

CASE STUDY

Pilot Programme: Advocates for Animals

PARTNER ORGANISATION: ADVOCATES FOR ANIMALS

Advocates for Animals is the first UK law firm dedicated to animal protection. It is a not for profit set up by David Thomas and Edie Bowles, two solicitors with vast combined experience in animal protection law.

Advocates for Animals were selected as one of the first organisations to collaborate with Animal Ask in our pilot programme from November 2020. We selected two organisations to support who could benefit from an additional research resource towards an upcoming ask consideration. Advocates for Animals approached us with a request to research all possible projects within two specific parameters:

1) the lack of regulatory framework for fish farming in Scotland and;

2) the lack of enforcement of animal welfare violations

Advocates for Animal's requirements were relatively specific, stating that they required support with the formation of an ask that would be suitable for either prosecution or judicial review. The ask was for the UK specifically and we had 6 months in which to complete this research. The focus of the research is impacting as many individual lives as possible, in order to have the greatest overall impact.

SCOPING

We started our research with some scoping in order for our team to gain as much knowledge as possible about the UK judicial review system. We partnered with a corporate law firm who gave us 110 hours of pro bono support. They produced an in depth scoping report which detailed UK animal welfare law and the possible angles we could look into within the scope from AFA. They also made some cross country comparisons which were useful for us to consider when deciding on the likelihood of certain asks progressing into the later rounds.

RESEARCH ROUNDS

We collated a list of 19 potential asks within the framework provided by AFA. In round one we examined each ask using our four methodologies; weighted factor model, expert view, cost effectiveness analysis and informed consideration.



Following the systematic rankings taken from the research, we eliminated 11 ideas. In round two we examined the remaining eight asks in greater depth using the same four methodologies as round 1.



This gave us enough information to identify our priority asks for our extensive research reports: pig tail docking and the regulatory framework for Scottish salmon.



We also identified some other potentially promising asks including rat poison and selective breeding. You can request the full list of ideas from the Animal Ask team.

In our final extensive reports we found strong arguments for launching a judicial review for tail docking enforcement and to improve the regulatory framework for Scottish salmon. Each ask could potentially be very impactful. However, which one looks better in expectation depends on how you weigh the evidence or likelihood of certain outcomes.

Overall our team views pig tail docking enforcement as a more promising ask, however our conclusion is best summarised based on the uncertainties or judgement calls that would lead you to favour one ask or the other.

PIG TAIL DOCKING ENFORCEMENT

Tail docking causes suffering through the acute experience of being tail docked and through chronic pain that likely proceeds the mutilation. Improving enforcement of current regulations would benefit the lives of many millions of pigs through reduced tail docking and would likely also improve environmental enrichment. However there are some potential negative flow-through effects such as increased tail biting and increased demand for chicken which will lead to more broilers being farmed. We expected tail biting to increase slightly but concluded that this was a worthwhile trade-off for overall welfare. The increase in broilers is a greater concern as the additional number of days experienced on factory farms could be quite large. On balance, our team also views this as an acceptable trade off given there is a comparable reduction in pig days experienced, but if this number increased or one is more concerned about this trade off it could reduce the promisingness of this ask.



FAVOURED IF:

- You particularly favour cases with a more straightforward and clear path to impact
- You believe that the probability of success of the case is strong
- You believe that pigs have a significantly higher moral value or capacity for welfare than fish



LOOKS LESS PROMISING IF:

- You are particularly concerned about the potential increase in demand for chicken meat as a result of small increases in the price of pig meat

IMPROVING THE REGULATION OF THE SCOTTISH SALMON INDUSTRY

Using a judicial review to improve the regulation of the Scottish salmon industry is promising for very different reasons. Unlike pig tail docking where the main uncertainty falls with the trade-off between different consequences for pigs and other animals, the promise of this judicial review depends on how likely you perceive certain outcomes to be. Here we found several areas where the Scottish salmon industry could improve and future developments that should be examined and regulated now. Due to the sensitive nature of discussing the intricacies of case value or case outcomes, we are limited as to what we can discuss here. If you are interested in this intervention and would like to discuss these details further, please get in touch.

FAVOURED IF:

- You are comfortable with harder to measure, less likely, outcomes if they could have high expected value
- You think this ask would increase the probability of the wider movement succeeding in their future efforts to improve the lives of salmon
- You think that it is quite likely that the Scottish government will create new regulations as a result of the pressure from this judicial review

LOOKS LESS PROMISING IF:

- You have higher skepticism of approaches which have long causal chains with several potential points of failure before impact occurs
- You are skeptical that this case will succeed in the face of political interests

Access to the full extensive reports will be made public following Advocates for Animal's work in this area. Due to the sensitivity of the case we are unable to share any further information at this time. If you have specific questions about either intervention, please get in touch with Animal Ask and we would be happy to advise you further regarding our findings.

EVALUTATION

ADVOCATES FOR ANIMALS ACTION

AFA are currently reviewing both extensive reports and are considering their options. Their decision on which ask to pursue will depend on a variety of factors including; funding, movement capacity and the time sensitive opportunities available once they are ready to begin this work. We will closely monitor Advocates for Animal's decision making in the coming months in order to fully understand the impact of our partnership.

PARTNERSHIP FEEDBACK

As a part of our evaluation process, we ask our partner groups to rate their experience of working with us. You can see the feedback from AFA below.



STRONGLY AGREE

Please indicate your opinion on the following statement:
My organisation feels confident in Animal Ask's abilities to carry out ask research on our behalf.



VERY SATISFIED

Overall how satisfied are you with Animal Ask's pilot programme?



EXCELLENT

How would you rate the overall communication between Animal Ask and your organisation?



STRONGLY AGREE

Did your organisation feel well informed throughout the process of working with Animal Ask?

'Advocates for Animals is incredibly grateful for the work Animal Ask carried out on its behalf. Due to their meticulous research and carefully drafted proposal, we feel confident taking our asks forward.'

Edie Bowles, Advocates for Animals



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