

# Agenda – Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee

---

Meeting Venue:

Committee room 2 – Senedd  
and video Conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 7 February 2024

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

**Robert Donovan**

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

[SeneddEconomy@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddEconomy@senedd.wales)

## Hybrid

---

### Private–pre meeting

(09.15–09.30)

### Public meeting

(09.30–12.20)

#### 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions, and declarations of interest

(09.30)

#### 2 Papers to note

(09.30)

##### 2.1 The Official Controls (Extension of Transitional Periods) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2024

(Pages 1 – 2)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee  
to the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd – 31 January  
2024



### **3 Minister for Economy – Tata Steel session**

(09.30–10.25)

(Pages 3 – 22)

Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Economy, Welsh Government

Dickie Davis, Deputy Director – Special Projects and Construction, Welsh Government

Nigel Elias, Senior Industrial Transformation Manager – Steel, Welsh Government

Attached Documents:

Research brief

### **Break**

(10.25–10.30)

### **4 Tata Steel UK**

(10.30–11.15)

Rajesh Nair, Chief Executive, Tata Steel UK

Chris Jaques, Chief Human Resources Officer, Tata Steel UK

### **Break**

(11.15–11.30)

## **5 The Border Target Operating Model**

(11.30–12.15)

(Pages 23 – 37)

Baroness Lucy Neville–Rolfe DBE CMG, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office,  
UK Government

Tom Smith, Director – Borders Group at the Cabinet Office, UK Government

Attached Documents:

Research brief

Summary paper – Horticultural Trades Association (HTA)

## **6 Legislative Consent: Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill**

(12.15–12.20)

(Pages 38 – 53)

Attached Documents:

Legal advice note

Evidence paper – Farmers' Union of Wales (FUW)

Evidence paper – National Farmers' Union Cymru

Evidence paper – RSPCA Cymru

## **7 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting**

(12.20)

## **Private**

(12.20–12.25)

**8 Consideration of evidence following the meeting**  
(12.20-12.25)

Lesley Griffiths MS  
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd

31 January 2024

Dear Lesley

The Official Controls (Extension of Transitional Periods) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2024

Thank you for your letter of 10 January 2024 in respect of your decision to consent to the making of the above Regulations. My Committee considered the letter at its meeting of 15 January 2024.

It would be helpful for us to receive further information about the Regulations and other legislation required to implement the Border Target Operating Model (TOM). We would therefore be grateful if you could respond to the questions enclosed in the annex by 21 February 2024.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee.

Yours sincerely,

*Huw Irranca-Davies*

Huw Irranca-Davies  
Chair

## Annex

1. You state in your letter that the statutory instrument will be the first piece of legislation to implement the first milestone of the TOM from 31 January 2024. Could you provide further information in respect of legislation anticipated to be required to reach future milestones?
2. You state in your letter that it was not possible to give my Committee advance notice of your intention to consent to the Regulations as the statutory instrument was received during recess. Could you indicate whether you were given advance notice by the UK Government of the proposed scope of these regulations, and if so, when you were provided with this notice?
3. You have previously exchanged correspondence with my Committee on the relationship between official controls regulations and international obligations, particularly to WTO rules and the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. You raised concerns that the current position may be incompatible with the UK's obligations but that this was a temporary position and that the risks of this incompatibility did not fall to the Welsh Ministers. Could you provide an update on whether and how these regulations develop this position?

