



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

The Rt Hon the Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park
Minister of State

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Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 29 May to the Secretary of State about the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

Firstly, thank you for your words about the broader elements of the Pathway. I know my officials have greatly valued the support that members of the Farm Animal Welfare Forum have offered so far. The species-specific priorities we settled on, based upon a range of evidence and industry expertise, reflect some of the very best opportunities for improving animal health and welfare in each sector. We look forward to working collaboratively with industry and other stakeholders as we further develop the Pathway offer.

Your letter mentions our work exploring the options around labelling for animal welfare and its overlaps with environmental labelling. You may have seen that the Government Food Strategy has since set out our commitment to launch a consultation in 2023 on proposals to reform current animal welfare labelling. This commitment builds on our recent call for evidence on welfare labelling, which yielded over 1,600 responses. We are very grateful to your members for all the data and insights they provided, and we will publish a summary shortly. We are very keen to engage with you and your members further on this work and will be in touch shortly to discuss.

To drive positive change through better information, transparency and accountability, the Government Food Strategy also launched a transformational Food Data Transparency Partnership. Working closely with industry and other key actors, the Partnership will develop consistent and defined metrics to measure the health, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare impacts of food objectively, so we can build a more transparent and accountable food system.

Our work on welfare labelling will form a key part of this Partnership. We will also work with stakeholders to create a common framework of metrics which the food and drink industry can follow when making voluntary information to consumers regarding their emission and sustainability claims.

With regards to the importance of intergovernmental collaboration on animal agriculture, the UK is undertaking an ambitious approach to cooperation and collaboration, where we are seeking commitments to work with trading partners on animal welfare.

We will use our influence at the World Trade Organization and other multilateral bodies to argue for better and fairer trading rules, while also pushing to strengthen environmental and animal welfare standards globally.

Thank you for your members' varied contributions to our work on farmed animal welfare. I look forward to your continued engagement with labelling for animal welfare and the broader Animal Health and Welfare Pathway.

Thank you once again for your letter.

With best wishes,



THE RT HON THE LORD GOLDSMITH OF RICHMOND PARK