. Opposition to Animal Racing in Any Form

CAWF opposes the use of animals in racing—including horse, dog, and pigeon racing—due to high injury rates, abandonment, and inhumane training practices.

5.4. Opposition to Animal Fighting in Any Form

CAWF stands firmly against dog fighting, cockfighting, and any activity where animals are forced to fight for human amusement or gain.

6. Animals as Gifts, Prizes, or Promotional Items

6.1. Opposition to the Use of Live Animals as Prizes in Competitions or Raffles

CAWF strongly opposes the awarding of live animals as prizes or raffle items. This practice undermines responsible pet guardianship and often leads to neglect or abandonment.

6.2. Opposition to the Giving of Live Animals as Gifts

CAWF opposes gifting live animals, particularly without the recipient's informed consent and preparation. Animals are sentient beings and not commodities.

7. Cruelty, Abuse, and Unnatural Practices

7.1. Opposition to the Feeding of Live Prey

CAWF opposes the deliberate feeding of live prey to predators when humane, pre-killed alternatives exist. This practice causes unnecessary suffering to the prey animal.

7.2. Opposition to the Use of Traps, Snares, and Glue Devices

CAWF opposes all forms of inhumane trapping, including the use of snares, steel-jaw traps, glue traps, and glue boards, which cause prolonged suffering and non-selective injury.

7.3. Opposition to Cosmetic Mutilations

CAWF is against cosmetic surgeries such as tail docking, ear cropping, and declawing, except when medically necessary under veterinary guidance.

8. Environmental and Public Welfare Considerations

8.1. Opposition to the Use of Fireworks

CAWF opposes the private and commercial use of fireworks due to their terrifying and often dangerous impact on animals. We call for the ban on the use of fireworks and the promotion of animal-friendly alternatives.

9. Legislative and Policy Advocacy

9.1. Advocacy for Stronger Animal Welfare Legislation and Enforcement

CAWF supports the introduction, implementation, and enforcement of robust animal welfare legislation at all levels of government. Authorities must act decisively against cruelty and neglect.

9.2. Promotion of Humane Education

CAWF advocates for the integration of humane education in schools and public campaigns to foster compassion, respect, and responsible animal guardianship.

The Cape Animal Welfare Forum is dedicated to promoting the highest standards of animal welfare through advocacy, education, and collaboration. We believe that the humane treatment of animals is a reflection of a just and compassionate society, and we will continue to work towards a world where all animals are treated with the respect, care, and dignity they deserve.