



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Lord Douglas-Miller
Minister for Biosecurity, Animal Health and Welfare

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

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

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
kate.brady@parliament.uk

Our ref: MC2024/00432/SS

19 February 2024

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 5 January to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituent, about fur and foie gras. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

Firstly, in response to your constituent's comments regarding foie gras. The UK has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world. The Government has made clear that the production of foie gras from ducks or geese using force feeding raises serious welfare concerns.

As you are aware, foie gras production using force feeding is banned in the UK, as it is incompatible with domestic legislation. Foie gras production is covered by the general provisions in the [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#) which make it a criminal offence to allow an animal to suffer unnecessarily and places a duty on people who are responsible for animals which requires them to do all that is reasonable to ensure the welfare of their animals. This includes an animal's need for a suitable diet and to be protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease.

Whilst we have domestic restrictions on the production of force-fed foie gras, it is possible to import foie gras from abroad. In line with the Government's commitment to improving animal welfare standards as set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare, we are committed to building a clear evidence base to inform future decisions.

Secondly, in response to your constituent's concerns regarding fur farms. 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. Seal products can only be imported and placed on the UK market for sale in limited circumstances and subject to strict conditions.

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.

In the Action Plan for Animal Welfare, Defra committed to explore potential action in relation to the import of fur from abroad. In 2021 Defra published a formal Call for Evidence on the fur trade. A summary of replies received should be published in due course.

We are continuing to build our evidence base on the fur sector, which will be used to inform us of any future action on the fur trade.

We have also commissioned a report from our expert Animal Welfare Committee into the issue of what constitutes responsible sourcing in the fur industry. This report will support our understanding of the fur industry and help inform us of our next steps.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K Douglas-Miller', followed by a long horizontal line that ends in an arrowhead pointing to the right.

LORD DOUGLAS-MILLER