

PRESS RELEASE

Attention Newsdesks
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Immediate Release 11

SNP FEARS FOR LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT

The SNP says the need to provide first class abattoir facilities in the Western Isles is greater now than ever before. Their assertion comes hard on the heels of European moves which could see animals unable to be shipped across in the Minch in winds of Force 5 or over. The proposals, yet to be finalised, aim to enhance the welfare of animals during transportation but have set alarm bells ringing in the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Outlining their concerns, SNP MEP, Ian Hudghton said:

“The European Scientific Committee on Animal Welfare and Health has published proposals which would prevent the carrying of livestock by sea in wind speeds of force 5 or above. This might be fairly easy for farmers in Southern Europe to comply with, given the more balmy conditions generally found in the Mediterranean. But it will create severe difficulties for Scotland’s island communities given the notorious shipping routes round our shores.

While the SNP supports measures designed to protect animals in transit, we feel very strongly that the EU must ensure that the movement of livestock is not impeded by unworkable restrictions. My Scottish Parliament colleague, Winnie Ewing MSP has been in liaison with Councillors in the Western Isles and it is clear from our discussions that suitable additional abattoir facilities in the islands would, at least in part, address the difficulties we can see looming on the horizon.

I have therefore tabled the attached Parliamentary Question to the Commission, while Winnie is raising the matter with Ross Finnie in Edinburgh.”

Commenting on the SNP’s actions, Winnie Ewing MSP said:

“We would hope that both the Commission and the Scottish Executive will see our proposal as a positive example of “joined up thinking” and that both Brussels and Edinburgh will provide whatever assistance the Comhairle nan Eilan Siar requires to ensure that Western Isles farmers continue to get their produce to the markets of mainland Scotland and beyond.”

ENDS