



For Publication – Guide to Writing Letters To Editors

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factfile

✉ Why?

As the saying goes: the pen is mightier than the sword, and with regards to promoting animal rights, it really is one of the most successful tools we have. A letter in a local paper will get the cruelty-free message, in your own words, to tens of thousands of people at once, and possibly to millions if it gets printed in a national newspaper or magazine.

✉ When?

The best time to submit a letter for publication is in response to an article or news item that has appeared in the paper to which you are writing. This could be, for example, about a local wildlife cull or a restaurant selling 'exotic meat'. If the article is negative, then write in with the other side of the argument that defends animals or points out the problems and cruelty associated with whatever is taking place. If it is a positive article, send in a letter of support or encouragement. You can also write to publicise a particular occasion or event, such as Animal Aid's Horse Racing Awareness Week or Veggie Month, or how to have a compassionate Christmas.

✉ What?

Always think about what you want your letter to achieve. Encourage people to give up meat by mentioning our free Going Veggie recipe pack. If you want people to write to their MP, provide the House of Commons address. Suggest people buy cruelty-free household products from the Co-op, or even better order goods from Animal Aid. Wherever possible, give Animal Aid's contact details (most importantly the web site address) so that people can contact us for more information.

✉ How?

Don't be afraid to speak up for the animals – they don't have a voice, but you can give them one. Be rational, concise, and polite. Ranting won't get you anywhere! You will probably have enough basic knowledge to put together a letter but if you want detailed information on a particular topic, check our web site, or call us. Don't feel you have to include lots of facts and figures – a simple argument or even an emotional response expressing dismay or disappointment is just as valid. Try to make a point that no-one else is likely to make, and avoid making too many points in one letter.

✉ Where?

Address your letter to the Letters Editor, marked 'for publication'. Start it with Dear Sir, Dear Madam or

Dear Letters Editor. You can submit your letter by post, but for daily nationals, you really need to send it by fax or email, preferably before mid afternoon on the day of publication of the feature to which you are responding, as papers will want to print responses while the topic is still newsworthy. Contact details will be printed in the paper, or give them a ring to find out the direct email address or fax number.

✉ Who?

You do have to supply your name and address, but you can ask for your details not to be published, in which case they will put 'Name and address supplied'.

✉ Don't give up?

Newspapers receive lots of letters each day, and obviously can't print them all. If yours isn't selected for publication, keep trying! If you have no luck, study more carefully what letters do get printed and the style in which they are written, or try another paper.

✉ Top Tip?

Try to keep your letter to a maximum of 250 words. That way it stands less chance of being shortened by the editor.

Good luck!