



Mabon ap Gwynfor MS

Mabon.ap.Gwynfor@senedd.wales

1 November 2022

Dear Mabon,

Please find below the answer to your Written Question.

Mabon ap Gwynfor (Dwyfor Meirionnydd): What assessment has the Welsh Government made of why dog attacks cost farmers four times more in Wales than in Scotland last year? (WQ85942)

Mabon ap Gwynfor (Dwyfor Meirionnydd): What consideration has the Welsh Government given to replicating New Zealand's policy of requiring dogs to be trained with e-collars before they enter conservation areas where they might put other animals in danger? (WQ85943)

Lesley Griffiths: We take the issue of dog attacks on livestock very seriously. The costs, financially and emotionally, for those who own or find dead and injured livestock are wholly unacceptable, as are the animal welfare implications. The Countryside Code, published by Natural Resources Wales, provides clear guidance on the responsibility of dog owners to keep their dogs under effective control. Dogs should be kept on a lead or in sight at all times and owners should be confident their dogs will return on command.

We are working with the UK Government on introducing further safeguards through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. The Bill proposes to repeal and replace the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 with a new set of provisions to address the issue of dogs attacking or worrying livestock. It aims to broaden the definition of livestock which are afforded protection and the areas in which the powers apply. As currently drafted, it also incorporates a range of ancillary orders that the Courts may make to provide effective tools to address reoffending in the most serious cases of livestock worrying.

Animals should be protected from pain, injury and distress. This is why we introduced the Animal Welfare (Electronic Collars) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to prevent the use of electronic training/impulse collars on dogs and cats. The regulations ban the use of any collar that is capable of administering an electric shock to a dog or cat.

In 2015, the Welsh Government commissioned an independent review of evidence in relation to the welfare implications for dogs and cats arising from the use of electric collars. The review considered the potential benefits and efficacy of electric collars against animal welfare concerns in order to reach conclusions about whether the benefits outweighed the animal welfare costs. The review is available on the Welsh Government website: [electronic-collars-in-dogs-and-cats-review-of-welfare-implications.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/electronic-collars-in-dogs-and-cats-review-of-welfare-implications.pdf).

In relation to the question regarding cost to farmers in Scotland compared to Wales, is not possible to make direct comparisons between these statistics because of the substantial differences in sheep and human demographics and patterns of farming in the respective countries.

We are aware of the New Zealand models used specifically in conservation settings. Wales has banned the use of electronic collars and I have no intention of revisiting this policy position or reviewing the regulations at this time.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd