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Mr Peter Stevenson  
Compassion in World Farming

Ms Nicola Glen  
Eyes on Animals

Our ref: 2019/0030238

26th November 2019

Dear Mr Stevenson and Ms Glen,

I refer to your letter of 3 October to Zac Goldsmith MP and myself concerning the export of live calves and your interpretation of the requirements of Council Regulation 1/2005.

As calf exports from Great Britain currently originate from a Scottish assembly centre, I am replying to explain the situation.

Firstly I should say that I understand and share the widespread concern about the welfare of calves on long journeys across Europe and ideally would like the industry to be able to move to a position where all male pure dairy breed calves produced in the UK could be reared and have a productive life here, rather than being of such low economic value that they are either killed on farm soon after birth, or consigned for export to be reared elsewhere in Europe. Our recent Programme for Government contained a commitment to examining the potential for new systems of calf rearing in dairy systems.

However I know from discussions with dairy farmers that this is a very complex problem which is why we are working on solutions. We have supported the pioneering approach of the Ethical Dairy model, which keeps dairy cows and their calves together for a much longer period of time. There are a number of other positive initiatives currently being used and developed particularly in relation to breeding. I commend the good progress that the wider dairy industry is making in developing strategies, key to which is the use of sexed semen, to reduce the number of male dairy calves. The dairy sector is also working to reduce the number of animals transported and to investigate home markets, and the Scottish Government fully supports this and will continue to engage with the sector, and wider interested parties, in this work.

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Regarding your concerns about feeding calves during the mid-journey rest stop, as you acknowledge it is not practical to provide feed in the form of liquid milk replacement to a load of calves on a lorry. Proper individual feeding to ensure each calf receives a suitable amount of feed happens at control posts or the destination where calves are unloaded and rested for at least 24 hours. To do this at a mid-journey rest on the way to a control post or the destination would require the calves to be unloaded at suitable facilities, fed and rested for a period before reloading which would involve additional handling stress and prolong the overall journey by several hours.

It is the Scottish Government's view that it is preferable for the welfare of the calves for them to complete the journey to the control post or final destination as quickly as possible so they can be given individual attention in specialised facilities.

As you say it is also a legal condition that calves on farms are fed at least twice a day. This is required by Council Directive 2008/119/EC and is implemented in Scotland by the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010. This condition applies to the rearing of calves on farms, whereas EU Regulation 1/2005 sets out relevant rules which govern the transport of calves.

Regarding checks by APHA at the mid-journey rest stop to ensure calves have been provided with water, as you say, Article 15.1 of Regulation 1/2005 provides that the relevant authority must carry out, at any stage of the journey, appropriate checks on a random or targeted basis to verify that declared journey times are realistic and that the journey complies with the Regulation. Scottish Government officials liaise regularly with APHA and have been assured by APHA that calf vehicles are routinely checked by its staff at the point of loading to ensure that water can be provided on the vehicle, and at the port of Ramsgate where the time of arrival can be recorded and compared with the journey log to verify that declared journey times are realistic and that the journey complies with the Regulation, including the one-hour rest period. Returned completed journey logs are also checked by APHA as you describe. I have asked Scottish officials to maintain close engagement with APHA on any movements involving calves from Scotland to ensure welfare standards are maintained.

I hope this reply addresses your understandable concerns but I would be happy to discuss any further practical suggestions of how conditions for calves during transport can be improved, or how a productive life for male dairy calves can be provided which would avoid the need for them to be transported long distances for rearing.

Please note this letter has also been copied to Zac Goldsmith MP, Minister of State for Environment and International Development.



**MAIRI GOUGEON**

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