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### No appetite for rabbit farming in the UK

Many people would be shocked to learn that rabbits were being farmed for their fur and flesh, confined for hours on end in tiny hutches, unable to freely access grass, on a site in the English countryside.

Sadly, an investigation by Animal Aid has shown this to be the case in Atlow Derbyshire. Investigators were saddened to see rabbits, who appear to have very limited room to move and display their natural behaviours, such as running, foraging, digging and playing. Our investigators never saw rabbits out of their hutches over multiple visits.

The hutches containing these inquisitive and gentle animals appear too small for them to even be able to sit upright. More alarmingly, T&S Nurseries, the company operating on this site, have applied for planning permission for two other sites – in Amersham, Bucks and near Lyndon in Rutland. A recent application in Cornwall was refused.

National campaign group Animal Aid and many others, including local groups and individuals, strongly object to the proposals for these two intensive rabbit meat and fur farms.

The female rabbits are treated as breeding machines, their babies, weaned and then removed and apparently killed at just 16 weeks old. In captivity rabbits can live to be 10 years old.

T&S Rabbits, the associated website, sells items such as hats and scarves made from 'free-range' rabbit fur. The fur is sold as a by-product to rabbit meat, exploiting a legal loop-hole. Animal Aid investigators were distressed to see rabbits in barren individual hutches, unable to socialise and with no free access to the outside. This is not what people imagine when told an animal's life has been 'free-range'.

Rabbits who have very little exercise and are under-stimulated can be hugely damaged, both emotionally and physically. Some rabbits appeared listless and largely unresponsive to the presence of investigators - very concerning in a prey animal.

Says Tor Bailey, Animal Aid Campaign Manager:

*'The very thought of confining female rabbits as breeding machines to have their young repeatedly taken from them is abhorrent.'*

*'Our investigators were shocked and saddened when they witnessed these docile and intelligent animals confined in tiny cages, denied the chance to bask in the sunshine, dig and play – to even sit upright. The conditions were truly shocking.'*

*It is cruel and distasteful that any animal should be needlessly exploited for their fur or flesh; farming animals exclusively for their fur has been banned for 20 years in England and Wales, this case shows that there remains a loophole in the law which needs immediate closure. The UK bans were implemented on the grounds that farming and killing animals specifically for their fur is unethical, and at odds with public morality. This is fur farming by the back door.'*

'Notes for Editors'

- Read more about our investigation here:  
<https://www.animalaid.org.uk/stoprabbitfarms>
- "T&S Rabbits" is based at various locations throughout the UK.  
<http://www.tandsrabbits.co.uk/products.html>
- Cornwall Planning Application PA20/08566, was refused 19 March 2021.  
<https://www.falmouthpacket.co.uk/news/19159455.rabbit-farm-proposed-tregunwith-wood-site-near-mylor/>
- Buckinghamshire (Ref. Planning Application [PL/21/0130/FA](#)); and Rutland (Ref. Planning Application [2020/1439/FUL](#))
- <https://www.animalaid.org.uk/ears-open-help-object-to-proposed-rabbit-fur-and-meat-farm-in-rutland/>
- <https://www.animalaid.org.uk/help-stop-a-rabbit-meat-and-fur-farm-setting-up-in-buckinghamshire/>
- Rabbits killed at 16 weeks:  
<https://docs.planning.org.uk/20210113/227/QLBKW7NNLT000/ul5fc5exa5aeol00.pdf>
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