

CROCODILE FARMS

Read the text and choose the word that best fits the gap.

When Andy Johnson (0)_____ Britain's first ever crocodile farm in 2006, he (1)_____ under fierce criticism from animal rights groups, opposed the factory farming of wildlife. However, Johnson, who also farms cattle, pigs and lambs, (2)_____ that his motivation for starting a crocodile farm was for (3)_____ environmental reasons. He wants to protect wild crocodiles from being poached, and he primarily interested in their meat, not their skins. "By supplying Europeans with home-produced crocodile, we can (4)_____ the market value of illegally supplied crocodile meat," he claims.

Johnson says the meat "has a mild flavor - it's low fat, high protein, very healthy and humanely produced." His crocodiles are housed in tropically heated room that (5)_____ around 20 by 30 meters, so they have plenty of room. However, Dr. Clifford Warwick, a reptile biologist, (6)_____ concerns. Their biology and behavior do not (7)_____ themselves to a captive life. The animals may seem peaceful and relaxed, but an animal behaviorist can see that they are stressed."

In the last century, many species of crocodiles were hunted to the (8)_____ of extinction as trade in their skins flourished. Some 300,000 Australian saltwater crocodiles were killed between 1945 and 1972. The alligator suffered a similar (9)_____, although both species are now protected and their (10)_____ are slowly rising. Worldwide, the legal trade in crocodilian skins (crocodiles, alligators and caymans) has roughly tripled since 1977, rising to a million or (11)_____ animals by 2002. The majority of these are farmed animals, but upwards of 90,000 are killed annually in the (12)_____.

