



**Craig Whittaker MP**

**CALDER VALLEY**

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### **Gamebird battery cages**

Thank you for contacting me about the welfare of gamebirds.

I understand your concerns on this issue. Both I and the Government are committed to the highest standards of animal welfare, so I am glad to tell you that the Animal Welfare Act 2006 already makes it clear that gamebirds must not be caused any unnecessary suffering.

A Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds Reared for Sporting Purposes was drawn up based on research carried out by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, advised by a working group that included animal welfare organisations such as the RSPCA. Stock-keepers who fail to follow it could be found to have committed an offence. The Code specifies that these birds must:

- 1. have an environment appropriate to their species, age and the purpose for which they are being kept, including adequate heating, lighting, shelter, ventilation and resting areas;*
- 2. have ready access to fresh water and an appropriate diet to maintain growth, health and vigour;*
- 3. be provided with appropriate space and facilities to ensure the avoidance of stress and to allow the exhibition of normal behaviour patterns;*
- 4. be provided with company of their own kind as appropriate for the species concerned;*
- 5. be adequately protected from pain, suffering, injury, or disease. Should any of these occur a rapid response is required, including diagnosis, remedial action and, where applicable, the correct use of medication.*

The full Code can be found at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) by searching on the term 'Gamebirds'.

These rules are enforced by the Animal and Plant Health Agency which carries out routine welfare inspections and investigates complaints; prosecutions can be brought where necessary.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP