Brexit Affect on Animal Welfare in the UK: Analytical Essay

In January 2020 when Brexit began to take place, there has been various concerns across the UK about how animal welfare and the different ways the laws and legislations may be affected. Brexit also caused a concern all over the UK as a large majority of the laws and legislations that are currently in place are made by the EU, this is roughly estimated to be around 80%/ This means that the UKs' standards for animal welfare may subside. Furthermore, it has also been brought to alight that the Lisbon treaty, which recognizes that animals have the capacity to feel pain and suffering; also known as being sentient is not included in the EU withdrawal act (House of commons 2019).

It is estimated that in the United Kingdom alone, 900 million animals are reared on farms every year (RSPCA 2019), so it is vital that animal welfare standards are met at an equally high level across the whole of the UK. There are around 40 different animal welfare legislations created by the EU, which protect a wide variety of animals across the UK. This includes 17 for farm animals, 11 for wildlife, 8 for animals used for research and 4 for companion animals (RSPCA 2019). In addition to this, it is a possibility that new trade agreements will be made with other countries post-Brexit that may possibly possess lower trading standards compared to the EUs'. One of these countries may include America as they are known to use growth hormones (this is currently banned and illegal to use in the UK). In farm animals such as cows as it causes them to produce more meat and milk, which then will be sold to supermarkets. This is a controversial subject as many people believe that it is an unethical process which can have various negative side effects for the animals. The side effects growth hormones have on cows include them being more susceptible to infections in the udders. Currently the rule for farm animals in the United Kingdom include the European convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes, which the five freedoms is included in (RSPCA 2019). The five freedoms consist of: freedom form hunger and thirst, discomfort, pain injury and disease, express normal behavior, fear and distress. It is also said that after Brexit, the agricultural bill will pay farmers £3.3 billion, if they maintain a higher standard of welfare for their animals but also if they improve their environmental standards (Philips 2020). Medical testing on animals is immensely regulated and monitored but, cosmetic animal testing is currently banned in the UK. Although it is also possible that animal testing may increase significantly post-Brexit as it will make the country more attractive to alternative bidders such as china, this may be an economic advantage however, this will be at the expense of the animals welfares (Philips 2020). Animal testing causes unnecessary pain and suffering to animals such as rats, dogs and chimpanzees which are all recognized in the Lisbon treaty as being sentient beings, these animals usually have a shortened life span and die of causes such as cancer etc. Animal testing is currently monitored by Reach which was put into place by the EU regulations back in March 2013, will stop applying to the UK in January 2021. After post-Brexit, if the EU animal testing data is shared with the UK, it may mean that animal testing may have to increase significantly to replace the data that was lost (Cat, 2018). The tests are also need to be carried out so that the UK is able to register the chemicals. In addition to this, it has been implied by the UKs' chemical industry association that the tests on animals are unnecessary as it doesn't input anything important needed for the chemical safety to be carried out (Cat 2018).

Overall, after Brexit it is expected that a new system will be put into place for livestock which

includes farmers to be rewarded for maintaining and presenting higher welfare standards for their animals. This will hopefully encourage the farmers to partake in this higher level of standards and cause a surge of welfare in the farming industry. Furthermore, the Lisbon treaty should be put back into place or put into the Eu withdrawal act before we leave, as it is the core for recognizing that animas are sentient beings. And animal welfare laws and legislations should remain at their current standards or even better, but there should also be improvements to certain areas of the farming industry such as the transport a long distance as they can be extremely stressful for the animals, so it is recommended that animals must be slaughtered as close to the farms where they are reared. Hopefully coming out of the EU the UK will make a deal where the Eu will allow us access to the animal testing data so that the unnecessary testing on animals will not have to take place.