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(Local Environment, Marine and Animal Welfare)  
Defra  
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### **Welfare of farmed animals at slaughter and clear labelling of meat**

I note that the in the Defra responses to the recommendations of the FAWC report on the welfare of farmed animals at slaughter, Recommendations 197, 201 and 203 were not accepted, and Recommendation 210 only partially accepted, in deference to the rights of religious groups. While, as humanists, we would put animal welfare above religious requirements (particularly when there is some debate within religious groups as to whether stunning is acceptable), we understand that this is a sensitive issue.

However, we feel that the Government should be equally committed to the rights of those of us who, because of our ethical and philosophical beliefs, do not wish to consume meat that has been inhumanely treated while alive. Much halal and kosher meat finds its way onto the open market where it is not identified as such. Many of our members are concerned about animal welfare and anxious to avoid needlessly cruel slaughterhouse practices, but current practice and regulations make that difficult, if not impossible.

The Defra response did promise that: "As part of the wider process of review and consultation on labelling meat, the Government will work with consumer and industry groups to consider whether this problem can be addressed through a voluntary system of labeling..."

I am writing, on behalf of the British Humanist Association, to ask about the progress of this initiative. Has work or consultation on this begun? May we contribute in any way or be part of the consultation, as the principal organisation representing the interests of the large and growing population of ethically concerned but non-religious people living in the UK?

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