

The following exceptions have been applied to the some or all of the documents that fall within the scope of your request.

Personnel Information – Regulation 11

Regulation 11 of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (the EIRs) sets out when personal data can and cannot be disclosed under the EIRs. Regulation 10(3) makes it clear that, where a request for environmental information includes personal data, the personal data must not be made available (i.e. disclosed) otherwise than in accordance with regulation 11.

Where this exception has been applied the following will replace the withheld information - **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information**

Internal communications - Regulation 10(4)(e)

Regulation 10(4)(e) allows authorities to refuse to disclose internal communications. This is a class-based exception, meaning that there is no need to consider whether disclosure of the communication would cause harm before applying the exception. Provided the information is an internal communication, the exception will apply.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

This has been applied to sections of documents where the information contained within is outwith the scope of your request as it does not refer to the welfare of pigs or farrowing crates.

Information Already Available

Some of the information you have requested is already publicly available at –

[Pig welfare guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

[Good Food Nation - Food and drink - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Under regulation 6(1)(b) of the EIRs, we do not have to give you information which is already publicly available and easily accessible to you in another form or format. If, however, you do not have internet access to obtain this information from the website(s) listed, then please contact me again and I will send you a paper copy.

ECONOMY (ARE) ARE : Animal Health and Welfare

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information, [Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information@hotmail.com

Our Reference: 202100180247

23 March 2021

Dear **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information,**

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 March 2021 to Ben Macpherson MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment, asking his support for the Private Members Pig Husbandry (Farrowing) Bill at Westminster. I have been asked to reply.

It would not be appropriate for the Scottish Ministers to support this Bill regarding possible legislation in England as animal welfare is a devolved matter. However, you may wish to be aware that the Scottish Ministers have confirmed to DEFRA that they will consider how best to legislate for future proposals to improve animal welfare, including doing so jointly with the UK Government, where the Scottish Government's particular interests and circumstances can be recognised and protected.

It may also be helpful to inform you of the Scottish Government's current position on the welfare of pigs. I would firstly like to assure you that the Scottish Government takes the welfare of all animals very seriously; and provision is made for the keepers of all animals to provide for their welfare under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

All keepers are legally obliged to take all reasonable steps to ensure the 'five needs' as detailed in section 24 of the 2006 Act. In addition, the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010 ('the 2010 Regulations') specify in detail the welfare conditions in which each common farm animal must be kept.

The Scottish Government has published a number of Codes of Practice/Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock to encourage the highest standards of husbandry, and that relating to pigs can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/welfare-pigs-codepractice/> Work is also currently ongoing to produce new Scottish Government guidance on the welfare of pigs.

With regard to the use of farrowing crates, the Scottish Government would prefer to avoid the close confinement of all sows. However, the commercial development of free farrowing systems is not yet sufficiently advanced for these to replace crates completely.

Farrowing crates protect piglets from being crushed by the sow - one of the largest causes of pig mortality. As I am sure you will agree, it is equally important to maintain the welfare of the piglet as well as that of the sow. The time in which a sow may be kept in a farrowing crate is also limited, by schedule 6 of the 2010 Regulations, from seven days before the predicted day of farrowing until the piglets are weaned. After this period sows must be moved back to loose housing accommodation in which they are able to turn round easily.

Additionally, the Scottish Government continues to fund research into farm animal welfare at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), where the team of researchers are also involved in the

development of alternative farrowing systems. As part of their work on advancing sow welfare, SRUC - in conjunction with Newcastle University - have developed PigSAFE, a specially designed pen system which takes into account the behavioural needs of both the sow and her piglets.

