



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 15 November to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituents about the ban of fur imports and foie gras. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

The Government shares the British public's high regard for animal welfare. Our ambition is to promote the highest standards both within the United Kingdom (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.

Whilst the UK was a member of the European Union (EU), we were subject to rules on the free circulation of goods within the EU market. Building on the opportunities presented by our departure from the EU, we can now take further steps to address low welfare standards, informed by evidence and reflecting our values.

On 31 May 2021, Defra published a formal [call for evidence](#) on the fur trade in Great Britain (GB). This 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 GB 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 will use the evidence gathered to inform any future action on the fur trade in GB, in line with the Government's commitment to improving animal welfare standards.

We are taking forward an ambitious programme of manifesto commitments on animal welfare which will raise domestic standards further and help us set an international example to lead the way towards a better future for animals everywhere. We are taking the opportunities presented by our departure from the EU to enhance our position as global leaders in animal welfare and promote high animal welfare standards across the world.

The Government has made clear that the production of foie gras from ducks or geese using force feeding raises serious welfare concerns.

The production of foie gras by force feeding has been banned in the UK for over 15 years following the introduction of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. It is a legal requirement to provide for an animal's welfare needs, such as supplying a suitable diet and protecting the animal from injury and disease. Under this legislation, it is a criminal offence to allow an animal to suffer unnecessarily, which clearly reflects the UK public's attitude to welfare standards.

Whilst we have domestic restrictions on the production of force-fed foie gras, we still import foie gras from abroad. Building on the opportunities presented by our departure from the EU, we are now able to take additional steps where there is clear evidence of low welfare standards. We are considering any further steps that could be taken in relation to foie gras that is produced overseas using force-feeding practices. We are gathering information and will continue to speak to a range of interested parties about the issues involved, in line with the Government's commitment to improving animal welfare standards as set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare. This will be used to inform our approach to the issue of force-fed foie gras.

Yours sincerely,



**THE RT HON LORD BENYON**