



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

The Rt Hon the Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park
Minister of State

Mary Glendon MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MC2022/02990/DT

17 February 2022

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your email of 8 February on behalf of several of your constituents about the export of live animals. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

The UK Government is taking advantage of our status as an independent trading nation and delivering its manifesto commitment to end excessively long journeys for slaughter and fattening by banning the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. The UK's departure from the EU has provided us with a much-awaited opportunity to address this longstanding ambition.

The UK Government's view is that animals should only be transported if it is necessary and that the most welfare considerate route should be chosen. Journey durations should be minimised where possible to reduce the risk of welfare complications arising during journeys.

From a welfare perspective the UK Government views export journeys for slaughter and fattening to be unnecessary or unnecessarily stressful because the animals could be slaughtered or fattened domestically and, any such journey for slaughter or fattening, typically would be shorter or less stressful than any equivalent journey to a third country.

Informed by Farm Animal Welfare Committee's advice which was submitted to the UK Government in 2019, the UK Government launched a consultation in England and Wales in 2020 on ending live animal exports for slaughter and fattening, as well as for broader improvements to the domestic welfare in transport regime.

The UK Government did not propose to end the export of animals for breeding purposes or poultry exports. Animals exported for breeding are typically transported in very good conditions above the regulatory baseline, with procedures in place to ensure that the welfare of the animal is prioritised during the journey.

There were no exports of poultry for slaughter or fattening from Great Britain to the EU in 2019 or 2020. The summary of responses was published in August 2021. 87% of respondents agreed that livestock and equine export journeys for slaughter and fattening are unnecessary. The most common reason provided was due to concerns over welfare of the animals and the second reason was that livestock could be slaughtered and fattened in the UK.

Following full consideration of the scientific and expert evidence, and the responses to the recent public consultation, the Government will now be banning exports of cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and equines for slaughter and fattening beginning in or transiting through Great Britain to a third country, through the introduction of the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. We are working closely with local authorities, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, and the Scottish and Welsh Governments to ensure that the ban is implemented and enforced effectively across Great Britain.

Thank you once again for your email.

With best wishes,



THE RT HON THE LORD GOLDSMITH OF RICHMOND PARK