



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA - P/LG/0125/17

Mark Reckless AM  
Chair - Climate Change, Environment  
and Rural Affairs Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff  
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January 2017

Dear Mark,

Further to my attendance at the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee on 14 December 2016 to discuss issues surrounding the use of snares in Wales. Thank you for the follow up questions from members of the Committee, below, I have responded to these in the order in which they were raised.

**1. What the Welsh Government is doing to gather Welsh-specific data on both the sale and use of snares (code compliant and non-code compliant).**

The Welsh Government has been working with a wide range of stakeholders throughout the process of the development and implementation of the Code of Best Practice on the use of snares in fox control. They include the police, who investigate any reported contraventions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in relation to snares. We have asked for any information on compliance and non-compliance with the Code. We are also in discussions with the main snare retailers in Wales and their suppliers about providing sales figures on snares.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**2. What are the Cabinet Secretary's views on how alternative methods for pest control could be promoted by the Welsh Government?**

The Code of Practice makes it clear snaring should only be considered as a last resort, once all other options have been explored. The Code provides a link to an advisory leaflet we have produced for both non-lethal and lethal control of foxes in rural areas. This guidance is published on our website at <http://gov.wales/wildlifemanagement>.

**3. What is the Welsh Government doing to address the sale of non-Code compliant snares?**

We are discussing options with the main supplier of 95% of snares to farm stores in Wales. He is working with his manufacturer and has provided us with an improved snare design. We have sought comment from the game sector on this snare and assessed its compliance with the Code. Our full appraisal of the snare has identified some areas for improvement. The supplier is taking our comments on board and is working with his manufacturer to produce a new snare for our consideration by mid-February. If this snare is unsatisfactory we plan to meet with the supplier and manufacturer to resolve the situation. We have also stressed the importance of making a code compliant snare routinely available with other suppliers and retailers and through interested parties we have been widely promoting the Code and the use of code compliant snares

**4. Are snares permitted to be used on Welsh Government-owned land?**

Natural Resources Wales does not use snares on their woodland estate and do not encourage their use.

**5. What are the Cabinet Secretary's views on the Law Commission's 2015 'Review of Wildlife Protection Legislation'. Does the Cabinet Secretary agree with the conclusion of the report that free-running snares should be more tightly regulated?**

The Law Commission report will be used to shape the way forward for wildlife protection in Wales. It is illegal under the Wildlife and Countryside Act to use a self-locking snare. It is my view the published Code of Practice provides clear guidance on the operation and inspection of snares. Our aim is to ensure the use of free running snares comply with our Code of Practice on snares.

**6. How is the efficacy of the Welsh Government's 'Code of best practice on the use of snares in fox control' being assessed? How are levels of compliance monitored and what are the deterrents for non-compliance?**

We have met with a wide stakeholder group with an interest in snares and many of these organisations have been promoting and providing training on snaring practice and the Code. We are working with them to provide evidence of the uptake of the Code and the improvement of snaring practice. Failure to comply with the Code is not an offence in itself, however, failure to comply with a relevant provision in the Code may be relied upon by a court as tending to establish liability.

**7. What is the status of the Welsh Government's Code of Practice? The Cabinet Secretary's letter to the CCERA Chair states it is a statutory code under the Section 14 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, whilst RSPCA and LACS consider compliance with the Code as voluntary.**

The Code was made under Section 14 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and whilst failure to comply with the Code is not an offence in itself, failure to comply with a relevant provision in the Code may be relied upon by a court as tending to establish liability.

**8. Does the Cabinet Secretary think that there is a case for introducing, as has been done in Scotland, additional requirements such as training for those using snares and the use of tags on snares so owners are traceable?**

Scotland has made additional legislation in relation to snares through the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. Snares must have safety stops fitted and users are required to attend a training course and register a personal identification number which must be displayed on the individual snares. We understand the Scottish Government is planning to review these arrangements shortly and I will be interested to see if these additional measures have had any success in driving up snaring standards.

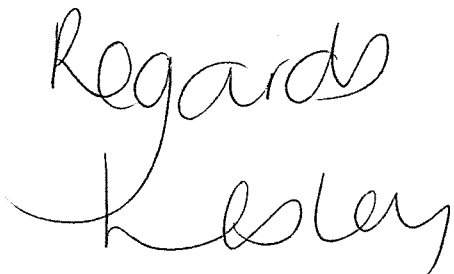
**9. Is the Welsh Government intending to work with key suppliers of snares to promote the sale of code-compliant snares?**

Yes, we are currently discussing options with the main supplier of 95% of snares to farm stores in Wales. We have stressed the importance of making a code compliant snare routinely available. The supplier has suggested some modifications to their existing snare and we are working with the supplier to ensure these will result in a snare which complies with the Code.

**10. What training on the use of code-compliant snares is available in Wales and is the Welsh Government considering making more available?**

Training has been made available on the use of snares and the Code by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust who have confirmed training is available on demand.

I believe the way we treat our animals is an important reflection of our society's values. The Code was developed to improve animal welfare standards and I am actively reviewing the Code and its effectiveness in Wales to ensure it meets this requirement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Regards" on the top line and "Lesley" on the bottom line. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Lesley Griffiths AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig  
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs

