



Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Thursday 18th July 2024

Dear Members of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee,

We are writing to request that the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee consider conducting an inquiry into the use of cages for pheasants and partridges by the shooting industry in Wales.

The breeding and rearing of game birds take place on an industrialised scale in Wales as it is home to the largest game farm in the UK. The practice of confining pheasants and partridges used for breeding purposes in cages raises significant animal welfare concerns, as it prevents them from expressing natural behaviours and does not fulfil their needs, leading to severe distress, physical injury, and a high incidence of disease.

The Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021 to 2026 sets out four animal welfare commitments as part of the programme for Welsh Government. The fourth commitment is entitled: Restrict the use of cages for Farmed Animals. The action to carry out a scoping exercise into the cages currently used was due for completion in 2023 as part of the fourth commitment but as of the year 2 progress report, there has been no mention of examining the use of cages for game birds.

Given Wales's commitment to high animal welfare standards, it is imperative that the welfare of game birds is investigated and addressed.

We would envisage the Committee to consider scrutinising the following issues in an inquiry:

- An independent impact assessment of animal welfare for game birds kept in cages for breeding.
- The inadequacy of current legal protections and regulatory frameworks for game birds, including the frequency, criteria and outcomes of inspection.
- Cost-benefit analyses of a transition away from using raised battery units for game birds.
- Analysis of the public cost of agricultural subsidies given to businesses that farm game birds, as well as compensation provided to farms that experience outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.
- Wider environmental impacts of the industrialised nature of game bird farming.

We believe that a Senedd inquiry into this matter is in line with public interest since YouGov polling showed in 2021 that 72% of people in Wales oppose the use of cages for breeding game birds.



This is in addition to the Senedd Petitions Committee considering the petition to “Ban game bird cages” in February 2022, which resulted in correspondence with the then Minister for Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths MS. There has been no further update on progress as per the year 2 Animal Welfare Plan progress report despite a firm commitment to restrict the use of cages for farmed animals.

We kindly request the Committee to include caged breeding of game birds in its Forward Work Programme.

We would also welcome the opportunity to provide additional information, evidence, and testimony to support this inquiry.

We look forward to hearing a positive response and the opportunity to collaborate on improving the welfare of farmed animals in Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fiona Pereira".

Fiona Pereira
Campaign Manager
Animal Aid



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shahinoor Alom".

Shahinoor Alom
Public Affairs (Wales) Officer
League Against Cruel Sports



Replies can be made via email to:

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