



**Chris Heaton-Harris**  
Member of Parliament for Daventry  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 7048

September 2020

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the welfare of farm animals and the use of cages.

I understand your concerns on this matter. The UK has some of the highest standards of animal welfare in the world. There is comprehensive legislation to uphold these standards, as well as guidance on how best to protect the welfare of specific animals living on farms, such as hens, pigs and cattle. The Government has already banned cages or close confinement systems where there is clear scientific evidence that they are detrimental to animal health and welfare and is actively looking into the use of cages. I understand that it will be considering the full range of options that are available for future reform.

The new statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Laying Hens and Pullets came into force in August 2018. The Code provides improved guidance on welfare legislation and reflects the latest scientific and veterinary advice. I am also aware that all major supermarkets have said they will stop selling eggs from hens kept in enriched cages by 2025.

On pig welfare, the aim is to get to a point where traditional farrowing crates are obsolete and where any new system protects the welfare of the sow, as well as her piglets. I understand that important steps have been taken on the use of free farrowing systems, but further advances are needed before compulsory replacement of farrowing systems can be recommended.

The Government is committed to making the UK a world leader in protection of animals as we leave the EU. This includes increasing maximum penalties for animal cruelty from six months to five years imprisonment and an update of statutory welfare codes. These codes strengthen guidance on how to meet the needs of livestock animals and enhance their welfare.

Ministers are also committed to making any necessary changes to UK law in a rigorous and comprehensive way to ensure animal sentience is legally recognised once the UK leaves the EU. I understand that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is engaging with relevant organisations and authorities to enhance its policies on this issue further.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Website: [www.heatonharris.com](http://www.heatonharris.com)



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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**