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Humza Yousaf MSP
The Scottish Parliament
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Ash Regan MSP
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Kate Forbes MSP
The Scottish Parliament
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9 March 2023

Dear Humza, Ash and Kate,

As potential leaders of the Scottish National Party, I am writing to request that you reaffirm your party's commitment to ending the use of cages for laying hens. The Scottish National Party manifesto states that "we will adopt the highest possible animal welfare standards, including shifting to entirely free range, woodland or barn chicken and egg production." The Scottish Government also [committed](#) to launching a consultation on this issue as far back as 2021. If you become the next leader of the SNP, will you fulfil this commitment and immediately begin the transition away from cruel and unnecessary cages?

There are approximately 12 million laying hens in cages in the UK and roughly 3 million are in Scotland¹. Cages "fail to properly meet the hens' physical or behavioural needs. They provide an unacceptably restrictive amount of space per bird [and] severely restrict many important physical activities... [which] is likely to lead to frustration, bone weakness and osteoporosis - clear indicators of poor welfare."²

¹ <https://www.fas.scot/livestock/poultry/>

² <https://www.ciwf.org.uk/news/2010/08/enriched-cages-condemned>

There is significant public, industry and political support for a legislative ban on cages due to these poor welfare outcomes. The Humane League UK, the RSPCA and the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation launched a petition on this issue which has over 100,000 signatories³. Nine major companies including Nestlé, Greggs and Nando's published a statement calling for the Government to do the right thing by banning cages for hens⁴ and the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, and the Green Party have also all made commitments to ban cages.

Despite avian flu and rising costs across Europe, Denmark recently joined Austria, Switzerland and Germany by banning cages for hens. The European Union is also progressing its plans to do the same. Yet while these countries, who are facing similar challenges to the UK, are banning the cruel practice of cages, the UK has yet to begin formal discussions with stakeholders about transitioning from cage systems. I urge you to launch this consultation as soon as possible so hens no longer have to live in the misery of cages.

Yours sincerely,



Amro Hussain
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The Humane League UK

³<https://tinyurl.com/288apmpm>

⁴https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zY4pKj4berL_g17vF2tcOllv7jndUpfF/view