



**Chris Heaton-Harris**  
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oAA  
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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the welfare of farm animals; a subject I and my constituents care very much about.

My Ministerial colleagues are examining the evidence around the use of cages for farm animals and are considering all options. They have also committed to continuing to focus on maintaining world-leading farm animal welfare standards through both regulatory requirements and statutory codes.

Ministers have been clear that it is their ambition for farrowing crates to no longer be used for sows. Indeed, the new pig welfare code clearly states that *“the aim is for farrowing crates to no longer be necessary and for any new system to protect the welfare of the sow, as well as her piglets.”*

It is important that we make progress towards a system that both works commercially and safeguards the welfare of the sow and her piglets, and that we do so as quickly as possible. The UK is already ahead of most pig producing countries in terms of non-confinement farrowing, with around 40% of our pigs housed outside and not farrowed with crates. I will of course listen closely to what my colleague, Sir David Amess MP, has to say on this subject when he brings forward his 10 Minute Rule Bill in March.

I know that the Government is also examining the future use of cages for all laying hens and I welcome the commitment from our major retailers, with positive support from our egg producers, to stop retailing eggs from enriched colony cage production systems by 2025. I am pleased that the UK already has a much larger free-range sector by far than any EU country, with over 50% of our hens kept in free range systems.

The Government has set itself a challenging agenda of animal welfare issues that it will tackle and is acting on many fronts to improve the health and wellbeing of farm animals. A major example is the commitment to end excessively long journeys for live animals going for slaughter and for fattening.

Of course, if you do have specific concerns about the welfare of an animal, I would recommend reporting it to the police or to the RSPCA who can investigate and take action where necessary.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**