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To All MPs representing Scottish Constituencies.

Dear Member of Parliament,

Animal Concern has supporters in every Scottish Parliamentary constituency and it is on behalf of those supporters that I write to you this morning to ask you to attend the debate in Parliament later today on the subject of sentient slaughter of animals.

The RSPCA and the British Veterinary Association have grave concerns over the welfare of animals slaughtered without pre-stunning. Unstunned animals suffer extreme pain and stress before and during the slaughter process.

If animals are going to be killed for food the very least we can do for them is ensure that they are spared as much pain and suffering as we can and the very best way to do that is to make it a strict legal requirement that animals are stunned to complete unconsciousness prior to having their throats slit and bled to death. It is important to stress that animals should be stunned to complete unconsciousness and not subject to light stunning which immobilises animals to make them easier to handle but leaves them fully sentient to pain and aware of their surroundings and what is happening to them.

Some religions are split over whether or not their faith requires animals to be fully conscious when they are bled to death. Different factions within the same religions say that it is OK to pre-stun animals so long as specific prayers are said while others insist that animals should not be stunned.

For decades Animal Concern has opposed animal suffering no matter what the reason. We believe it is just as wrong for animals to be cruelly treated in Christian festivals in some Europe countries as it is to slaughter fully conscious animals to meet the desires of other religious groups. Suffering is suffering no matter what reasons are put forward to justify it.

We urge you to support calls for all animals to be given the benefit of full stunning prior to slaughter.

It may not be strictly relevant to today's debate but recent undercover investigations have yet again revealed cases of deliberate cruelty to animals by workers in abattoirs which carry out unstunned slaughter and abattoirs where animals are fully stunned before being killed. In addition to banning slaughter of sentient animals we urge you to consider the introduction of CCTV to monitor welfare of animals at time of slaughter in all abattoirs.

Not only would this encourage workers to employ the highest welfare standards it would allow hard-pressed Government and local authority animal welfare and food hygiene officers to make additional "visits" to abattoirs simply by typing in a password on their office computer.

On behalf of Animal Concern supporters in your constituency I hope you will attend today's debate and speak up on behalf of the many millions of animals and birds killed in British slaughterhouses every year.

Yours sincerely,

John F. Robins,
Secretary to Animal Concern