

KEITH TAYLOR
Green Party
for the South East of England



Lord Gardiner
Under Secretary of State
Defra
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

August 2016

Dear Under Secretary of State,

Re: Long distance transport of farm animals for slaughter

Earlier this year I wrote to the former Secretary of State responsible for animals, Liz Truss MP, regarding the long distance transport of farm animals for slaughter and failed to receive a response. As the new Under Secretary of State responsible for animals, I am therefore forwarding my inquiry to you.

I am writing to express my grave concern about the welfare of billions of farm animals, including chickens, sheep, cattle and pigs. One million farm animals are transported every day across Europe, most of them for slaughter. Live transport, especially on long distances, can be a major animal welfare concern. Animals can suffer stress from hunger, thirst, exhaustion, lack of space and lack of rest. Scientific evidence shows that the stress of transport weakens the immune system making animals more vulnerable to diseases. In the UK, over 10,000 sheep are exported from our shores every year and we believe urgent action is needed to end this needless suffering.

As you may be aware Germany, The Netherlands and Denmark have put in a joint Resolution to the Council asking for a revision of the EU Transport Regulation. This was recently supported by Sweden who have now submitted an official request for such. I support this call for better conditions for animals transported between Member States, an issue that will be discussed in the coming year under the new Animal Health Regulation.

Despite the recent vote to leave the EU, until Article 50 is invoked and official negotiations are concluded, the UK remains an active member of the European Union. I therefore ask that the UK also publicly support this call and make a similar request to the Commission.

There is increasing public concern about the welfare of farm animals as shown in the recent Eurobarometer report. The recent Stop The Trucks campaign has also generated over 100,000 actions: www.stophetrucks.eu. Yet despite this strong public support for an alternative meat-only trade and action on transport distances, figures show that journey times have in fact increased since the application of the EU Animal Transport Regulation in 2007. Furthermore recent scientific evidence on the welfare of farm animals during transport has shown the need to update the Regulation.

Ongoing concerns over journey times, transport conditions and enforcement can only be addressed when the existing standards are updated and overhauled and when animals are required to be slaughtered as near as possible to their place of birth and rearing.

I hope you can support such changes and the principles in the Resolution. I believe the review would be an important step towards improving the welfare of farm animals both in the UK and across the EU, and moving towards a meat-only trade and where live animals are to be transported it should be restricted to a maximum of 8 hours.

As an MEP I will be doing all I can to secure assistance from the EU Commission and I ask that in your role as a representative on the EU Agriculture Council, you do all you can to help address this important issue.

Thank you in advance and I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

Keith Taylor, Green MEP, South East England.