

Challenges and Opportunities in Irish Animal Protection Law

Animal protection law in Ireland has developed in recent years. Up until 2013, our principal statute was over 100 years old, dating back to 1911. Over the last decade, legislation has been drafted repealing the archaic 1911 Act, in addition to the introduction of legislation to regulate puppy farming, coursing and the greyhound industry. However, despite the efforts made to protect animals, Ireland is still referred to as the “puppy farm capital of Europe”. Additionally, it remains one of only seven countries to legalise greyhound racing, and also has an active fur farming industry. There has been some success over the years such as a ban on wild animals used for entertainment in circuses, the judiciary taking a stricter approach in sentencing cases involving animal cruelty and most notably the government decision to introduce a prohibition on fur farming. Nonetheless, Ireland is far from achieving adequate protection of animal interests. This paper will discuss Ireland’s animal protection laws highlighting both the opportunities and challenges in achieving animal rights.



Stephanie O' Flynn

National University of Ireland, Galway.