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No Return to Cruelty Says Poll to Mark Hunt Ban Anniversary

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(United Kingdom - 18 February 2007) - A new poll shows public opinion is more than 3:1 in favour of the hunting ban remaining, as animal welfare groups today celebrate the second anniversary of the prohibition of the barbaric 'sport'.

The results of a new Ipsos - MORI poll¹, released today by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW - www.ifaw.org), the League Against Cruel Sports, and the RSPCA, shows that despite the pro-hunt protestations, little has changed, with support for a ban repeatedly exceeding opposition over the past decade.

In the latest survey, 58% supported the ban remaining in place, against just 17% per cent who wished to see the Hunting Act repealed. The 17% is made up of nine per cent who 'strongly supported the ban being scrapped', and an additional eight per cent who 'tended to' support the ban being scrapped. A total of 25% were either neutral or did not know.

John Leaman of Ipsos - MORI commented:

"On the basis of this survey, support for a hunt ban nationally once again outweighs opposition by a clear margin – as it did before the Hunting Act came into effect. Before the ban was introduced, public support for a ban in our surveys typically ranged between 2:1 to 3:1 in favour – so this latest figure suggests that this pattern is continuing. In rural areas, we found that support for a ban also repeatedly exceeded opposition – and in this latest survey, it is running at around 2:1 in favour of the ban staying (50% vs 26%, with 24% neutral or undecided)."

John Rolls, RSPCA Director of Animal Welfare Promotion said:

"Two years on, and the public unsurprisingly remains buoyantly in favour of the ban on what was a brutal, needless and outdated pastime. Sadly there is a vocal minority which still seems unwilling to accept the principle of democracy - but those who defy the law are, in increasing numbers, now finding themselves in court."

Douglas Batchelor, Chief Executive of the League Against Cruel Sports said:

"For two years the diehard supporters of hunting have deluded themselves that the public would forget why they wanted hunting banned. They haven't because there is no way a civilized society can tolerate cruelty towards animals in the name of sport."

Robbie Marsland, Director IFAW UK said:

"This poll is a stark reminder to hunting enthusiasts that the ban was driven by profound public abhorrence at the killing of animals for fun. Just how profound is shown by the fact that so many people are still in favour of retaining the ban, despite two years of relentless whingeing propaganda by the hunting lobby. The public does not want a return to cruelty in the countryside."

Notes to editors:

1. Ipsos Mori interviewed 1,983 GB adults aged 15+ in home, face-to-face on Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing. Fieldwork was carried out between 2-8 February 2007 and data are weighted to national profile. Where results do not sum to 100 per cent, this is due to computer rounding.
2. Mori polls, conducted on the issue of hunting from 1997 to 2007, show that typically public opinion has run at between 2:1 or 3:1 in favour of a ban on hunting.

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