

# Shechita UK

James Paice MP  
Minister of State  
Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

14<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Dear Mr Paice,

As you know, Shechita UK represents the Jewish community on the issue of religious slaughter for food and we were therefore deeply troubled to read the comments that you made at the recent conference of the British Meat Processors Association.

You have been clear in the past that you believe that religious slaughter is inhumane, this despite a wealth of scientific evidence, cited by some of the world's foremost authorities on animal welfare, which contradicts that view.

However, successive Governments, including this one as well as our own Prime Minister have recognised that religious communities should be free to slaughter animals for food, considering at every stage the importance of animal welfare, in accordance with their religious beliefs.

You have personally spoken on a number of occasions about 'respect' for religious communities in this regard. However, your unqualified references to the 'immense distress and pain' that you say animals 'must be suffering' as a result of religious slaughter, displays a lack of any such respect.

Animal welfare is the fundamental tenet of Shechita and a cornerstone of the Jewish faith. It is therefore difficult to convey how offensive it is to hear anybody suggest that we inflict any form of unnecessary suffering on an animal. It is particularly difficult to hear it from a farmer who must have seen the failings of secular slaughter with regard to the handling of animals prior to slaughter as well as the unacceptable levels of mis-stunning during the process, not to mention the obvious pain caused by the stunning methods themselves.

I would ask you to appreciate that it causes great anguish to the Jewish community for us to read such comments.

Yours sincerely



**Henry Grunwald OBE QC**  
**Chairman**