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Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd
Minister for Natural Resources and Food



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-399/P &
04399
Ein cyf/Our ref July 2014

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20 June 2014

P-04-399 - Petition to ban the practice of slaughtering animals without pre-stunning

P-04-433 - Petition calling for the compulsory installation of CCTV in Welsh slaughterhouses

I write to provide an update concerning petition numbers P-04-399 and P-04-433.

P-04-399

The Welsh Government introduced the Welfare of Animals at Time of Killing (Wales) Regulations 2014 (WATOK) on the 20 May. The Regulations put in place the enforcement provision of EC Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at time of killing.

The WATOK Regulations combine the new standards introduced by the Council Regulation whilst also retaining the pre-existing stricter national rules that were already in place under the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter and Killing) Regulations 1995 that have been replaced.

The provisions apply to slaughter and related operations in Food Business Operators (Slaughterhouses) and seasonal slaughter and related operations outside a slaughterhouse.

The Regulations provide extensive animal welfare protection through national rules and include the derogation to disapply the stunning provisions at time of slaughter to provide for the needs for communities of faith.

Defra were scheduled to make consequential amendments to UK legislation upon introduction of the English implementing Regulations, however, without prior notice to officials or Welsh Ministers, they laid and revoked their regulations on the same day. This caused some concern in relation to taking forward the consequential amendments in a timely fashion. My officials are working with the Food Standards Agency to introduce short term mitigation action to allow the industry to function in Wales. I intend bringing forward the minor technical amendments to domestic legislation regarding the change of reference to "a Certificate of Competence" contained within our Regulations.

I am committed to ensuring that a high standard welfare for all animals kept in Wales is maintained at all stages of their life, including at the point of slaughter. Now that the EU Regulation 1099/2009 has been implemented in Wales, Welsh Government will give further consideration to the welfare of animals at time of killing.

Having reviewed the legislative powers available to Welsh Government, it is recognised that animal welfare is one aspect of this complex and sensitive area of policy; I also have to be mindful of the Welsh Government's legal duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

The Welsh Government will need to take account of the scientific evidence available and the wider implications that include equality and human rights, whilst consumer, retailer and European developments on the subject of food labelling will also be considered.

A European Commission study that includes the feasibility of method of slaughter labelling, is due this summer that may provide Member States with recommendations for future labelling provisions.

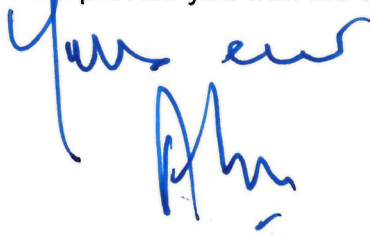
P-04-433

Following a request by the Welsh Government the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) is preparing advice for the Welsh Government about unobserved monitoring at slaughterhouses that include the use of CCTV.

A FAWC consultation on CCTV and other methods for monitoring and/or verification of the welfare of farm animals in slaughterhouses closed on the 16 May 2014.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/fawc/files/Consultation-on-CCTV-and-other-monitoring-and-verification-methods-in-slaughterhouses.pdf>

FAWC propose that the advice will be presented to the Welsh Government and other devolved administration in this winter, my officials will then review and consider the advice and I will provide you with the outcome of the review.



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