



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

15th May 2024

Dear Constance,

RE: CAGED FARM ANIMALS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about the use of cages for farm animals. I have read your comments with interest.

I would like to assure you that my ministerial colleagues and I take the welfare of all animals seriously. Since publishing the 'Action Plan for Animal Welfare', the Government has delivered an ambitious legislative programme, bringing significant improvements for animals both in the UK and abroad. Ministers are firmly committed to maintaining the UK's strong track record on animal welfare and to delivering continued improvements, both in the course of this parliament and beyond.

I understand that my ministerial colleagues do not believe that the time is right to consult on cage reforms, recognising some of the challenges that numerous sectors have faced in recent years. I am informed that the market is already driving the move away from using cages for laying hen production for example, with over 60 percent of eggs coming from free range production. Regarding pigs, the UK also has a significant outdoor pig sector, with 40 percent of the national sow breeding herd farrow freely on outdoor pig units with no option of confinement.

I am assured that the Government will continue to work with the sector to maintain and enhance high standards of welfare. For example, the 'Animal Health and Welfare Pathway' will prioritise areas for additional improvement in the health and welfare of pigs, cattle, sheep, and poultry. I know that one of the Government's priorities for the pathway includes supporting producers to transition away from confinement systems.

I am also assured that the Government continues to advance international co-operation on animal welfare and to promote high welfare standards. I am aware that production methods, such as sow stalls and battery cages, are already not permitted in the UK. I welcome that the Prime Minister has confirmed that the Government will safeguard the UK's ability to maintain high animal welfare, food, and environmental standards in new trade agreements.

Of course, if you have specific concerns about the welfare of an animal, I recommend reporting it to the police or the RSPCA in the usual way.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove'.

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE