



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

**The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
From the Secretary of State for Environment, Food  
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*Mr*

*Dear Keith,*

Thank you for your further letter of 20 February about the #BetterDealForAnimals campaign and the government's plans to enshrine animal sentience in UK law.

I can reassure you that leaving the European Union will not lead to a lowering of our high animal welfare standards. The EU Withdrawal Act 2018 already ensures that existing EU standards will be maintained once we leave the EU and we are actively exploring options for strengthening our animal welfare standards after we have left.

As I mentioned in my previous letter, the government is already committed to making any necessary changes to the law to ensure that animal sentience is recognised in domestic law after we leave the EU. I was delighted to have had the opportunity to give a speech at the Parliamentary Reception for the launch of the #BetterDealForAnimals campaign on 26 February. I was pleased to attend this important event and hear from the many charities involved about how we can maintain and enhance our reputation as a leader on animal welfare after we leave the EU. Defra officials are currently engaging closely with a number of animal welfare stakeholders as we develop our proposals on animal sentience.

Thank you again for your letter.

With every good wish,

*Yours,  
Michael*

**Michael Gove**

