

PE2130/F: Make it illegal to remove all the hair from a horse's tail

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity written submission, 8 December 2025

Thank you for your letter of 1 December 2025 regarding PE2130: Make it illegal to remove all the hair from a horse's tail.

The Committee will wish to note that following discussions with equine stakeholders, it has been agreed that the existing Equine Code will now be replaced with Equine Guidance. Unlike Codes, Guidance does not require to be laid before and approved by resolution of the Scottish Parliament and is therefore much easier to keep up to date. This ensures that evolving equine practices, changes to statute etc. can quickly be written into Guidance and published in a timely manner.

Regarding the timeline for publication of the new Equine Guidance, I can advise that the Scottish Government is aiming to publish it in early March 2026. In terms of where this work has got to, the Equine Working Group responsible for drafting the new Guidance is currently engaged in a final round of consultation with key equine stakeholders to essentially road test the Guidance and obtain feedback. Following this stage, final amendments will be made where necessary, at which point the Guidance should be ready for final formatting and publication.

Responding to the issues raised by Animal Concern on the practice of trimming/shaving an equine's tail, I can advise that this practice will be addressed in the new Equine Guidance. I can also confirm that the Scottish Government has no plans at this time to legislate to prohibit the removal of the hair on an equine's tail.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

JIM FAIRLIE