



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01797

Name of petitioner

Kirsten MacQuarrie

Petition title

End live chick culling

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ban the maceration of newborn male chicks and set a deadline to end all live chick culling in the egg industry.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have contacted the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform.

Petition background information

Male chicks in the UK egg industry are currently killed using gas or maceration: while gas is the more common method, maceration (mechanical destruction) remains legal. I understand all plants in the UK have at least one macerator. This killing typically takes place on the first and only day of life for male chicks, occurring at an immense scale – the charity Animal Aid estimates that 30 million chicks are killed in the UK every year – and it is the case for all newborn male birds, whether they are hatched on free-range facilities or not.

In January 2020, France announced that it would be outlawing the practice of culling the egg industry's day-old male chicks by 2021. Last year, the German Federal Administrative Court also ruled that this practice could continue only on a temporary basis, and in Switzerland the act of macerating male chicks has been banned since the beginning of 2020. In the US, the trade group United Egg Producers has also committed to 2020 being the final year of live chick culling, as the technology available to the egg industry advances beyond the need for this practice.

Researchers from around the world have spent the last decade identifying ways in which the sex of chicks can be determined while still only eggs. Once this is in place within the industry it will eradicate the need for any live chicks to be killed at all.

In response to my letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, the Scottish Government advised the killing of surplus chicks which are

Land Reform, the Scottish Government advised the killing of surplus chicks which are less than 72 hours old and embryos in hatchery waste is regulated by Schedule 11 of The Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995 ("the 1995 Regulations"). Under these regulations mechanical apparatus must be used by a skilled operator and be designed so as to produce immediate death without any unnecessary suffering caused to the chicks. The Scottish Government noted it is aware of ongoing research into methods of determining the sex of a chick prior to hatching, however the methods currently available are not viable on an industrial scale.

It is deeply disappointing to me that, despite often being referred to as a 'nation of animal lovers', this animal welfare issue is not being taken seriously: in the short-term, by banning maceration as a brutal and undignified method of culling that carries a particularly high risk for malpractice, suffering and cruelty, and in the long-term by prioritising research for in-egg sexing technology.

I believe there is an opportunity for Scotland to lead the way in protecting newborn male chicks as part of its responsibilities for animal welfare matters.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/endchickcull>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

10

Closing date for collecting signatures online

10 / 03 / 2020

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Do you believe that the mechanical destruction of live newborn birds is acceptable in modern-day Scotland?

Do you want Scotland to be at the forefront of best practice for animal welfare within the United Kingdom?