



# ANIMAL CONCERN

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Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Rt. Hon. David Miliband MP,  
Secretary of State,  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs,  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR

Dear Minister,

I write following the court case in which two workers at a Bernard Matthews intensive turkey farm have been found guilty of cruelty to animals by throwing live turkeys to each other and then hitting them with batons wielded like baseball bats.

This case resulted from undercover filming by investigators from Hillside Animal Sanctuary. Indeed undercover investigators from Hillside and other groups have probably brought about more successful prosecutions than those agencies whose remit involves policing the livestock farming industry. State Vets and local authority Environmental Health/Trading Standards departments are overstretched and simply do not have the resources to properly protect farm animals.

It would be possible, through a minor amendment to legislation, to make it far easier to police intensive livestock farms and protect animals from cruelty and neglect. If intensive livestock farmers were obliged to install CCTV or webcams in their premises animal welfare inspectors could check on conditions from the comfort of their office. This would not be a substitute for site visits but it would mean farms could be inspected several times a year instead of once every several years.

Technological advancements have made the equipment required inexpensive and simple to install and operate. Security passwords could restrict access to the proper authorities and to farm managers who would find it a valuable tool in maintaining high standards of animal welfare and product hygiene. The best farms would be proud to leave their webcams open to public view to allow consumers to see the conditions under which their food is reared.

Simply having monitoring equipment, with hard drive storage and playback, would deter acts of cruelty such as those captured almost every time an undercover team visits a farm.

I urge you to take this idea seriously as it would improve animal welfare and food hygiene and greatly increase the efficiency of the enforcing agencies while saving public money.

Yours sincerely,

John F Robins,  
Campaigns Consultant