



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

16<sup>th</sup> December 2022

*Jean Contrevent*

**RE: 'ACTION PLAN FOR ANIMAL WELFARE'**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the Government's 'Action Plan for Animal Welfare'; I have read your comments on this issue with interest.

My ministerial colleagues and I share your high regard for animal welfare. In May 2021, the Government set out a series of ambitious reforms in the 'Action Plan for Animal Welfare'. Since 2010, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has had a strong track record in delivering reforms and passing legislation. This includes banning the use of conventional battery cages for laying hens, making CCTV mandatory in slaughterhouses across England, banning the use of wild animals in circuses, and introducing the strongest ivory ban in the world.

Other measures introduced include the mandatory microchipping of dogs in 2015 and the modernisation of the licensing system for dog breeding and pet sales. I understand that Ministers have been working to add a new requirement for the compulsory microchipping of cats. In 2021, the *Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act* came into force, raising the maximum sentence for animal cruelty from 6 months to 5 years.

The *Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act* formally recognises animals as sentient beings in domestic law and ensures that animal sentience is taken into account when developing policy across Government, through the creation of an Animal Sentience Committee, which will be made up of animal experts from within the field.

Further, the *Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill* will bring in some of the world's strongest protections for pets, livestock and kept wild animals. This includes introducing a ban on keeping primates as pets, banning the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening, and also addressing the unethical trade of puppy smuggling by reducing the number of pets that can travel under pet travel rules. I look forward to supporting this Bill as it continues to progress through Parliament.



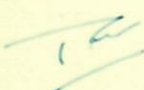


Ministers recognise the welfare concerns related to foie gras and are actively considering further steps that could be taken. The Government is committed to exploring potential action in relation to animal fur, as set out in the 'Action Plan for Animal Welfare' and launched a call for evidence on the fur sector. The Government has been considering options relating to the advertising and offering for sale of unacceptably low welfare activities using force feeding practices.

Regarding cages, I am aware that the Government has been working to improve the welfare of farmed animals and transitioning to non-caged systems. Ministers will work with producers and the food sector to raise animal welfare standards. Any decisions that are made on cage reforms need to take full consideration of the implications for animal welfare and for the sectors concerned, including a realistic phase out period to secure achievement of our better welfare goals and sustainability for the industry.

Finally, Ministers support the *Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill*, which will ban the import of hunting trophies for specific species. The Bill includes a power to add or remove species from the scope of the ban which will ensure that the Bill remains comprehensive and can achieve its aims. I welcome that this Bill recently had its Second Reading in the House of Commons and I look forward to supporting it as it continues to progress through the House.

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**