

Fireworks season sparks RSPCA Assured advice to help protect farmed animals

Let your neighbours and local community know about livestock on your land

Thursday 17 October 2024

RSPCA Assured is offering advice to farmers to help reduce the fear and stress fireworks cause livestock.

Farmers will be all-too aware that loud bangs and flashing lights from organised and private fireworks displays can lead to cattle and sheep running away in panic, injuring themselves on fences or farm equipment in the process - or even running onto busy roads, risking injury and death.

Poultry can also be negatively affected by fireworks: when hens and chickens are frightened, their instinct is to huddle together, with some birds potentially being smothered.

An RSPCA Assured spokesperson said: "Every year farmed animals are frightened by fireworks - despite it being illegal to light fireworks near fields and barns where livestock are kept.



"One way farmers can try to reduce the risk is to proactively engage with neighbours and the local community, alerting them to the presence of livestock on their land and the impact fireworks can have.

"This fireworks season the RSPCA is also encouraging members of the public who are having displays in their gardens to consider their neighbours and warn them in advance - or,

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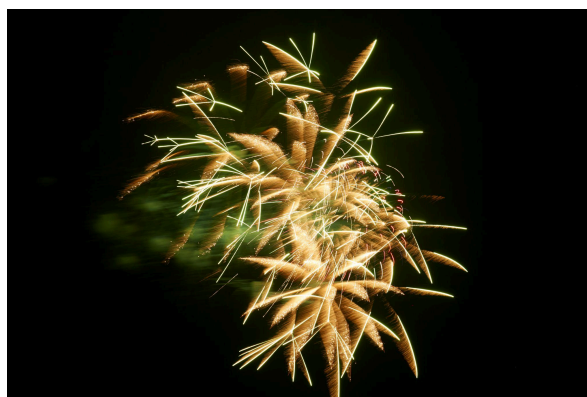
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preferably, to attend organised events instead - so we hope this will help reduce the impact on farmed animals."

Another tip is to play low, soothing-sounding music to livestock for limited periods to mask the fizzes, cracks and bangs - and starting this in the run-up to the fireworks season allows animals to get used to having the music playing in the background.

Lucy, a pig farmer and RSPCA Assured member, plays classical music to her pigs year-round - but finds it particularly helpful on and around 5 November.

She said: "[Classic FM](#) is great to put on the radio for the pigs, especially when they first arrive on the farm. The soothing sounds help keep them calm in their new environment.



"The background music also helps muffle any sudden noises, whether it be fireworks or thunder - or even just day-to-day noises, like me walking into the shed and the tractor driving through. You can tell pigs are happier, as they play with each other and wag their tails."

Farmers can also follow these tips to help protect their livestock on Bonfire Night::

- Check and reinforce fencing and enclosures where necessary in case animals panic and try to escape
- Check your livestock regularly for signs of distress
- Where practical, arrange for an experienced stockperson (who your animals are familiar with) to stay with them when fireworks are going off
- After local firework displays, check fields for any firework debris that could be dangerous to your animals.

-ends-

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