17th September 2018

**RE: GAMEBIRD BATTERY CAGES.**

Thank you for contacting me recently about the welfare of pheasants bred for shooting; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

I appreciate your concerns on this issue. Both the Government and I are committed to the highest standards of animal welfare, so I am glad to tell you that the *Animal Welfare Act 2006* already makes it clear that gamebirds must not be caused any unnecessary suffering.

A *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds Reared for Sporting Purposes* was drawn up based on research carried out by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, advised by a working group that included animal welfare organisations such as the RSPCA. Stock-keepers who fail to follow it could be found to have committed an offence. The Code specifies that these birds must:

1. **Have an environment appropriate to their species, age, and the purpose for which they are being kept, including adequate heating, lighting, shelter, ventilation, and resting areas.**

2. **Have ready access to fresh water and an appropriate diet to maintain growth, health, and vigour.**

3. **Be provided with appropriate space and facilities to ensure the avoidance of stress and to allow the exhibition of normal behaviour patterns.**

4. **Be provided with company of their own kind, as appropriate for the species concerned.**

5. **Be adequately protected from pain, suffering, injury, or disease. Should any of these occur, a rapid response is required, including diagnosis, remedial action and, where applicable, the correct use of medication.**

The full Code can be found at www.gov.uk by searching on the term ‘Gamebirds’.

These rules are enforced by the *Animal and Plant Health Agency* and local authorities, which carry out routine welfare inspections and investigates complaints; prosecutions can be brought forward where necessary.

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.

With best wishes,

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

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