

Forever Against Animal Testing – where are we today?

Well... in a nutshell, it's in a bit of a muddle. And when it comes to animal welfare being in a muddle, it isn't OK – we need cast iron assurances that no animals have been tested on for cosmetics. Full stop. End of. We need a full ban back.

Whilst the Government confirmed on Wednesday 17 May 2023 that animal testing for cosmetic ingredients has stopped, it's sadly not so simple. There is still work to be done – and so we're doing all we can.

We know so many of our collective care about this, so here's more information on where things stand.

Here's a quick recap....

The UK were the first country to ban the testing of cosmetics on animals back in 1998, after a powerful campaign from The Body Shop and Cruelty Free International. Dame Anita Roddick, our founder, was the first CEO of a beauty company to campaign for this – right back at the end of the 1980s.

However, this was effectively ended in 2019, under the radar, when licenses were once again issued to suppliers for certain ingredients to be tested on animals.

I thought the Government confirmed that licenses have stopped being issued?

Most recently, due to immediate campaigning by us, other brands, and of course Cruelty Free International, the Government has confirmed that no more animal testing licenses for ingredients used 'exclusively' in cosmetics will be issued.

This is good news! However, the word 'exclusively' still causes us great concern.

So sadly, we only have a partial ban....

The latest reassurances, whilst welcome, are still not compatible with the full ban we had in place from 1998 to 2019. That's because there is legislation out there called REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) that means some ingredients that are used in cosmetics AND for other purposes can still be licensed for animal testing. Ingredients used 'exclusively' in cosmetics account for only about 20% of total cosmetics ingredients, which potentially leaves the other 80% open to animal testing.

Whilst these licenses are being used to test for important reasons so that we can all use products with the full knowledge that they are safe, there are many non-animal tests available that have been scientifically proven to be just as effective in providing the reassurances that consumers, manufacturers, and brands need.

No animals need to be harmed

The advances in technology we have available to us now mean that we can safely test all ingredients used in cosmetics – even those that are used elsewhere – without any living creature having to suffer unimaginable pain and distress, and in some cases even lose their life, for the purposes of beauty.

This is why we strongly believe we can't turn back the clock. A full ban was possible in 1998, and we're in an even stronger position today through technological and scientific developments to keep to that commitment.

What is The Body Shop calling for?

We're calling for animal testing to stop on ALL ingredients used in cosmetics. We want a full ban back.

To do this we need the Government to urgently find a solution, by ensuring all relevant regulations impacting cosmetics ingredients work in harmony, to get a full ban back.

We know this is complex – as different areas of legislation have been developed across the UK and Europe – but a solution must be found that protects consumers and animals.

Does this mean some products from The Body Shop include ingredients that since 2019 have been tested on animals?

Thankfully no - because we are Leaping Bunny certified, by Cruelty Free International. And this most recent situation demonstrates why Leaping Bunny certification is so important – for brands and consumers. So look out for the Leaping Bunny!

What's next?

Right now we're working with our partners at Cruelty Free International to establish how we can best use our business and influence to urge the UK and EU Governments to commit to bringing a full ban back.

We believe this can happen by ensuring all relevant regulations impacting cosmetics ingredients work in harmony. We know that this matters to people. Watch this space. We can't turn back the clock.