3rd October 2018

RE: FACTORY FARMING

Thank you for contacting me recently about factory farming; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

I understand the strength of feeling about this issue and I am committed to the highest standards of animal welfare, including on farms. The UK’s strong commitment in this area is reflected in World Animal Protection’s recent Animal Protection Index, which judged 50 countries on their policy and legislation for animals and saw the UK ranked joint top alongside New Zealand, Austria, and Switzerland. Recent updates to on-farm welfare codes for several animals show this protection in action.

I believe animals should be slaughtered locally wherever possible. I am pleased the Government has announced plans to make CCTV mandatory in slaughterhouses. However, under European Union (EU) Single Market rules, it is illegal to ban the export of animals to other EU countries; there are instead EU and UK laws to protect the welfare of live animals during transport. You are right to highlight that as the UK withdraws from the EU, there are great opportunities to re-evaluate existing structures.

Mandatory labelling for methods of production has to be weighed against the costs involved for businesses, which could be significant. Legislation already provides scope for producers to label their products voluntarily, and several assurance schemes are also in place. Consumers who have a preference for a particular farming method can, therefore, readily find meat products labelled with information to inform their choice.

Ministers are fully committed to ensuring that antibiotics are used responsibly. I am pleased to say that as a result of their efforts, sales of antibiotics for use in animals in the UK fell to their lowest level since records began, exceeding a target to tackle the threat of antibiotic resistance two years early.

Locally, I have recently objected to plans for a large scale ‘factory’ style chicken farm near to Rushden, as I do not believe the standard of animal welfare within these factories is desirable, or acceptable, and I fully support the ‘Chuck Off’ campaign.

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.

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
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