



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

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

Iain Stewart MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MC2021/20568/MM

13 August 2021

Dear Iain,

Thank you for your email of 10 August on behalf of your constituents about the Kept Animals Bill. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

The UK has and continues to lead the way on animal welfare. The Government has made clear our commitment to going further to raise animal welfare standards and has set this out in our Action Plan for Animal Welfare. This lays out the breadth of animal welfare and conservation reforms we are taking forward, including introducing the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. In this Bill we will extend and strengthen measures for the welfare of pets, farmed animals, and kept wild animals.

The Kept Animals Bill will deliver three manifesto commitments relating to animal welfare. The Bill will crack down on illegal puppy smuggling. It will also ban the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening as well as ban the keeping of primates as pets. In addition to these manifesto commitments the Bill will also take further steps to address the issue of livestock worrying as well as update the Zoo licensing act.

The UK is a nation of pet lovers and this Bill will ensure that our pets have the highest welfare protection. This is why the Kept Animals Bill will crack down on unscrupulous traders exploiting our pet travel rules by reducing the number of pet dogs, cats and ferrets that can travel to GB in one non-commercial movement. The changes mean the non-commercial movement of pets will be restricted to five per vehicle on ferry and rail routes and three per person if a foot passenger or travelling by air.

The Bill also includes powers for the Government to introduce further restrictions to pet travel and imports through secondary legislation following public consultation. These restrictions are likely to include raising the minimum age of imported puppies and tackling the import of pregnant dogs and dogs with mutilations such as cropped ears and docked tails.

This Government is taking advantage of the UK's status as an independent trading nation and ending excessively long journeys for slaughter and fattening. From a welfare perspective, this Government views export journeys for slaughter and fattening as unnecessarily stressful because the animals could be slaughtered or fattened domestically, and any such domestic journeys would be shorter or less stressful than any journey to a third country. Therefore, this Government will now be banning exports of livestock and equines for slaughter and fattening, beginning in or transiting through Great Britain to a third country.

This Government recognises that primates are highly intelligent and complex animals and their needs simply cannot be met in a domestic environment which is why we are committed to banning the keeping of primates as pets. The Bill includes the creation of a new licensing regime, which will ensure that people are only permitted to keep primates if they provide them with high welfare conditions, akin to those provided by licensed zoos. The licensing regime will involve regular inspections and will be enforced by Local Authorities.

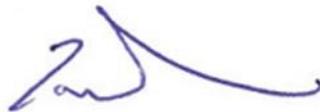
The Bill will also take further steps to address the issue of livestock worrying. Dog attacks on farm animals are a major concern to farmers and rural communities. Under this Bill, enhanced mechanisms will be available to the police. The Bill will also expand the types of livestock which are currently afforded protection. This will ensure that police can respond to the most serious incidents of livestock worrying effectively and proportionately and offer better protection to livestock and farmers in England and Wales.

This Bill will also update the Zoo Licensing Act in Great Britain, improving its operability and allowing for animal welfare standards to be enforced more thoroughly across zoos in Great Britain. The changes will also allow us to update the conservation requirements zoos must undertake more easily and frequently.

As part of the Action Plan for Animal Welfare we have also introduced the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill, which will recognise in UK law animals as sentient beings, and supported the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021, which this year increased the maximum prison term from six months to five years for animal cruelty offences in England. And to encourage higher standards abroad, later this year we will be introducing further legislation on international animal welfare and conservation.

Thank you once again for your email.

With best wishes,



**THE RT HON THE LORD GOLDSMITH OF RICHMOND PARK**