

Lawyers Welcome Animal Law Day

Friday 14 July, 2023

The UK Centre for Animal Law (A-LAW) is proud to announce a national Animal Law Day on 22 July each year to mark the anniversary of Britain's first national animal welfare law. Animal Law Week will run from 18-22 July each year, culminating in Animal Law Day, on 22 July.

A-LAW has a rich history of promoting animal law and making it accessible to animal advocates working to advance animal protection through law and policy reform. Whether through its pro bono support, legal policy work or legal education programmes, A-LAW has been striving to 'make the law work for animals' for nearly two decades.

The 'Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act 1822' (also known as 'Martin's Act' after its sponsor, Richard Martin MP), received Royal Assent on the 22 July 1822. This was the first national legislation intended specifically to make cruelty to animals an offence.

By establishing the principle that it is a proper part of the state's role to introduce laws to regulate the treatment of animals, Martin's Act is the forerunner of animal protection legislation not only in the United Kingdom, but across the world.

In 2022, A-LAW marked this important bicentenary anniversary with a week of online talks, wrapped up as the 'AnimaLaw: Visions for the future' conference, which took place between 18 – 22 July, coinciding with the actual anniversary of Martin's Act, which became law on 22 July 1822.

Continuing that tradition, we will mark the importance of animal law with a national Animal Law Week on 18-22 July each year, culminating in Animal Law Day on 22 July.

A-LAW will ask lawyers to celebrate and raise awareness of animal law with their own events and activities and the charity will also be hosting a series of animal law focused activities, fundraising and educational outreach over the course of the week with special emphasis placed on Animal Law Day.

A-Law Chairperson, Paula Sparks states:

'The law has a huge impact on the lives of animals. It can both serve to legitimise harms to animals for purposes that benefit humans and conversely, protect animals from gratuitous cruelty and legislate for their welfare as kept animals. Law also has a huge potential role in achieving a paradigm shift for animals, to halt and reverse species loss and to achieve policy objectives such as sustainability and climate goals, that align with animal welfare objectives. We are pleased to announce this initiative to raise awareness about the importance of animal law and public policy and the need to continue discussion about how to make the law work for animals.'

Professor Jane Holder, Director of Research Studies, University College London Faculty of Laws.

'This initiative draws attention to the growing strength of the animal justice movement and the growing need for legal education to pursue an animal justice agenda. The next generation of lawyers and law makers will need to approach law critically and creatively and push for much needed legal reform in all aspects of law relating to animals. Animal Law week contributes greatly to this educational aim, marking both progress in the law to date, but also the need for future legal action.'

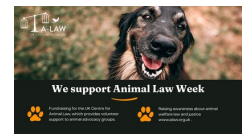
Marcia Hyde, Head of the Animal Welfare Law Team at 42 Bedford Row chambers states:

'The law reflects society's values and protects and promotes what we collectively consider to be the fair and just way to be in the world. Perceptions and sensitivities about what animals mean to humans and how we think animals should be treated are changing rapidly. This welcome initiative from A-Law is a real opportunity for lawyers from different legal disciplines to recognise and promote animal welfare issues present within those disciplines.'

Frances Allen, Head of the Animal Rights Law Team at Goldsmith chambers states:

'Future generations will look back at this time in history as the turning point in the fight for the recognition of legal rights for nonhuman animals.'

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Kevin McKenzie, McKenzie Solicitors states:

'As each myth regarding our differences from other animals is successively exploded by modern scientific research, we can no longer go on endlessly stating what makes us, as humans, qualitatively different. The issue of animal sentience is now firmly in the fore - under the microscope, in the UK as a consequence of debate concerning protections resulting from our departure from the European Union. It is taking on increasing importance for younger generations, and Animal Lawyers can surely be said to be on the right side of history.'

If you have any questions or wish to contact a member of the A-law team for comment, please email info@alaw.org.uk.

Notes for the editor:

- The UK Centre for Animal Law (A LAW) is a charity that exists to promote knowledge and education about the law relating to animal protection, and the more effective enforcement of legislation relating to animals.
- We are registered as a charity in England and Wales. We are politically neutral. As well as publishing legal analyses to inform public debates, we provide animal protection organisations with access to high quality legal advice to assist their work. We also promote the teaching of animal law in UK universities.
- We seek to be a source of objective, independent legal analysis on animal protection law issues. Whilst legal topics are often complex, it is our job to explain them as clearly as possible, to increase the effectiveness of UK animal protection organisations collectively, and to promote informed public debate.
- We are led predominantly by volunteer lawyers and works closely with legal academics and others on a multi-disciplinary basis to further animal welfare objectives.
- For further information about us, or to access our online resources, please see our website: www.alaw.org.uk.
For more information, please visit <http://alaw.org.uk/>.

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