



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Angus MacDonald MSP

Falkirk East Constituency

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26 February 2015
Ref: AMD/LA

Dear Mr Davenport,

Thank you for your email of 25th February regarding the Review of the Exotic Pet Trade. The Scottish Government takes the welfare of all animals, including exotic pets, very seriously.

We understand that there is an increasing demand across Europe, including in Scotland, to keep exotic, non-domesticated animals as pets, which can lead to potential harm to both animal and human health and welfare.

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead, has committed to a review of the trade and importations of exotic animals for the pet trade in Scotland following discussions with animal welfare charity OneKind.

Mr Lochhead is keen to review current legislation and explore the effect tighter controls on exotic pet ownership could have.

Existing legislation in Scotland already provides for the protection of the welfare of exotic pets, forbids the release of non-native animals and has the power to ban the sale or keeping of certain invasive species. However, we recognise that there may be more that can be done to protect exotic animals that are brought into the country for the pet trade.

It is ultimately the responsibility of individual pet owners to ensure that they have the knowledge, facilities and resources to care for any pet before taking it on, and to make every effort to purchase pets from a responsible breeder. However, the Scottish Government is planning to conduct a wider review of pet welfare, including

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the breeding and sale of animals for the pet trade, in order to explore further options. The positive list approach recommended in OneKind's 'Pet Origins' report will be considered as part of this review.

Excellent progress has already been made in tackling the issues surrounding the sale of pets online by the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG), which has implemented minimum standards for websites advertising animals for sale. Specifically, the Scottish Government has worked with the PAAG to set up a system for reporting illegal or inappropriate website advertisements in Scotland.

PAAG published a report in September 2014 that showed that across the UK over 100,000 internet adverts contravening its guidelines had been removed in the last six months.

Further options to deal with online sales will be explored in the review.

I have already made enquiries regarding the details of the consultation and would be happy to inform you when I receive a response so you can submit your views and encourage your members to do likewise.

I trust that this response will be helpful, however please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angus MacDonald', written in a cursive style.

Angus MacDonald MSP
SNP – Falkirk East Constituency