# Agenda Item 3

Document is Restricted

# Agenda Item 5

Document is Restricted



Document is Restricted

# Agenda Item 6

Document is Restricted

ETRA Committee Inquiry into the Animal Welfare  
(Livestock Exports) Bill

Written Evidence from the Farmers' Union of Wales

January 2024

1. The Farmers' Union of Wales was established in 1955 to protect and advance the interests of Welsh families who derive an income from agriculture. The Union has eleven offices distributed around Wales which provide a broad range of services for members. The FUW is a democratic organisation, with policies being formulated following consultation with its twelve County Executive Committees and nine Standing Committees.
2. The FUW is well aware of the commitment within the Conservative Party manifesto to ban live exports for slaughter and further fattening and the subsequent and imminent Legislative Consent Motion on the Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill. The FUW would reiterate that current transport regulations – which are underpinned by robust welfare science - are more than sufficient to ensure high standards of welfare during transit.
3. Rather than a blunt and overly prescriptive ban, the FUW would have preferred further discussion on measures such as the use of an evidence based exporter Code of Practice with a set of verifiable standards for the export of live animals for slaughter or fattening. The FUW continues to stress that the industry remains at the forefront of global animal health and welfare and the development of further practices to ensure high welfare standards in transit – whilst allowing the live animal trade to continue – would have been a more pragmatic approach.
4. Although live animal trade is an accepted and highly regulated practice, there have been no exports of live animals for fattening or slaughter since December 2020 because the relevant border control facilities which would be necessary post-Brexit are not in place. However, the UK remains a net exporter of lamb; with around 30% of UK lamb exported to the EU in 2019. The FUW remains extremely concerned about the retention of lambs within the UK market that would otherwise have been exported. Indeed, it is worthy of note that, due to ongoing demand for sheep in the EU, the government does not expect exports to stop permanently without the imposition of an export ban via a legislative procedure. Whilst it must be recognised that the UK sector is a low exporter of live animals - with around 0.2% of sheep and 0.02% of livestock and horses being exported to the EU - the trade in live animals remains a beneficial and important mechanism by which to showcase our domestic produce to an international market and it is essential that such doors are not closed to domestic producers operating in a global marketplace.
5. Live exports are an alternative to the export of whole and part carcasses and provide a method of meeting specific consumer demands, additional marketing options and provide an outlet for product at times of high domestic supply. Whilst the overwhelming preference of FUW members is for livestock

to be slaughtered within the UK, and branded accordingly, it is accepted that other countries and cultures offer an increased market demand for slightly different specifications. Moreover, due to UK farmers being predominantly grass-based livestock rearers, there is a natural post-summer 'glut' of stock ready for slaughter. Being able to export to European Countries such as France and Germany during this time, and during Religious Festivals, helps balance supply and demand dynamics.

6. Impact Assessment modelling conducted by Defra in 2021 for the UK Kept Animals Bill suggested losses for live exporters amounting to more than 50 million pounds over a 10 year period; with the impact largely expected to fall on sheep enterprises. The FUW believes such costings to be an underestimate of the actual financial burden imposed upon the sector. The FUW believes that further work is needed to identify the full costs of the ban and its consequence for the sector in order to more fully account for the additional administration, the loss of markets and the likelihood of costs disproportionately falling on small enterprises.
7. In addition to the above, the FUW continues to express concerns that the bill may cause oversupply in UK markets, resulting in lower demand and therefore lower prices for farmers.
8. The FUW also continues to stress that a government genuine in its commitment to improving the welfare of animals in transport should prioritise shortening the journey times between point of production and slaughter at a domestic level. Over the past three decades around 90% of slaughterhouses have been lost in Wales. Increases in Government imposed regulations and charges – such as increased charges for disposal of Animal By-Products - have generally accelerated the loss, leading not only to longer journeys for animals, but also a reduction in competition in the marketplace, less choice for producers and consumers and greater exposure to potential losses of Welsh levy - as seen following the closure of Welsh Country Foods at Gaerwen in 2013. The ethos around the Conservative manifesto pledge to reduce journey times is accepted, but there should equally be a full and earnest commitment to support more small and local abattoirs.
9. Given the above, it is worthy of note that the government has recently made provisions of around £4 million in capital grant funding to support smaller abattoirs in England to improve productivity and welfare standards and encourage the adoption of new technologies. Such funding recognises the pivotal role played by such businesses in shortening journey times and providing a route to market for rare and native breeds. The FUW would

welcome discussions on how such support could be provided in a Welsh context.

