

P-04-536 Stop Factory Dairy Farming in Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 17.02.15.

Dear Kayleigh,

Many thanks for your email of 11th February regarding Petition P-04-536 (Stop Factory Dairy Farms in Wales), and the specific communication from the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food.

When the petition was submitted 12 months ago it highlighted why a review of planning legislation was of critical importance to ensure Wales fulfils its aspiration to become a truly sustainable country.

Our definition of “factory dairy farming” within the petition itself is detailed as being “large scale indoor dairy farms”. In simple terms, our concerns surround intensive indoor farms where cows have very limited or no access to pasture. Due to their operating requirements, and to achieve ever greater yields, these farms are very often large-scale farms, but that does not mean that the petition is aiming to place a limit on the size of dairy herds per say.

We agree with the Deputy Minister that in general Wales has as an excellent record of animal husbandry and promotes the highest standards of farm animal welfare. However, our concern is that Wales and the rest of the UK risks allowing intensive indoor dairy farms to alter that proud record, by restricting the natural behaviour of cows, and by pushing cows to and beyond the limits of their physical tolerances.

We are concerned that we appear to be sleepwalking into a nightmare scenario that other countries have already experienced that will ultimately be bad for dairy farmers, consumers, the environment and for cow welfare. We continue to support the call in Petition P-04-536 for an urgent inquiry to be undertaken to assess current and future risks, to ensure the planning system is able to prevent the negative impacts that can arise from intensive indoor dairy farms.

Kind regards,

Ian Woodhurst