

---

## Animal Parliament

One day Farmer Giles rose early and drove off to the agricultural show with Rex, his loyal sheepdog.

When the farmer and his dog were safely out of sight, a group of farm animals gathered together in the big barn.

"Phewww!" said Emily the sheep. "I'm sick to death of being bossed around by that sheepdog!"

"Me, too", said Francis the fat, furry, farm cat. "It's not fair that one farm animal should be able to tell all the others what to do."

"Yes. Farm animals should be able to make their own decisions", said Emily.

"No way!" grunted Sid the pig. "There'd be chaos if you let farm animals make their own decisions ... At least you know where you stand with Rex."

"But think how much fairer it would be if we *all* had a say in things", said Emily, "one animal, one vote."

"What's so fair about one animal one vote?" grunted Sid. "I'll tell you what'd happen ... you'd all gang up on us pigs and vote for a ban on mud – or at least to reduce it to such an extent that it's not worth wallowing in ... We pigs are always getting complaints about our mud-wallowing habits and how 'offensive' they are."

"Ooooooh! ..." said Emily. "We'd never take a vote on anything without discussing it first. Pigs should get the same chance to explain their point of view as the next farm animal."

"And then get out-voted!" grunted Sid.

"Don't be so negative", said Emily. "Have more faith in your fellow farm animals."

"Fellow farm animals?" said Sid. "And who might they be, for mud's sake? ... Do they include bees, for example? Give bees a vote each and they'd get their own way every time. There's thousands of the little buzzers in the orchard."

"And don't even think about giving ducks a vote", said Damian the insensitive chicken ... Ducks wouldn't have a clue what to do with a vote if they got one – not a cluckin' clue."

"Ducks have as much right to a say in things that affect them as other farm animals", replied Gordon the rather more sensitive donkey. "What worries me is what would happen if you all voted for something beastly that went against my conscience – like taking revenge on Rex. You know how I feel about violence."

"We all respect your views, Gordon", said Emily, "but you can't go against a vote just because you don't like it."

"I'd vote for taking revenge on Rex, no problem", whispered Francis the fat, furry, farm cat.

"I've ... been ... thinking", lowed Mollie the lugubrious cow. "Voting is not a bad idea ... and discussing is not a bad idea ... either ... But if we all had to discuss *everything* ... nothing would ever get decided."

"And if we had a vote on every decision, nothing would ever get done", interrupted Francis.

"What we should do", suggested Mollie, "is elect a small group of farm animals to do some of the discussing and voting ... for us."

"An animal parliament!" the animals chorused in unison.

"What's the betting it's never a pig that gets elected?" grunted Sid.

To be continued ...

[With apologies to George Orwell]