10. The FUW would use this opportunity to strongly assert that any moves to ban UK live animal exports must ensure equivalent standards in trade deals to protect UK farmers from an asymmetric and unfair playing field. Indeed closing the door to domestic exportation whilst simultaneously opening the door to live animal exports from far flung trading partners is the epitome of hypocrisy and must be avoided. Furthermore, it must be fully recognised that the UK - Australia trade deal will now allow the importation of vast volumes of food produced from animals that are moved in conditions that would already be deemed illegal within the UK. The 2019 Conservative manifesto promised that *'in all of our trade negotiations, we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards'*, however the UK Government chose not to enshrine those standards in the Agriculture Act 2020, nor in the recent Australia trade deal negotiations which agreed to massively increase tariff free access for Australian beef and lamb with negligible guarantees on welfare standards. Nearly half of Australia's cattle and sheep live exports will be travelling over 9000 miles by sea, under far lower welfare standards than applied domestically. By tilting the playing field in favour of our competitors the government is off-shoring its responsibility with regards to animal welfare.
11. The FUW remains against excessively long journeys for livestock but remains confident that our current welfare standards, coupled with the fact we have relatively close export markets, cements our place as world leaders when it comes to animal movement welfare standards. This is evidenced by the fact the UK is currently the highest ranked G7 country in the World Animal's Protection Index.
12. The FUW notes that an overarching ethos of the bill is to prevent the export of live animals to unknown and 'likely lower' welfare slaughterhouse conditions. The FUW is yet to see the production of any real evidentiary support relating to this claim. It is worthy of note that the vast majority of live exports from the UK are destined for the EU or Ireland. For example, in 2018, 96% of sheep and 86% of pigs were 'exported' to Ireland. The FUW believes that the proposed ban is therefore rooted in politics and is simply symbolic, as opposed to being founded in evidence which would lead to real and demonstrable improvements in welfare.

Dear ETRA Committee

**Senedd Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee - Legislative Consent: Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill**

NFU Cymru champions Welsh agriculture and represents farmers throughout Wales and across all sectors. NFU Cymru's vision is for a productive, profitable, and progressive farming sector producing world renowned climate-friendly food in an environment and landscape that provides habitats for our nature to thrive with Welsh food and farming delivering economic, environmental, cultural, and social benefits for all the people of Wales whilst meeting our ambition for net zero agriculture by 2040.

We are pleased to be able to provide the Committee with this submission in order to help inform its scrutiny of the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill currently before the UK Parliament

1. The United Kingdom and Wales has some of the highest standards of animal welfare in the world and it is one of the largest livestock producers in Europe, worth some £14.7 billion to the UK economy each year<sup>1</sup>. Protecting livestock during all stages of the production cycle, including during any transport, consignment for slaughter and further rearing, is a top priority for Wales' farmers.
2. Compared to the export of fresh and frozen meat, live export from GB is a small but nonetheless important component of the sector. In 2022, the UK exported a total value of £751million live animals<sup>2</sup>.
3. Very few of NFU Cymru's members would be in a position where they arrange for the live export (for slaughter) of the animals which they produce, rather it would typically be the purchaser of such animals who might do so, often aggregating an export consignment of animals from a number of different primary producers.
4. Although comparatively few Welsh animals are exported live, and typically our members would not themselves be directly involved with the live export of animals, the fact that there has been a live export market has been of considerable importance to the sector.
5. The fact is that live exports of finished animals for slaughter provides much needed competition in the marketplace, something which is of particular relevance when livestock numbers are high on the domestic market (peak season) and market prices are under pressure.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nfuonline.com/archive?treeid=104972>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/bulletins/uktrade/may2023#explore-uk-trade-in-goods-country-by-commodity-data-for-2022>

6. Imports of New Zealand and Australian lamb during the British peak season can reduce domestic demand and price. Maintaining the ability to export live animals boosts competition and supports farm gate prices.
7. Despite the fact that the UK and Welsh Governments want farmers to secure more of their returns from the marketplace, to realise these enhanced returns the markets must be there in the first place, and with the closing off of the export avenue and important outlet for Welsh farmers has been closed off.
8. Since leaving the European Union, the UK has not exported any live animals for slaughter due to the lack of EU Border Control Posts approved for, or accepting, live animal exports at any UK facing port on the north European coast. Furthermore, outside of the EU's single market it is of course open to the UK government to legislate to end live exports for slaughter and/or fattening if it so wishes.
9. The majority of UK and Welsh live exports are breeding animals. Our high quality and high genetic merit stock is in demand across the EU, and access to this market for breeding is critical. Much of this trade would resume if a Border Control Post were established on routes via Dover passenger ferries.
10. NFU Cymru is disappointed by the introduction of The Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill at the end of 2023 by the UK Government. We believe that the introduction of such a ban on live exports is misguided.
11. The Animal Welfare Bill would not prevent live animals destined for slaughter in the UK coming into Wales from Ireland via the ports in Holyhead, Fishguard and Milford Haven. Whilst there is no such traffic in live animals at the present time, there is nothing to prevent it potentially happening in future.
12. Further to this, the Animal Welfare Bill also comes at a time when the UK Government has either concluded or is pursuing trade negotiations with countries which export large numbers of animals for fattening and/or slaughter and have lower standards of animal welfare in their production systems.
13. Instead of the ban outlined in the Animal Welfare Bill, NFU Cymru would instead advocate instead for a live export assurance scheme to ensure our high standards of welfare continue across borders. This would have benefits including:
  - Protecting livestock during transport for different purposes, including consignment for slaughter and further rearing, which is relevant to sheep, beef, and dairy farmers.
  - Providing assurance for all aspects of the process from farm or collection centre to point of slaughter.
14. There has been a huge amount of research on welfare in transport and studies consistently show the length of journey is not a key factor in protecting welfare at slaughter. It follows that the crossing of a land or sea border itself is not an objective factor to consider when safeguarding welfare.



15. The following areas are agreed by experts to be the most important welfare factors when it comes to the transportation of animals.
- Stockmanship at key contact points such as loading and unloading,
  - Quality of the journey (which includes smooth movements and stable environments constant ideal temperatures)
  - Access to clean safe drinking water
  - Rest periods
  - Grouping animals appropriate to their species, age, size etc.
16. There is extensive guidance on the Welsh Government website as to the regulations governing the transport of a range of different species of farm animals<sup>3</sup>
17. The rules in the Welsh regulation requires everyone transporting animals on any journey to ensure that:
- No one shall transport animals, or cause them to be transported, in a way likely to cause them injury or undue suffering.
  - Journey times are kept to a minimum.
  - The animals are fit to travel.
  - Those handling animals are trained and competent.
  - The vehicle and its loading & unloading facilities are designed, constructed, and maintained to avoid injury and suffering and to ensure the safety of the animals.
  - Water, feed, and opportunity to rest are given to the animals as appropriate and sufficient floor space and height is available in the transport.
18. With the statutory safeguards outlined in place, and the proposed development of a live export assurance scheme to ensure that our high standards of animal welfare can continue across borders, NFU Cymru believes that our farmers should be able to sell into the live export market in order to stimulate competition for our top quality livestock and to ensure that they have access to the best paying markets, be that at home or abroad.
19. We trust that this submission clearly sets out NFU Cymru's position with regard to the live export of farm animals.

---

<sup>3</sup> [Animal welfare | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)



# Briefing document

---

## Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill

On December 18, the Welsh Government laid a [Legislative Consent Memorandum](#) (LCM) recommending that the Senedd supports proposals for a ban on the exportation of livestock to be applied to Wales. The confirmation of the Welsh Government's support for such a ban is very much welcome, following decades of campaigning for such action by the RSPCA. The [Animal Welfare \(Livestock Exports\) Bill](#) is a UK Government bill that seeks to create a new legal framework, prohibiting the export of relevant livestock for the purpose of slaughter or fattening for slaughter. The bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons in December, with the third reading having taken place on January 15 - it will now be passed to the House of Lords for further scrutiny. Meanwhile, the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee have both been asked to consider and report to the Senedd on the bill by March 15.

### The need for a ban on live exports

Due to the significant animal welfare concerns around live exports, the RSPCA has been calling for a ban on this practice for more than 50 years. A UK-wide ban on live exports was previously unachievable as our membership of the European Union coincided with a requirement for free trade between members. Now that we have left the European Union, the UK Government has brought forward the aforementioned bill to end the future exportation of livestock for fattening and slaughter, with this being among the commitments made in the UK Conservatives' 2019 [manifesto](#).

