Dear Edward

I am writing to let you know that new guidance for the welfare of laying hens will be published this week. This guidance will replace the current code of practice for the welfare of laying hens, which was published in 2012.

The new laying hens guidance is based on the new Defra code of practice for the welfare of laying hens, which was published in 2018. However, my officials have worked closely with industry and animal welfare stakeholders to draft our own comprehensive guidance for Scotland, which encourages good practice that, in some areas, goes beyond the minimum requirements of the legislation. The new guidance has been approved by the UK Animal Welfare Committee.

An SSI will be laid later in the year to amend the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010 so that the obligations currently on owners and stockkeepers in relation to codes of practice will be extended to this new guidance. A notice to revoke the existing code of practice for the welfare of laying hens will be laid at the same time.

MAIRI GOUGEON