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The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
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28 March 2022

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 23 February on behalf of your constituent,
about the import of fur and foie gras. I apologise for the delay in
responding. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence.

The Government shares the British public's high regard for animal welfare. Our ambition is to promote the highest standards both within the UK and globally.

Fur farming has been banned in England and Wales since 2000, and since 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland. There are restrictions on some skin and fur products which may never be legally imported into the UK. These include fur and products from cats and dogs, and a ban on commercially importing and marketing all seal products and any related products with limited exemptions. We have established controls on fur from endangered species protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and we do not allow imports of fur from wild animals caught using methods which are non-compliant with international humane trapping standards.

However, now we have left the EU, the Government is able to explore potential action in relation to animal fur. The recent call for evidence published by Defra on the fur trade in Great Britain was a key step in helping us to meet the commitment set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare to better understand the fur sector in Great Britain and gather evidence from those with an interest in it. We received around 30,000 responses from businesses, representative bodies and individuals, demonstrating the strong public interest in this area. We are reviewing the evidence gathered both from our call for evidence and wider engagement with the fur trade and stakeholders, and a summary of responses setting out the results and key findings will be published soon.

Regarding foie gras, the Government has made clear that the production of foie gras from ducks or geese using force feeding raises serious welfare concerns. We are now able to consider any further steps that could be taken in relation to foie gras that is produced overseas using force feeding practices, such as restrictions on import and sale. We are gathering information and will continue to speak to a range of interested parties about the issues involved. This is in line with the Government's commitment to improving animal welfare standards as set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare.

George Eustice

RT HON GEORGE EUSTICE MP

