

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-715
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06107/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

13

September 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 30 August regarding the petition you have received from the League Against Cruel Sports requesting a ban on the manufacture, sale and use of snares in Wales.

Snares are commonly used in the UK for pest control to restrain certain mammal species, prior to despatch. In Wales snares are used by farmers and gamekeepers mainly to control foxes. Snaring is used as a method of control because it is effective for foxes in locations and at times of the year when shooting is not possible, either because it would not be safe, or because of high cover which prevents foxes from being seen.

I recognise snares are capable of causing injury and death to target and non-target animals and this was shown in the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) research on the use of snares on an England and Wales basis which was published in 2012. Their report entitled 'Determining the Extent of Use and Humaneness of Snares in England and Wales' showed some of the animals caught through the use of snares were unnecessarily suffering through poor snaring practice.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales

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.

As such it was considered there was good reason to believe snaring practice would be improved if practitioners followed a Code of Practice and we published an improved Code of Best Practice on the Use of Snares in Fox Control in September 2015. This Code promotes best practice in the use of snares and places the welfare of animals at its core. It provides clear, practicable advice to snare operators for fox control, including how to comply with the law in terms of equipment and operations. Compliance with the Code will improve operator practice and help avoid the capture of non-target animals.

The Welsh Government worked with all interested parties to develop this Code and a number of the organisations involved have been actively promoting the Code amongst their members. They have run awareness raising and training events, with the aim on improving operator practice and animal welfare standards. Further sessions are planned at various venues across Wales.

My officials are now planning to meet with interested parties to discuss the Code of Practice to coincide with its 1st anniversary. The aim is to gather evidence on snare operational standards since the publishing of the Code and identify any further steps which can be undertaken to increase compliance with the Code and further improve animal welfare standards.

More generally, wildlife legislation is also being considered as part of an analysis of the Law Commission report on wildlife law reform. I am giving careful consideration to the Law Commission's recommendations. On snares, the Law Commission has recommended the operation and inspection of snares may benefit in the future from additional regulations. It is my view at this time the published Code of Practice provides clear guidance on the operation and inspection of snares.

Regards



Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs