29 March 2019

Dear Edward

I am writing to let you know that new guidance for the welfare of meat chickens and meat breeding chickens will be published online on Monday 1 April. This guidance will replace the current code of practice for the welfare of meat chickens, which was published in 2005.

The meat chickens guidance closely follows the wording of the Defra code of practice on meat chickens which was approved by the Farm Animal Welfare Committee and published last year. However, it also includes some changes as suggested by our own stakeholders.

An SSI will be laid in the spring to amend the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010 so that the obligations currently on owners and stockkeepers in relation to codes will be extended to this new guidance. A notice to revoke the existing code of practice for the welfare of meat chickens will be laid at the same time. The 2010 Regulations will have to be amended each time we publish a new guidance document on the welfare of a farmed animal, and this will therefore give Parliament the opportunity to scrutinise the guidance before it comes fully into effect.

MAIRI GOUGEON