The PigSAFE system is now commercially available, and while not currently in use on a large scale, it is positive to see that free farrowing options are available to producers and it represents an important step towards ending the close confinement of sows. It is worth noting that all companies constructing pig housing now offer an "alternative" system whereas five years ago they did not. This highlights that the industry is taking positive steps to replace farrowing crates with higher welfare systems. However, we will continue to consider how best we can encourage the use of farrowing systems which allow for the best possible welfare outcomes for both the sow and piglets.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

AHW : Animal Welfare

ARE : Animal Health and Welfare

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information, [Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information@btopenworld.com

Our Reference: 202100229559

31 August 2021

Dear **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information,**

Thank you for your email of 6 August 2021 to the Scottish Ministers regarding a petition to the UK Parliament which seeks to abolish the use of cages in respect of farmed animals. I have been asked to reply.

I would firstly like to assure you that the Scottish Government takes the welfare of all animals very seriously; and provision is made for the keepers of all animals to provide for their welfare under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

All keepers are legally obliged to take all reasonable steps to ensure the 'five needs' as detailed in section 24 of the 2006 Act. In addition, the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010 ('the 2010 Regulations') specify in detail the welfare conditions in which each common farm animal must be kept. The Scottish Government has published a number of Codes of Practice/ Recommendations for the Welfare of Farmed Animals to encourage the highest standards of husbandry. Work is currently ongoing to produce new Scottish Government guidance for the welfare of a range of animals.

With regard to the use of farrowing crates, the Scottish Government would prefer to avoid the close confinement of all sows. However, the commercial development of free farrowing systems is not yet sufficiently advanced for these to replace crates completely. Farrowing crates protect piglets from being crushed by the sow - one of the largest causes of pig mortality. As I am sure most will agree, it is equally important to maintain the welfare of the piglet as well as that of the sow. The time in which a sow may be kept in a farrowing crate is also limited, by schedule 6 of the 2010 Regulations, from seven days before the predicted day of farrowing until the piglets are weaned. After this period sows must be moved back to loose housing accommodation in which they are able to turn round easily.

Additionally, the Scottish Government continues to fund research into farm animal welfare at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), where the team of researchers are also involved in the development of alternative farrowing systems. As part of their work on advancing sow welfare, SRUC – in conjunction with Newcastle University - have developed PigSAFE, a specially designed pen system which takes into account the behavioural needs of both the sow and her piglets. The PigSAFE system is now commercially available, and while not currently in use on a large scale, it is positive to see that free farrowing options are available to producers and it represents an important step towards ending the close confinement of sows.

It is worth noting that all companies constructing pig housing now offer an "alternative" system whereas five years ago they did not. This highlights that the industry is taking positive steps to replace farrowing crates with higher welfare systems. However, the Scottish Government will continue to consider how best it can encourage the use of farrowing systems which allow for the best possible welfare outcomes for both the sow and piglets.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

AHW : Animal Welfare

Dear [Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information,

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 May 2023, raising your concerns around animal welfare in the pig farming industry.

The Scottish Government is fully committed to protecting and improving the welfare of all animals in Scotland. The 2021-2022 [Programme for Government](#) (PfG) commitment to review animal welfare legislation, and take forward a range of legislative measures before 2025 demonstrates the importance of animal welfare to Scottish Ministers.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to our [Welfare of pigs: code of practice](#) which aims to encourage all those caring for animals adopt the highest standards of husbandry. It further details the 'Five Freedoms' that are based on an animal's needs. These include the need for; a suitable environment and diet; to be able to exhibit normal patterns of behaviour; be housed with their own kind if appropriate; and to be protected from injury and disease.

Please also be assured that routine tail docking is not legally permitted in Scotland. Tail docking is only permitted as a last resort after improvements to the pigs' environment and management to avoid outbreaks of behavioural problems such as tail biting have proved ineffectual. Where it is necessary to tail dock, the procedure must be carried out in accordance with the law by a veterinary surgeon or by a competent, trained operator. Tail biting is painful and can lead to serious injury, it can also be a symptom of physical or mental stress which can significantly impact animal welfare.

