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Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig  
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-815  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/07398/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM  
Chair of the Petitions Committee

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Dear Janet

19 November 2019

Thank you for your letters of 31 July and 6 November, regarding petition P-05-815 Control Rapidly Expanding Intensive Poultry Industry in Wales.

The Town and Country Planning Intensive Agriculture Working Group has been established with the objective of identifying the various roles and responsibilities of all bodies involved in the planning process relevant to intensive agriculture and examine technical advice and scientific evidence in relation to planning permission. The work will include looking at the impacts of intensive agriculture, biodiversity and climate change. The preparation of a Technical Advice Note (TAN) will be the key output of the Working Group to help improve the quality of planning decisions benefiting from the industry and local communities.

Poultry farms are covered by the same planning regulations as other developments. Determining planning applications in accordance with their Local Development Plan provides Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) with the opportunity to comprehensively consider the cumulative effects of existing poultry units which includes noise, smells, pollution and health. Last year, the Chief Planner issued a letter to LPAs reminding them to take into account the cumulative impacts resulting from similar developments nearby. It advised about the need to exercise particular care when considering planning applications which bring livestock units and residential or sensitive environmental areas close together.

Poultry farms are also regulated under the Environmental Permitting Regulations by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to make sure they do not affect the environment.

In November 2018, I issued a statement outlining my intention to introduce regulations across Wales to tackle pollution from agriculture. I have been working closely with the Wales Land Management (WLMF) Sub-group to establish the right balance of regulatory measures, voluntary initiatives and investment to enable the industry to address pollution issues. I will continue to work with all stakeholders to develop a suite of measures necessary to address agricultural pollution.

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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.

The proposed regulations have been developed to reduce losses of nutrients to the environment from agriculture and to protect water and air quality. Baseline regulations applying to all agricultural holdings across Wales will ensure a better understanding of the requirements, prevent moving the problem elsewhere when compared to a spatially targeted approach and will improve the ability of the regulator to undertake enforcement action.

Under Prosperity for All, the Welsh Government is committed to building healthier communities and better environments. Clean air has a central role in creating the right conditions for better health, well-being and greater physical activity in Wales. This is reflected through a commitment to reducing emissions and delivering vital improvements in air quality through planning, infrastructure, regulation, and health communication measures.

Welsh Government will be consulting on the draft Clean Air Plan in December this year, with a view to publishing the final Plan in spring 2020. The Plan will highlight the challenges and bring together existing commitments and new actions across Government to achieve air quality improvements through policy, regulation and new legislation. This Plan will also be our first step to a Clean Air Act for Wales and I would welcome your views on our cross-Government Plan.

My vision is for a prosperous, resilient poultry industry promoting Wales' present and future well-being which will only be achieved by protecting animal welfare and its impact on the environment.

Regards  
Lesley

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