



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

**The Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP**  
From the Secretary of State for Environment, Food  
and Rural Affairs

Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

T 03459 335577  
defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

Mr James West  
Senior Policy Manager  
Compassion in World Farming  
River Court  
Mill Lane  
Godalming  
GU7 1EZ

Our ref: PO2019/20383/ES

25 October 2019

Dear James,

Thank you for your letter of 1 October about live animal exports, and your letter of 31 July to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on animal welfare and future trade deals.

This Government is committed to maintaining our rigorous standards on animal welfare and food safety after we leave the European Union (EU) - high standards and high quality are what our domestic and global customers demand, and that is what we will provide. The Withdrawal Act will transfer onto the UK statute book all EU food safety and animal welfare standards. Our current high standards, including import requirements, will apply when we leave the EU.

As we leave the EU, the UK will have an independent trade policy for the first time in 40 years. While we want to maintain a close relationship with Europe, this will give us the opportunity to forge ambitious trade relationships around the world, and to enter into new free trade agreements with other countries or groups of countries. But those future trade agreements must work for consumers, farmers, and businesses in the UK. Existing restrictions on chlorine washed chicken and hormone treated beef have been carried over into UK law and we have no intention of undercutting our own reputation for quality by lowering our food and animal welfare standards in pursuit of a trade deal.

As you note, I have been supportive of CIWF's calls to take action on live exports and so I was pleased to recently announce that we will consult on improving the welfare in transport of live animals. This follows last year's call for evidence in relation to future welfare in transport standards, commissioning of external research from University of Edinburgh/SRUC, and inviting the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) to conduct a review and make recommendations.

The Government welcomes FAWC's recommendations that live animal journeys should be minimised and that animals for slaughter should not be transported longer distances if suitable alternatives are available. FAWC's report, which will be published in due course, will inform a public consultation on these issues, which is the first step to delivering on our manifesto commitment. Any future policies coming out of the consultation would be taken forward as part of the package of the animal welfare measures that were announced in the Queen's Speech. I am, of course, also aware of concerns over exports of live animals, and



can confirm we will be consulting on proposals that will seek to address journeys for both slaughter and fattening.

As you appreciate, measures which operate to restrict exports can give rise to legal complications under WTO rules. These are being worked through carefully. Together with the expert work already carried out by FAWC, I expect the forthcoming consultation to provide valuable input to enable us to create a robust and workable new set of rules to implement our manifesto commitment. It would be wrong to pre-judge the outcome of the consultation, but I can assure you that it will include options which have the effect of significantly restricting live exports for slaughter and for fattening.

The Government is committed to improving the welfare of all animals, and as we move towards a new relationship with Europe and the rest of the world, we have a unique opportunity to shape future animal welfare policy in the UK to ensure the highest standards in every area.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about these important issues.

Regards,



**Theresa Villiers**