Scotland already has a significant level of free farrowing units where sows are able to nest in hutches outdoors and farrow naturally. The Scottish Government funds research into farm animal welfare at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), which includes the development of alternative farrowing systems. As part of this work SRUC and Newcastle University have developed PigSAFE, a specially designed pen system which takes into account the behavioural needs of both the sow and her piglets.

The PigSAFE system is now commercially available, and although not yet in use on a large scale, it is positive to see that free farrowing options are available to producers. All companies constructing pig housing now offer an "alternative" system whereas five years ago they did not.

Where it is practical and logical to do so, Scottish Ministers endeavour to deliver policy and legislation jointly across the UK in the interests of animal welfare. However, progress on a number of important pieces of animal welfare legislation, including consultation on the phasing out the use all cages for [Redacted] – **Outwith Scope of Request** and farrowing crates for pigs have been significantly delayed by the UK Government's decision to not progress the Kept Animal's Bill. Mairi Gougeon, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands has

repeatedly expressed the Scottish Government's disappointment and the need for urgency on a number important animal welfare issues, where joint working across GB has been previously agreed. Sadly no clarity has been provided by the UK Government and the Scottish Government will further consider how we can ourselves best deliver our animal welfare commitments going forward. I hope this information is helpful and confirms the Scottish Government's commitment to improving the welfare of kept animals in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Martin MSP/BPA

T : [Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information, [Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information@parliament.scot

Our Reference: 202400393405

Your Reference: (Case Ref: AR3889/SC)

2 February 2024

Dear [Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information,

Thank you for your letter of 09 January 2024 on behalf of your constituents regarding the Scottish Government's commitment to consult on phasing out the use of farrowing crates for pigs. Your letter has been passed to me to answer as I have portfolio responsibility for animal welfare.

The proposed consultation on phasing out farrowing crates for pigs was originally intended to have been delivered jointly across all UK administrations. However, progress on a number of important pieces of animal welfare legislation has been significantly delayed or ceased due to delays in UK Government timetabling or decisions to drop pieces of legislation such as the Kept Animals Bill. DEFRA has confirmed that it now has no immediate plans to take forward the work on farrowing crates.

Regardless, the Scottish Government is pressing ahead on improving the welfare of all animals in Scotland, including pigs, and on 20 November 2023 published the Scottish Government Guidance for the Welfare of Pigs. We are also in the process of updating the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010 to include this updated pigs' welfare guidance.

Scottish Government remains committed to improving the welfare of all animals in Scotland and we continue to monitor industry information to allow us to determine how best to ensure best practice. We also continue to monitor developments in the EU where expected proposals on the use of farrowing crates appear to have been put on hold. We still however remain committed to consulting on phasing out farrowing crates in due course.

I hope that this information is helpful to you and your constituents.

Yours sincerely,

GILLIAN MARTIN

Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Our Ref: AR3889/SC

Please quote this reference in all correspondence

9 January 2024

Dear Mairi,

I write regarding the Scottish Government's commitment to phase out cages for farrowing crates for pigs. I am aware that the Government intended to hold a consultation on this topic.

Constituents have contacted me to support the ending of this practice. I would therefore be interested to know what stage the consultation has reached. In addition, are you able to comment on any liaison you have had with your UK counterparts in DEFRA about this topic?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Angus Robertson MSP

The Rt Hon the Lord Goldsmith of
Richmond Park
Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs
DEFRA
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
W1P 4DF
Via email: **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information@defra.gov.uk**

Room 438
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3SB
Telephone: [Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information
Email: **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information@daera-ni.gov.uk**

Our reference: CORR-0019-2021

Date: 30 January 2021

Dear Lord Goldsmith,

POTENTIAL CAGE BANS IN THE **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** PIG SECTORS

Thank you for your letter of 6 January 2021 regarding your plans to explore reforms in respect of the use of cages and crates in farming. I note your intention to publish calls for evidence and consultations on **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** pig industries.

