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Y Gweinidog Newid  
Hinsawdd Minister for  
Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/11918/21

Chris Sherwood  
Chief Executive  
RSPCA



18 November 2021

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your letter of 28 October following our recent meeting.

### **Wildlife Law**

As part of our wider work on environmental governance, I have asked officials to scope out a possible review of environmental law in Wales to identify how it could be modernised to meet our ambition to tackle the climate and nature emergencies. RSPCA will have a key role in helping shape this reform but, as discussed, the limiting factor is to be able to find an appropriate legislative vehicle in this assembly term.

Animal welfare is a priority for the Welsh Government. Our recently published Programme for Government included a commitment to ban the use of snares in Wales. This builds on proposals in The Agriculture (Wales) Bill White Paper published last December. My intention is it should be contained in the Agriculture Bill which the Welsh Government will bring before the Senedd in the first year legislative programme.

### **Gene editing**

The issue of gene editing in animals raises serious ethical and welfare issues especially where cloning is used, and I understand cloning is a standard part of the production of gene-edited animals. There is no evidence disease resistant animals can reliably be produced via gene editing. As these diseases are, in the main, caused by overcrowding, improvements to their environment and diet should improve their health.

My colleague, the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, is in dialogue with the Food Standards Agency Wales, to work through the issues of labelling and transparency. If we were unable to prevent gene-edited products appearing on our shelves, the Welsh Government would like consumers in Wales to have a clear choice through clear labelling.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

### **Flood protection**

Thank you for the copy of the report you submitted in 2019. RSPCA officials are welcome to attend the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee sessions as an observer and may want to follow up on any points with the Chair.

### **Planning & Housing**

Thank you for sharing the advice of the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes. The level of detail in the advice suits a licensing scheme but covers too many non-planning issues. This is likely to confuse and dilute the key points planners need to understand and incorporate in their work. I would be happy to give further consideration to guidance from you that concentrates on the key points for planners; that is, locational considerations and overall physical characteristics of the buildings required in an animal care facility.

### **Fireworks**

We have raised awareness of the issue of fireworks and animal welfare, including signposts to official RSPCA advice, via our social media channels. My Communications officials have told me they would be happy to retweet RSPCA posts about this issue too.

Yours sincerely,



**Julie James AS/MS**

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Minister for Climate Change