



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

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

To all MPs

2 December 2020

Dear Colleague,

Consultation on ending the export of live animals for fattening and slaughter

I am writing to inform you of the launch of a public consultation on 3 December to deliver on the Government's manifesto commitment to end excessively long journeys for animals going for slaughter and fattening.

The UK Government and the Welsh Government will be consulting to end live animal exports for slaughter and fattening where the journeys begin or transit through England or Wales, as well as consulting on other improvements to animal welfare in transport more generally.

Export of livestock and horses for slaughter or fattening

We are proposing that the export of livestock and horses for slaughter or fattening, where the animals will be slaughtered within 6 months of their arrival, would be prohibited. In addition, export journeys for slaughter and fattening that use England or Wales as a land-bridge would not be permitted, i.e. export journeys beginning in Scotland, Northern Ireland or indeed EU Member States, such as the Republic of Ireland, destined for a country outside the UK, would not be able to travel through England or Wales en route to their final destination.

The proposal will not impact on domestic slaughter and fattening movements, so slaughter and fattening journeys between England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland would still be permitted. We are not proposing to ban exports of poultry, or animals being exported for breeding purposes, as we believe these journeys can continue to take place providing the welfare of the animals is suitably protected.

Proposals to improve animal welfare in transport

We are also consulting on proposals to generally improve animal welfare in transport, such as new maximum journey times, new requirements for thermal conditions and ventilation, space and headroom allowances and tighter rules for transporting live animals by sea. These proposals might have potential impacts on domestic animal movements, and these have been taken into account in developing the policy. An impact assessment has been prepared to outline the possible costs and benefits of the proposed reforms, which will be published during the consultation period.

The consultation will be launched in England and Wales. We are working closely with the Welsh Government on this issue and will be discussing the responses to the consultation with them and with the Scottish Government to ensure that, as far as possible, similar rules apply across GB on improving the protection for animals in transport. (As long as the Northern Ireland Protocol is in place, Northern Ireland will continue to follow the EU regulations on animal welfare in transport after the end of the transition period.)

As you are aware, there is longstanding concern over the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening from the general public and animal welfare organisations and many have campaigned for decades against this practice. Our proposals aim to address those public concerns. Ending live exports for slaughter and fattening signals our intention to continue being a world leader in animal welfare by maintaining and strengthening our already high animal welfare standards.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Goldsmith', written in a cursive style.

THE RT HON THE LORD GOLDSMITH OF RICHMOND PARK