The UK's current rules on the live exportation of animals date from 2005 and are implemented through devolved legislation such as the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Transport) (Wales) Order 2007. The rules set out the conditions for the commercial transport of animals and state that animals should not be injured or subject to unnecessary suffering while being transported. Specific limits on journey times for animals - on land and at sea - are also set out in legislation, alongside the authorisation process for transporters, vehicles and ships. The maximum journey times permitted vary according to species and the conditions of the transporting vehicle. As it stands, up to 19 hours is allowed for unweaned animals such as calves, 24 hours for horses and pigs and 29 hours for sheep and cattle. However, after these periods, if the animals are provided with a 24 hour rest period, the journey time is reset until the destination is reached.

The number of farm animals exported from the UK to Europe for slaughter or further fattening has slowly declined since 2000 - falling from 752,000 to 44,300 in 2016<sup>1</sup>. Previously, the majority of farmed animals exported from the UK were sheep, along with a smaller number of cattle, pigs, goats and equines. However, the exportation of livestock from the UK has not happened since the UK Government first announced a prohibition on this practice in 2020. A lack of required control posts at Calais has effectively blocked the only route that was previously used to export animals directly from the UK to Europe. However, this could change if different routes were chosen or if control posts were introduced at Calais. With no ban on the exportation of livestock for fattening and slaughter purposes in place as it stands, this cruel and unnecessary practice could be legally recommenced at any time. Granting legislative consent to

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6912543/>

a ban on live exports would offer an extra layer of protection to countless farm animals in the years to come while further demonstrating Wales' commitment to animal welfare.

### **Animal welfare concerns around live exports**

Long journey times pose several animal welfare risks such as acute stress, dehydration, exhaustion and injury. Animals can experience a range of problems as a result of being transported for long periods in sub-optimal conditions as a result of the use of inappropriate stocking densities with inadequate ventilation/temperature control systems and unsuitable feeding and watering facilities. Live exports involve complex journeys and can be associated with very long transport times, which is particularly problematic as evidence indicates that animal welfare worsens as journey times increase. According to a recently published research briefing on the [Animal Welfare \(Livestock Exports\) Bill](#), the shortest direct to slaughter export journey from GB to continental Europe in 2018 was a journey time of 18 hours. Most domestic journeys to slaughter in the UK are significantly shorter and therefore pose far less risk to animal welfare. Some journeys involving the export of live animals from the UK to Europe have been known to take up to 96 hours, during which time animals could be suffering both physically and mentally.

Other welfare concerns include the insufficient enforcement of existing rules once the animals leave the UK and the possibility that animals can be exported to countries where animal welfare standards are lower than the UK and exposed to practices that would be illegal here. Because of this, the RSPCA strongly believes that animals should only be transported when necessary and that a ban on live exports is both well-needed and long overdue.

### **Conclusion**

The RSPCA strongly believes that all farm animals should be slaughtered as close to where they are reared as possible, resulting in any export trade being carcass-only. Being subject to long journeys in cramped conditions has the potential to cause animals to become mentally exhausted, physically injured, dehydrated and stressed, directly contradicting the Welsh Government's ambition to ensure that every animal has a good quality of life.

A ban on live exports was previously among the commitments made in the withdrawn Kept Animals Bill - a piece of legislation which had strong cross-party support in the Senedd. A focus on the welfare of farmed animals is among the Welsh Government's relevant commitments with the introduction of mandatory CCTV in abattoirs imminent. The introduction of the Sustainable Farming Scheme in 2025 also has the potential to reward farmers who adhere to high standards of animal health and welfare, with the Welsh Government having committed to restricting the use of cages for farmed animals too. The LCM relevant to a ban on live exports therefore provides an important opportunity for the Welsh Government and Members of the Senedd to further demonstrate their support for improving the lives of farm animals in Wales.

As animal welfare is a devolved matter, specific decisions relating to the enforcement of a ban on live exports - for example, giving powers of entry, inspection, search and seizure in relation to live animal export offences to a particular agency - will be made by the Welsh Government. With the Welsh Government having indicated its support for a ban on live exports and that it is appropriate for all relevant provisions to be made in the UK Government's bill, we strongly encourage the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee to support the LCM that has been laid before the Senedd.

**Recommendation: To prevent the future suffering of farm animals as a result of long journeys in cramped conditions, we strongly recommend that the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee supports the LCM on live exports.**