I remain committed to raising farmed animal welfare standards where there is clear, identified need. **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request**

As you will be aware, the pig **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** sectors are of significant importance to the agri-food economy in Northern Ireland, and like all of our farming industry, a key objective of my From the Office of the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Department is to ensure the highest standards of animal health and welfare. I am also very conscious of the need to ensure that, in considering any future changes to our policy direction on these matters, we examine all relevant factors including the impact on industry. The structure of commercial pig farming in Northern Ireland is very different to that elsewhere in the UK in that there is no outdoor production here. The removal of farrowing crates would potentially have more significant repercussions and financial implications in Northern Ireland than other parts of the UK. Indeed, whilst some may consider the removal of farrowing crates as a way to address possible welfare issues around the confinement of sows, it also has the potential to lead to increased mortality of piglets given the risk of sows rolling over and suffocating their young.

I cannot, therefore, support a call for evidence or consultation on this matter at this juncture. Nonetheless, I wholeheartedly support continued dialogue on this matter between our officials and again, look forward to the outcome of your call for evidence and planned consultation.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

I would, however, welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter, and the other issues raised, with you in person, in order to articulate the unique factors which impact these sectors in NI, and are not a prominent feature elsewhere in the UK. In the meantime, I would like our officials to continue engagement as your proposed calls for evidence progress.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, Ben Macpherson MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment in Scotland and Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs in Wales.

Yours sincerely

EDWIN POOTS MLA

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands
Scottish Government
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Minister,
25 May 2021

POTENTIAL CAGE BANS IN THE **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** AND PIG SECTORS

I would like to start by congratulating you on your appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands. I look forward to working with you and the Scottish Government on reforms to improve farm animal welfare.

Following a series of meetings with key livestock industry sectors, welfare groups and **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information** to discuss priorities to improve farm animal welfare, the Government wishes to explore reforms in relation to confinement. The use of cages in farming prevents animals and birds from expressing their normal behaviours, thus compromising animal welfare. I intend to publish a series of calls for evidence and public consultations this summer, on potential cage bans in the **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request**, pig **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** sectors.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request and Pigs

We also intend to launch public consultations later in the Summer on potential reforms to phase out the use of **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** farrowing crates for pigs. I understand there are concerns that producers might be disadvantaged if these reforms were introduced in advance of any EU legislation on the use of cages. We recognise this concern and my officials are exploring the possibility of an enabling power to restrict, by regulations, the sale or import of products on the grounds of them being incompatible with our welfare legislation. If, for example, bans on enriched cages and farrowing crates were introduced, the intention would be to use this power to restrict the sale or import of eggs and pork and pork products produced in cages. In the light of this potential measure, I should be grateful if you could confirm whether you wish to work with us to progress with our consultation plans for **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** pigs and take a GB approach.

I look forward to receiving your response on the calls for evidence and the public consultations by 2 June.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland. I am also writing in similar terms to Lesley Griffiths MS, in Wales, the Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd.

With best wishes,

THE RT HON THE LORD GOLDSMITH OF RICHMOND PARK

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands Mairi Gougeon MSP

T: 0300 244 4000

E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

The Rt Hon the Lord Goldsmith
of Richmond Park Minister of State
1 June 2021

Dear Lord Goldsmith,

Thank you for your letter of 25 May 2021 about the UK Government's plans to explore reforms, through a number of calls for evidence, in relation to the confinement of farm animals. I thank you also for your kind words on my appointment and I hope that we can work together effectively to improve farm animal welfare in our two countries.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

Public consultations on [Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request and farrowing crates

I am pleased to note from your letter of 25 May 2021 that you also recognise the concerns over trade considerations that the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment raised with you on 20 January 2021. I would be grateful if your officials could keep mine apprised of progress towards exploring an enabling power such as you suggest. I am content, in principle, for my officials to work with yours towards joint public consultations on **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** and farrowing crates. However, I cannot commit to the launch of joint consultations until the Scottish Government has been able to consider the text of these.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland and to Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs in Wales.

Yours sincerely,

MAIRI GOUGEON



River Court, Mill Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1EZ

T: **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information**

Email: **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information**@ciwf.org.uk

Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Islands
Scottish Government
Edinburgh

Sent by email
27 May 2021

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I write, on behalf of Compassion in World Farming (Compassion), to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands. Compassion has a long-standing interest in many of the areas that are covered by your brief, and we very much look forward to contributing constructively.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

End the Cage Age

We were similarly pleased to see that the SNP manifesto committed to “shifting to entirely free range, woodland or barn chicken and egg production.” Compassion has long called for a ban on the use of enriched cages for **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request**, and we welcome this policy. The UK’s supermarkets have either ceased to sell caged eggs or committed to doing so by 2025. We hope this policy will be introduced swiftly, with a similar phase-out period for these systems.

The use of farrowing crates for sows is another cruel confinement system. Research shows that not only are outdoor or free farrowing systems significantly better for the welfare of the sow, but also that piglet mortality in these systems can be as low as or lower than in crates.

Calculations based on AHDB figures show that total piglet mortalities have been lower in outdoor systems than indoors in 19 out of the last 20 years. Germany, Europe’s largest pig producer, has prohibited farrowing crates; the ban comes into force in 15 years’ time. Sweden prohibits farrowing crates and does not permit temporary crating. Scotland should not be falling behind these countries in this area.

The UK Government, in its recently published Action Plan for Animal Welfareⁱ, has committed to reviewing the use of farrowing crates. We urge you to now take the necessary steps to end the

use of farrowing crates, with a reasonable phasing out period, and protect the welfare of around 200,000 sows confined to these systems each year. Again, a joined up approach to standards across Great Britain would be most welcome.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

We should be grateful for a meeting (virtual) in order to discuss these issues in more detail, or any other matters of farm animal welfare that you may want to raise.

Sincerely,

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

Compassion in World Farming

ⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/action-plan-for-animal-welfare>



River Court, Mill Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1EZ

T: **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information**

Email: **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information**

Nicola Sturgeon

The First Minister

The Scottish Government

St Andrew's House

Regent Road

Edinburgh

EH1 3DG

24 November 2022

Dear First Minister,

On Monday 12th December, at 2pm, Compassion in World Farming will deliver a petition to the Scottish Government, and we would like to invite you to receive it.

The petition calls on Ministers from all four of the Governments in the UK to End the Cage Age. It has been by over 350,000 people, to date.

The Scottish National Party's 2019 Manifesto stated that, in Government, the Party would "adopt the highest possible animal welfare standards, including shifting to entirely free range, woodland or barn chicken and egg production." The 2021/22 Programme for Government committed to "start consultations this year to... phase out cages for **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** and **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request**, and farrowing crates for pigs."

If Scotland is to remain a world leader on farmed animal welfare, we must move away from the use of cages. The European Commission has committed to proposing legislation in 2023 to end the use of all cages in the EU by 2027.

The Scottish Government must now publish these promised consultations if it is to not fall behind comparative nations in these areas, and we urge you to publish the planned consultations shortly and begin the process of improving the welfare of around 16 million animals that are confined to crates and cages every year.

Will you, or one of your Minister, advisors or officials, be able to receive the petition at 2pm on 12th December 2022?

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

From: [Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 5:03 PM

To: Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <ministerac@gov.scot>

Cc: info@onekind.org

Subject: FAO Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity: Phasing out of farrowing crates for mother pigs

Hello Mr Fairlie,

The charity OneKind has highlighted¹ that the commitment in your Programme for Government 2021-22 to “[s]tart consultation this year on proposals to improve animal transport legislation, and phase out cages for **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request** and **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request**, and farrowing crates for pigs” (page 89) is in fact not to include farrowing crates for pigs.

This is greatly concerning. I was distressed to read that mother pigs are kept in confined spaces where they are not able to turn around and, perhaps even worse, build nests for and bond with their piglets. They have a strong maternal instinct to do so. Pigs are intelligent animals (at least on the level of dogs) and feel emotional and physical pain, so I can only imagine their distress at being kept in these conditions.

They should be allowed to live in comfortable conditions while pregnant (freely in a barn or field as they wish) and to care for their piglets naturally and fully. It's the very least that they deserve.

I'd like to strongly advocate for pigs to be considered as part of this consultation. Can you provide a reason why they are being overlooked?

Many thanks,

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

CC: OneKind

¹ <https://www.onekind.org/ban-farmed-animal-cages>



River Court, Mill Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1EZ
T: +44 (0)1483 521 950 Email: policy@ciwf.org

Humza Yousaf MSP
First Minister of Scotland
Scottish Government
Edinburgh

17th May 2023

Dear First Minister,

I write on behalf of Compassion in World Farming (Compassion) to congratulate you on your recent appointment as First Minister of Scotland. As the world's leading farm animal welfare charity, Compassion has a long-standing interest in many areas of Scottish policy, including many of the "Scotland's Rural Economy" commitments in the SNP's 2021 manifesto. We very much look forward to contributing constructively to your work in these areas for the sake of public, animal, and planetary health.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

End the cage age

We were similarly pleased to see the SNP manifesto commitment to "adopt the highest possible animal welfare standards, including shifting to entirely free range, woodland or barn chicken and egg production."ⁱⁱ Compassion has long called for a ban on the use of enriched cages for **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request**, and we welcome this policy. While UK supermarkets have either ceased to sell caged eggs from caged hens or committed to doing so by 2025, we hope that the Scottish Government will swiftly introduce this policy to protect **[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request**, with a legally binding phase-out period for these systems.

In addition to this welcome commitment to animal welfare, we hope the SNP will address the cruel use of farrowing crates for sows. Confinement in these crates prevents sows from expressing natural behaviours such as nest building, interacting properly with her piglets or even turning around, and science shows that it leads to intense stress. Research shows that not only are outdoor and indoor free farrowing systems significantly better for the welfare of the sow, but also that total piglet mortality in these systems can be *as low as or lower* than in crates.ⁱ Calculations based on AHDB figures, for the UK as a whole, show that total piglet mortalities have been lower in outdoor systems than indoors in 20 out of the last 21 years. In fact, research now demonstrates that free farrowing carries many benefits for piglets as well as for sows.ⁱⁱⁱ

In its Action Plan for Animal Welfareⁱ, the UK Government committed to reviewing the use of farrowing crates. The parallel commitment, in the 2021/22 Programme for Governmentⁱ was most welcome and we urge you to now publish this long-awaited consultation on the use of farrowing crates, with a reasonable phasing out period, to protect the welfare of sows *and* piglets. We urge you to work with the UK government to ensure the UK does not fall behind countries such as Sweden, Switzerland and Norway which have prohibited farrowing crates, and New Zealand which has committed to a ban following a court ruling in 2020.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

We should be grateful for a meeting (virtual or in person) in which to discuss these issues in more detail, or any other matters of farm animal welfare that you may want to raise.

Sincerely,

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

Compassion in World Farming

Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment

Mairi Gougeon MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Government

Mr Stewart Hosie MP
House Of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Your ref: SH5408

Our ref: 2019/0015284

6th June 2019

Dear Stewart,

Thank you for your correspondence of 17 May 2019 to Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, regarding the Scottish Government's position on the use of cages in farming. I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise.

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

In relation to the use of farrowing crates, the Scottish Government would prefer the use of farrowing systems that do not closely confine sows. However, the commercial development of free farrowing systems is not yet sufficiently advanced for these to replace crates completely.

Farrowing crates protect piglets from being crushed by the sow - one of the largest causes of pig mortality. I trust that you will agree that it is equally important to maintain the welfare of the piglet as well as that of the sow.

