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Graeme Dey MSP

Convener

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

Committee

Room T.340

Scottish Parliament

Edinburgh

EH99 1SP

4 October 2016

Dear Graeme,

I am writing to inform you, and your Committee members, of four decisions that are being announced today in relation to animal health and welfare.

Firstly, to provide you with information on the timetabling of the Bill that Scottish Ministers announced in the Programme for Government 2016-17, to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses. It is expected that a Bill will be introduced to Parliament in May 2017 with a view to legislation coming in to force the following year.

Secondly, following a full public consultation process, the Scottish Ministers have agreed to permit the shortening, by up to a third in length, of the tails of Spaniel and Hunt Point Retriever puppies that are likely to be used for working in their later lives. This will allow individual veterinary surgeons to use their professional judgement about whether shortening the tail of a puppy is justified by the possible avoidance of more serious injury in later life.

Thirdly, again following full public consultation, the Scottish Ministers have agreed that tight regulations on the use of electronic training collars for animals will be introduced, to permit the use of any collars that can cause aversive sensations (i.e. electric pulse, sonic and spray collars) only under the guidance of an approved trainer or veterinary surgeon. The format and content of these regulations will be determined after further discussion with stakeholders from the pet industry, animal training and animal welfare sectors.

Fourthly, to inform you that the Scottish Government will review the offences and penalties under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. Preliminary discussions on this matter have been held with those tasked with the enforcement of animal welfare legislation, and proposals for future public consultation will be drafted in due course.

I look forward to working with you as work progresses on these initiatives; and I hope this indication of intentions is helpful to you.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roseanna Cunningham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Roseanna Cunningham