

## **Pressure Increases on Scottish Government to Support a Ban on Live Animal Exports**

Pressure on the Scottish Government to support a UK-wide ban on the live export of animals increased this week when MSP Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity received hundreds of petition postcards urging him to end the practice.

The protest letters, were presented by representatives from animal welfare charity, Compassion in World Farming to Emma Harper MSP (who received them on behalf of Fergus Ewing) and c MSP, Chair of the cross- party group for animal welfare, and one of the Deputy Presiding Officers of the Scottish Parliament.

The petitioners are calling on the Scottish government to support a UK-wide ban on live animal exports for fattening and slaughtering. Every year, around 2,400 sheep are exported from Scotland to France and Germany, a horrendous journey in cramped conditions that can last over 40 hours without water, a rest or veterinary attention.

Around 3,000 calves, many as young as two to three weeks old are also transported annually from Scotland by sea to Northern Ireland where they are driven across the border into the Republic. They are then sent on a 20 hour sea journey to northern France. From there they are taken all the way to Spain. The journey can take up to 60 hours, several of them at sea, and during that time many of the calves will experience inhumane conditions, standing in their own excrement, thirsty, hungry, and frightened. These calves are too young to control their body temperature, resulting in severe physical and mental stress, especially on hot or very cold days.

Britain is currently required under EU free trade rules to allow live animal exports, however the Conservative Manifesto stated: *“As we leave the European Union, we can take early steps to control the export of live farm animals for slaughter”* and Michael Gove, as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has continued to make positive noises on the issue. Animal welfare is a matter that is devolved to the Scottish Parliament. However, a ban on live exports is a trade matter which is reserved to Westminster. Westminster would be most unlikely to ban live exports without the approval of the Scottish Government and Parliament.

Peter Stevenson, Chief Policy Advisor for Compassion in World Farming, said: *“The calves sent to Spain can be as young as two weeks old. Having endured hours of travelling with a basic lack of water and food, and sometimes so cramped they can barely move, once in Spain, they are likely to be reared in barren conditions without straw or other bedding. It is unbelievable that anyone can consider this to be right. I call on the Scottish Government, to take heed of the growing public pressure to end this barbaric practice, and to press Westminster to enact a UK-wide ban on live exports for slaughter or fattening.”*

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