The time in which a sow may be kept in a farrowing crate is also limited, by schedule 6 of the 2010 Regulations, from seven days before the predicted day of farrowing until the piglets are weaned. After this period sows must be moved back to loose housing accommodation in which they are able to turn round easily.

I hope this is helpful.

MAIRI GOUGEON

Animal Welfare - Pigs

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

[Redacted] – Outwith Scope of Request

Farrowing Crates

The Scottish Government would prefer to avoid the close confinement of all sows. However, the commercial development of free farrowing systems is not yet sufficiently advanced for these to replace crates completely.

The Scottish Government is aware of calls for the phasing out of farrowing crates for sows across Europe and will consider these carefully. However, phasing out the use of farrowing crates in advance of EU legislation on those topics could raise the question of disadvantage to Scottish producers.

Farrowing crates protect piglets from being crushed by the sow - one of the largest causes of pig mortality; and offer welfare protection to recently born piglets.

The time in which a sow may be kept in a farrowing crate is also limited, by law, from seven days before the predicted day of farrowing until the piglets are weaned. After this period sows must be moved back to loose housing accommodation.

The Scottish Government continues to fund research into farm animal welfare at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), where the team of researchers are also involved in the development of alternative farrowing systems. As part of this work SRUC and Newcastle University have developed PigSAFE, a specially designed pen system which takes into account the behavioural needs of both the sow and her piglets.

THE PigSAFE system is now commercially available, and although not in use on a large scale, it is positive to see that free farrowing options are available to producers.

All companies constructing pig housing now offer an "alternative" system whereas five years ago they did not. This highlights that the industry is taking positive steps to replace farrowing crates with higher welfare systems.

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Pig Welfare Guidance

The Scottish Government takes the welfare of all animals very seriously; and provision is made for the keepers of all animals to provide for their welfare under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act'). Keepers of animals are legally obliged to take all reasonable steps to ensure the 'five needs' as detailed in section 24 of this 2006 Act.

The Scottish Government has also published a number of Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Livestock. The Code of Practice for Pigs was published in March 2012 and explains the responsibilities of ensuring the welfare of farmed pigs under the 2006 Act and The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010.

The good practice recommendations we publish must be up to date and in line with evolving thinking on animal welfare. We are moving towards the use of Guidance documents rather than the existing Codes of Practice.

Guidance is more flexible than Codes of Practice, can be published, revised and updated more quickly, and so is arguably better for animal welfare; and the Scottish Government is moving towards that.

Updated guidance on the husbandry of pigs, involving wide stakeholder participation, has been underway since before the Covid pandemic brought a halt. The Scottish Government hopes to be able to finalise and publish the guidance in the near future.

Agriculture and Rural Delivery Directorate

Animal Health and Welfare Division



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Our ref: 2019/0030593

14 November 2019

Dear **[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information**

Thank you for your correspondence of 11 October to Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister, on behalf of the Animal Interfaith Alliance regarding your manifesto for animal welfare. I have been asked to reply.

As I am sure you will appreciate the manifesto you have provided is quite comprehensive so, in order to hopefully maintain clarity, I have attempted to address each manifesto point in the order they are presented in your correspondence.

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16. To phase out sow farrowing crates.

As far as farrowing crates for sows are concerned the Scottish Government would prefer to avoid the close confinement of all sows. However, the commercial development of free farrowing systems is not yet sufficiently advanced for these to replace crates completely. Farrowing crates protect piglets from being crushed by the sow - one of the largest causes of pig mortality. As I am sure you will agree, it is equally important to maintain the welfare of the piglet as well as that of the sow.

The time in which a sow may be kept in a farrowing crate is also limited, by Schedule 6 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010, from seven days before the predicted day of farrowing until the piglets are weaned. After this period sows must be moved back to loose housing accommodation in which they are able to turn round easily.

Additionally, the Scottish Government continues to fund research into farm animal welfare at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), where the team of researchers are also involved in the development of alternative farrowing systems.

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I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted] – Section 11 (2) – Personal Information

Animal Welfare Branch