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David Rutley MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
for Food and Animal Welfare

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Jo Swinson MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Your ref: JS7948
Our ref: MC2019/12879/SC

27 June 2019

Dear Jo,

Thank you for your email of 15 June on behalf of a number of your constituents, about the live exports of animals for fattening and slaughter.

I hope it will be helpful if I explain the Government's policy on live exports for both fattening and slaughter. The rules concerning the commercial transportation of animals are set out in European Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport. This legislation covers any transportation of animals connected to an economic activity in the UK and the rest of the EU.

The Regulation sets out the strict conditions transporters need to follow, including the need to be authorised as a transporter and if they are carrying out journeys over eight hours, there are additional requirements such as having their vehicle approved to transport the animals they are carrying.

The Government would prefer that there is a trade in meat and meat products rather than the long distance transport of animals to slaughter. In line with our manifesto commitment, we will take early steps to control the export of live farm animals for slaughter as we leave the EU. We are currently considering all of the options, particularly in relation to trade between Northern Ireland and the Republic, and our obligations under WTO rules.

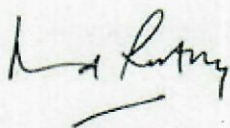
In line with our manifesto commitment, last year we launched a Call for Evidence on controlling live exports for slaughter and on improving the welfare of animals during transport. The call for evidence was issued on behalf of the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations and closed on 22 May 2018.

The Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC), an independent group of animal welfare specialists, were asked to look at what improvements could be made to the regulatory regime for the protection of animals in transport. FAWC recently submitted their advice on the welfare of animals in transport, which includes advice on controlling live exports to Defra and the Devolved Administrations. We are considering FAWCs recommendations and expect to come forward with proposals for public consultation to improve animal welfare in transport in due course.

The Government is committed to improving the welfare of all animals, and as we move towards a new relationship with Europe and the rest of the world, we have a unique opportunity to shape future animal welfare policy in the UK to ensure the highest standards in every area.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Rutley', with a horizontal line underneath.

David Rutley MP

Signed electronically to avoid delay