



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

4th July 2022

Dear Anthony,

RE: 'END THE CAGE AGE' CAMPAIGN

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the welfare of farm animals. I have read your comments on this important issue with interest.

I would like to assure you that my ministerial colleagues and I take the welfare of all animals very seriously. Ministers are delivering a series of ambitious reforms, as outlined in the 'Action Plan for Animal Welfare'.

The Government is committed to phasing out confinement systems and supporting the industry in doing so. However, Ministers need to work carefully and sensitively with the pig and poultry industries, which are both currently facing challenges.

I know that 60 percent of our hens are now kept in free-range systems, with major supermarkets pledging to stop selling eggs from the remaining 40 percent of hens in colony cages by 2025. I am aware that the Government will soon launch a consultation on the caging of laying hens, but Ministers will continue to work with the industry on improving feather cover and keel bone health, as well as reducing the amount of beak trimming.

Regarding pig farrowing crates, 40 percent of our pigs are kept outdoors, so outdoor farrowing systems are used for those sows. I understand that the consultation on pig farrowing crates is still being prepared and Ministers are conducting a significant review into the supply chain.

Furthermore, the Government's 'Animal Health and Welfare Pathway' will prioritise areas for additional improvement in the health and welfare of pigs, cattle, sheep and poultry. On pigs specifically, the Government will continue to improve biosecurity in order to control endemic diseases. On meat chickens, through the pathway, producers are being encouraged to implement the 'Better Chicken' commitment, which would require the use of slower growing breeds and lower stocking densities.

More broadly, Ministers are taking action to improve the health and wellbeing of farm animals through the *Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill*, which will ban exports of livestock and equines for slaughter and fattening.

Of course, if you have specific concerns about the welfare of an animal, I would recommend reporting it directly to the police or the RSPCA.

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