

**The Self Help Group for Farmers, Pet Owners and Others
experiencing difficulties with the RSPCA (The SHG)**

Press Release

For Immediate Release
13th October 2008

**MORI ACCUSED OF PRO-RSPCA BIAS - OXFORDSHIRE POLICE AND
COUNCILS LAUNCH TWO MASSIVE RSPCA ANTI-HUNT OPERATIONS**

In the same week that MORI were accused by Horse & Hound of pro-RSPCA anti-hunting bias, a huge crackdown on hare coursing has been launched by the RSPCA and various local authorities and constabularies.

One of the 3,500 new offences created by New Labour was to criminalise the hunting of hares with dogs. Hare coursing was, until 2005, a popular and legal countryside sport, as it remains in Ireland.

Oxfordshire PCs Darren James and Marc Lester are just two of the officers whose time is now spent on this animal crime as part of "Operation Migrate" and "Operation Countrywatch". Both PC James and PC Lester patrol the Downs near Wantage in one of several long-wheelbase Landrover Defenders.

Anne Kasica of the SHG said:

"We now have far too many demands on the time and resources of the police. One of their biggest problems is that highly funded animal rights campaign groups such as the RSPCA put intense pressure on the police to concentrate on more minor offences instead of dealing with burglaries and assaults."

"We need to know how police priorities are decided. Surely the main priority must be community safety, not assisting the RSPCA."

The issues raised over the Oxford situation are being repeated all over the country.

Chris Newman of the Federation of Companion Animal Societies (FOCAS) wrote to the Chief Constable of Hampshire

Constabulary last year when his 15 year old son was assaulted and needed hospital treatment and the police were too busy to interview him until some six weeks later.

In the letter Mr. Newman contrasted this with the police presence at an animal welfare incident only two and a half weeks after his son was assaulted, in which, in addition to other attendees, two police officers and three Police Support Officers were present for approximately four hours.

Council appointed Animal Welfare inspector Paula Davies was present throughout and led the investigation into whether the comfort of some pet rabbits had been met.

Mr. Newman asked the Chief Constable whether it was police policy to give priority to animal welfare over human welfare, under what remit civilians such as the RSPCA are permitted to use police facilities to pursue private prosecutions, and whether costs of the use of those facilities are recovered from the RSPCA.

Ernest Vine commented:

"This isn't anyone's idea of keeping the community safe."

"When police initiatives are announced, hare coursing isn't the first crime which leaps to mind - unless, of course, you are an animal rights extremist or you work for MORI."

Mr. Vine concluded:

"It is vital that there is a full and open debate on how police time should be prioritised and whether the police should be at the beck and call of the RSPCA in future."

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Word Total: 459

Notes to Editors: -

Chris Newman of the Federation of Companion Animal Societies can be contacted on 02380 434368.

For further comment please contact Anne Kasica on 01559 371031 or Ernest Vine on 01559 370566. Mobile 07719 367148. e-mail: shg@the-shg.org

The SHG was officially formed in June 1990 and has been helping people to defend themselves and their animals from the RSPCA ever since.

The national help line number is **0844 700 66 90**

A copy of this and previous press releases from The SHG are online at

<http://www.the-shg.org/SHGPressReleases.htm>

Background information on the Self Help Group for Farmers Pet Owners and Other Experiencing Difficulties with the RSPCA can be found at <http://www.the-shg.org>

Details of further criticisms of the RSPCA can be found at the RSPCA-Animadversion website:

<http://cheetah.webtribe.net/~animadversion>

References:

Putting a stop to hare hunts (From Banbury Cake)
5 Oct 2008 ... Pc Darren James, left, and Pc Marc Lester patrol the Downs near Wantage ...
www.banburycake.co.uk/news/3729311.Putting_a_stop_to_hare_hunts/

or

<http://tinyurl.com/3gp57d>

Does hunting poll show MORI bias against hunting?
Horse & Hound Online, UK - 4 Oct 2008
LEADING research company MORI has breached industry rules over the publication of a poll commissioned by anti-hunting groups ...

<http://www.horseandhound.co.uk/competitionnews/392/269321.html>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/3rtcqv>

Hunt ban bites in countryside - yorkshiretoday.co.uk
Aug 21, 2008 - RURAL businesspeople in Yorkshire say they are already being hit by the effects of the ban on hunting with dogs even though the new hunting season is still more than two months away. Six months after the ban came into force, livery yards, farriers, blacksmiths and those who make ...

<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/Hunt-ban-bites-in-countryside.1118375.jp>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/4wqdec>

Hounded - DisabilityNow

... prosecution record of the RSPCA, which as part of its remit investigates alleged animal cruelty offences, is causing concern to disabled people and ...

www.disabilitynow.org.uk/living/features/hounded

MP attacks RSPCA prosecutions BBC News, UK - 23 Sep 2008
Mr Field said RSPCA members needed to put pressure on its council for a change in policy otherwise it ought to face an external inquiry. ...

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/news/7631635.stm>

Animal Rights & the Future of the Pet Industry 2006

On the matter of links, Dr Richard Ryder, member of the Ruling Council of the RSPCA is ... of PAL ... In 1997 PAL donated over a million pounds to the Labour party. ...

<http://the-shg.org/OATA.htm>

Victims of RSPCA bite back - Feb 3, 2008

Two months before, the RSPCA had been invited to examine the cow, ... the same month Maidstone Crown Court heard the appeal of Craig Sargent, a Kent farmer, ...

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2008/03/02/do0202.xml>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/2a4nt3>

The sheer hell of bossy Britain
Guardian - Jun 19, 2007

Tory MP Boris Johnson contends that 3000 new offences put on the statute book in the past 10 years typify how bossy we have become thanks to New Labour. ...

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/jun/19/britishidentity.stuartjeffries>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/4wyavn>

Don't Allow Hare Netting: ICABS Appeal To Farmers
Waterford Today, Ireland - 12 Sep 2008

... of hares on their lands, and we earnestly appeal to them to use their rights and powers to protect the hare from the abuse that is live hare coursing.

http://www.waterford-today.ie/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4079&Itemid=10356&ed=395

or

<http://tinyurl.com/3zm9vz>

Protests at Clonmel hare coursing event - RTE.ie
Feb 6, 2008 - The Department of the Environment says the Government has no plans to ban hare coursing, even though the Green Party wants to see it done away with. Around 30000 people have been attending the three-day National Coursing meeting in Clonmel, Co Tipperary.

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2008/0206/coursing.html>

Animal rights activists to picket hare coursing... -
Belfast Telegraph

Feb 6, 2008 - Animal rights activists are planning a major protest in Co Tipperary today as the country's largest annual hare coursing event gets underway in Clonmel. The Campaign for the Abolition of Cruel Sports says the demonstration will mark the first time in 12 years that pickets have been ...

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/breaking-news/ireland/animal-rights-activists-to-picket-hare-coursing-event-13382599.html>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/3q9vq6>