



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP  
Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries

2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

T: +44 (0) 3459 335577  
E: [correspondence.section@defra.gov.uk](mailto:correspondence.section@defra.gov.uk)  
W: [gov.uk/defra](http://gov.uk/defra)

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA  
[jonathan.woods@parliament.uk](mailto:jonathan.woods@parliament.uk)

Our ref: MC2023/14448/LT

25 July 2023

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 20 July to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituents about the caging of farmed animals. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

We have delivered an ambitious legislative programme since the publication of the Action Plan, which will deliver significant improvements for animals in the UK and abroad. We are firmly committed to maintaining our strong track record on animal welfare and to delivering continued improvements, both in the course of this Parliament and beyond.

Our recent announcement on delivering the measures in the Kept Animals Bill through single measure bills will help us to deliver our manifesto commitments, including the ban on live exports. These are our key priorities. We do not consider the time is right to consult on cage reforms, being mindful of the challenges the sectors are facing. The market is already driving the move away from using cages for laying hen production. The proportion of eggs that come from caged hens has steadily decreased from 47% of total throughput in Q4 2017, to 21% in Q1 2023.

We continue to work with the sector to maintain and enhance our high standards. The Government's animal welfare priorities for its Animal Health and Welfare Pathway include supporting producers to transition away from confinement systems.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,

**Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP**