

P-05-815 Control Rapidly Expanding Intensive Poultry Industry in Wales

This petition was submitted by the Brecon and Radnor Branch of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales having collected 2,469 signatures online and 2,098 on paper, a total of 4,567 signatures.

Text of Petition

We the undersigned call on the Welsh Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to take long-term strategic action to ensure that the poultry product industry is environmentally sustainable through effective delivery of the Environment (Wales) Act, Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

Powerful agricultural drivers reinforced by BREXIT are increasing intensive egg & poultry production. The WG is ignoring the devastating environmental consequences for biodiversity, soil and water quality and avian and human disease. The public is vocal about poultry welfare but largely ignorant of the environmental impact of intensive poultry farming units (IPUs). "Free-range" egg units with concentrations of up to 2,500 birds/Ha are a particular risk (NRW report 218: Powys Poultry Pilot Study & INI nitrogen alerts 6/17).

Steep-sided valleys, high rainfall causing heavy nutrient run-off and populations of rare natural species make much of rural Wales wholly unsuitable for the current explosion of IPUs. After a decline from 1990, ammonia emissions have been increasing since 2010 (NAEI 2017 report for DEFRA). Critical loads of ammonia and nitrogen deposition (estimated thresholds for unacceptable damage to plant diversity) are far exceeded at some European & UK protected sites, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland. Excess phosphates threaten our watercourses (Wye & Usk Foundation 2017).

In failing to act on the evidence, WG, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Powys County Council (PCC) are neglecting the duty to "maintain and enhance biodiversity" (Environment Act Sec 6).

The WG must use its powers to control the industry:

1. *Provide proper resources for NRW to do urgent research, regulate and monitor IPU's and give better planning help to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs).*
2. *Issue planning policy and guidance to LPAs to improve decisions, ensure cumulative impacts are considered and monitor and enforce planning conditions.*
3. *Make the industry contribute towards the costs of regulation and monitoring and hold it to account for breach of environmental responsibility.*
4. *Publish transparent public reports on progress.*

Additional information

Our evidence is from Powys but our petition applies to all Wales.

Chair Diane McCrea confirms that NRW is shamefully under-resourced (BBC 14/12/17). NRW assesses impacts of IPU applications on European and UK nature sites and issues permits for IPU's over 40,000 birds. Improved NRW guidance (April 2017) covers cumulative impacts but assessment methods fail to prevent development where existing critical loads are exceeded.

The LPA assesses proper description of outdoor ranges and impacts on water quality, air quality, Local Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodland, landscape, residential amenity and local traffic.

LPAs lack the skills and resources for these responsibilities. PCC does not consider the cumulative impact of applications, together with all neighbouring IPU's, on the natural environment, landscape or rural residents. Schedule 2 Environmental Impact Assessment should ensure assessment of cumulative impacts but fails in practice. PCC is reluctant to award EIA status because the WG can overturn the decision (see P/2016/0608 & P/2017/0007).

CPRW has data on intensive poultry planning applications in Powys since 2011. In the last 30 months, there have been 99 APPLICATIONS involving over 3 MILLION BIRDS, of which 72 are for free-range eggs. Of the 99, only 10 have EIA status: 65 applications have been approved and ONLY ONE HAS BEEN REFUSED.

We have evidence of developments approved without contour or outdoor range mapping, close to nature reserves (71m), vulnerable ancient woodlands (adjacent) watercourses (10m) and residents (50m). Residents suffer health risks from flies, airborne ammonia, poultry dust, traffic-generated particulates and offensive smells. Environmental stakeholder and public objections are ignored, rare plant species are dying, disease risks are increasing and watercourses are failing WFD standards.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: A unique set of POWYS IPU DATA including applications, interactive map, hot-spot map and animated chronological IPU growth display can be viewed at <http://www.brecon-and-radnor-cprw.wales>.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Brecon and Radnorshire
- Mid and West Wales