



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

December 2016

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about CCTV in equine slaughterhouses.

I know that the Government shares the British public's high regard for the welfare of horses. Horses are covered by the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations, which set out requirements pertinent to the protection of animals at slaughter. Specifically, the business operator must ensure that a separate bay or room is provided for the killing of horses; a horse cannot be killed in a room or bay where there are remains of a horse or other animal; and a horse cannot be killed within sight of another horse.

Of the five approved equine slaughterhouses in England and Wales, three have CCTV installed in some areas for animal welfare purposes. Indeed, in the past 12 months, only 32 of 3,280 horses slaughtered were in plants without CCTV. I would note that the feedback the Government has had from the Food Standards Agency's official veterinarians, who monitor animal health and welfare regulations during slaughter, is that it has not encountered any particular problems or concerns about the welfare of horses at slaughter.

CCTV cannot be a substitute for responsible food business operators, and, while it does play a useful role, is not a panacea. If it is used, it is preferable that it is used because food business operators really want it, and want to use it to improve the management of their operation. When considering these matters, I believe that care is required to ensure that the culture is not inadvertently changed, and all the benefits from CCTV lost. The Government is yet to be convinced that it should be mandatory, but I understand it does keep the matter under review.

Once again, thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY