

ROADMAP FOR ENDING THE PRACTICE OF KILLING DAY-OLD MALE CHICKS

“We would like to see an end to the practice of killing day-old chicks.”

Animal Welfare Strategy for England, Published 22 December 2025

This document has been developed by the Vegetarian Society in conjunction with other individuals and organisations with collective experience across the environment, animal welfare, technology, food and agriculture sectors.

It is for the attention of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), following the recent publication of the UK Government’s Animal Welfare Strategy for England.

The purpose of this document is to outline the next steps which those supporting the Ban Hatch & Dispatch campaign agree are necessary to end the mass culling of male chicks in the UK egg industry. Each year approximately 40 to 45 million male chicks of conventional laying hen breeds are culled within 12 to 36 hours of hatching.

Ban Hatch & Dispatch was created to call for an end to the culling of male chicks in the UK. Launched in April 2025, the campaign continues to amass support among Parliamentarians, the public, and other interested stakeholders. Momentum in the UK follows successful action taken in other European countries to ban male chick culling and transition to in-ovo sexing technology.

The next steps outlined in this roadmap follow a roundtable held in the UK Parliament on Wednesday 11th February 2026, convened by Irene Campbell MP and attended by the following individuals:

- Kerry McCarthy MP
- Adrian Ramsay MP
- Jenny L. Mace, animal welfare academic
- Dr Jane Downes MCRVS, former member of the UK Government Animal Welfare Committee
- Amal Mabrouk, Orbem (in-ovo sexing technology company)
- Helle Haukvik, Norwegian Animal Protection Alliance
- Tone Steinsland, Steinsland & Co (Norwegian hatchery which has installed in-ovo sexing technology)
- Lorraine Platt, Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation
- Jenny Canham, The Vegetarian Society
- Richard McIlwain, The Vegetarian Society

The British Egg Industry Council (BEIC) was invited to attend along with its appropriate members but declined.

The roadmap draws on the contributions from those at the roundtable. This included representatives from the Norwegian egg industry, who explained how in Norway it was industry itself which took the lead in banning the practice, rather than waiting for government legislation, which led to the successful implementation of in-ovo sexing technology.

As per the UK Government's Animal Welfare Strategy for England (published December 2025), the direction of travel in terms of government policy is clear – that **Ministers "would like to see an end to the practice of killing day-old chicks"**.

To make this a reality, we the undersigned propose the following three-point plan:

- 1. Defra should convene a summit of all stakeholders in the next 2-3 months** – including the BEIC, retailers, NGOs and input from other countries which have already banned the practice.
 - a.** The purpose of the summit should be to agree on a **deadline** for when the practice should end and a series of workable and practical steps to help achieve this objective, including timelines for their delivery ahead of the deadline. This may include a pilot project as soon as possible to learn lessons about how to introduce the new technology as quickly and cost effectively as possible.
- 2.** Defra should establish a **Working Group** (including representatives from the egg industry, retailers and animal welfare experts and organisations) to develop an **implementation plan** for a ban, including how industry can best be supported to make the transition.

- 3.** Defra should make clear that the **backstop** for any failure by industry to implement a ban by the deadline will be legislation. This will ensure that focus remains on delivering the Government's ultimate objective – "to see an end to the practice of killing day-old chicks".

Signed by:

- Siân Berry MP (Green)
- Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat)
- Irene Campbell MP (Labour)
- Sarah Champion MP (Labour)
- Ellie Chowns MP (Green)
- Carla Denyer MP (Green)
- Neil Duncan-Jordan MP (Labour)
- Patricia Ferguson MP (Labour)
- Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative)
- Baroness Hussein-Ece (Liberal Democrat)
- Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (Green)
- Terry Jermy MP (Labour)
- Kerry McCarthy MP (Labour)
- Nav Mishra MP (Labour)
- Abtisam Mohamed MP (Labour)
- Iqbal Mohamed MP (Independent)
- Adrian Ramsay MP (Green)
- Lord Sikka (Labour)
- Hannah Spencer MP (Green)
- Also supported by Dame Joanna Lumley

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