

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

12 May 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to thank you for your commitment to a call for evidence this year to assess the impact of banning cages for hens. As we mark the one year anniversary of the Government's Action Plan for Animal Welfare, we urge you to launch the consultation with immediate effect, as a step towards a future where hens can be free of cruel and outdated cage systems.

The Action Plan for Animal Welfare commits to "examining the use of cages for laying hens" but after one year there has been no public consultation with stakeholders on the issue. Up to 14 million hens are currently in enriched cages in the UK. Without a ban, even if all UK corporate cage-free commitments are met by 2025, it is estimated that up to eight million hens will remain in cages annually.

A consultation is needed urgently to begin the process that could lead to the ending of cages for hens, and to help ensure that the UK does not fall further behind its neighbours on this issue. Austria, Switzerland, Germany and Luxembourg have banned enriched cages and the European Commission has committed to proposing legislation to phase out cages. In the US, Arizona recently became the tenth state to ban the use of cages for laying hens. The UK must ban cages for hens as soon as possible to maintain its status as a world leader in animal welfare.

Banning cages has enormous public support. According to a report published in 2020 by the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation, 76% of consumers want the banning of cages to be a priority. Food industry giants such as Nestlé, Greggs and Waitrose have also [called for a ban](#).

As stated in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare, "The way we treat animals reflects our values and the kind of people we are." We are united in this statement, and we know that keeping hens in cages goes against the very ethos of the Action Plan.

The Government must do all it can to move the process to end keeping hens in cages forward. The time is now, there is no reason for further delay, so we urge you to launch the consultation on the impact of banning cages for hens now.

Yours sincerely,

Parliamentarians

1. Henry Smith MP
2. Caroline Lucas MP
3. Jonathan Lord MP
4. Julian Knight MP
5. Giles Watling MP
6. Lord Randall of Uxbridge
7. Rachael Maskell MP
8. Dame Rosie Winterton MP
9. Alison Thewliss MP
10. Virendra Sharma MP
11. Christian Wakeford MP
12. Carol Monaghan MP
13. Kim Johnson MP
14. Sammy Wilson MP
15. Paul Blomfield MP

Organisations

16. The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare
17. RSPCA
18. Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation
19. The Humane League UK
20. Compassion in World Farming
21. FOUR PAWS UK
22. Humane Society International UK
23. Animal Equality UK
24. UK Centre for Animal Law
25. Mahavir Trust
26. Animal Interfaith Alliance
27. Christian Vegetarian Association
28. Catholic Concern for Animals

Notable Supporters

29. Lucy Watson
30. Kirsty Gallacher
31. Peter Egan
32. Marc Abraham OBE
33. James Dunmore