

Franck David
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament, TG.01
EDINBURGH, EH99 1SP
By email franck.david@scottish.parliament.uk

5 August 2008

Dear Mr David,

The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom and represents over 11,000 members. Our chief interest is to protect and promote the interests of the veterinary profession in this country and we therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the veterinary profession, be they animal health, animal welfare, public health or employment concerns.

We are pleased to respond to Petition PE1124 which calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 to introduce provisions to ban the manufacture, sale, possession and use of all snares.

Advocates for Animals first raised the issue of snaring with BVA in September 2007 and since then the BVA Ethics and Welfare Group (EWG) has been seeking to obtain further information on the practice of snaring in order to give the matter proper scientific and ethical consideration. The BVA EWG met with James Kirkwood, Chairman of the Independent Working Group on Snares, in November 2007 to discuss the conclusions of their report. As a result of this meeting the BVA contacted Defra to ascertain the progression of their research into the use and humaneness of snares in England and Wales, which is due to end in June 2009. Following a response from Defra the Group felt that they did not yet have sufficient scientific evidence to draw a meaningful conclusion on the matter.

The BVA EWG has been quoted by the Scottish Government as commenting that "in some circumstances snaring might be the least inhumane method where control is seen as necessary". Although not official BVA policy, this statement represents the initial deliberations of the BVA EWG regarding the use of snares. In the meantime, we remain supportive of the findings of the report of the Independent Working Group on Snares.

The BVA is concerned with the potential damage caused by misplaced and misused snares and the risks to non-target species. We welcome the discussions within the Scottish Government on this issue.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Peter C Jinman
Chairman, BVA Ethics and Welfare Group