



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 24 February on behalf of your constituent, _____ of _____ about pig welfare. I apologise for the delay in responding. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. Thank you for your understanding during this challenging time.

The Government is actively exploring options for strengthening the UK system compared to the EU baseline moving forward.

As part of the Government's animal welfare reform programme, a new welfare code for pigs was published on 1 March and sets out guidance on how best to keep pigs using the latest scientific and veterinary advice to safeguard and enhance welfare standards.

The new code of practice for pigs includes guidance on farrowing to protect the welfare of both sows and piglets and states 'the aim is for farrowing crates to no longer be necessary and for any new system to protect the welfare of the sow, as well as her piglets'. The code is available to view on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pigs-on-farm-welfare>.

It is important that we make progress towards a system which both safeguards the welfare of the sow as well as the piglets and works commercially, and that we do so as quickly as possible. To that end, Defra officials are examining the evidence around the use of cages in farming, and we will consider all the options.

RT HON GEORGE EUSTICE MP