

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

## **Scottish Government written submission, 8 January 2025**

I am writing to provide the Scottish Government's response to the above petition, which calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce a ban on the removal of all the hair from a horse's tail other than for veterinary reasons.

Complete removal of a horse's tail hair was historically common practice in order to ensure that the horse's tail did not become caught up in ploughs or carts etc. It is however a procedure that the Scottish Government does not support or recommend.

From an animal welfare perspective, a horse uses its tail as a means of protecting its rear end from flies and insect bites, as well as a means of self-cooling and to communicate emotions to other equines. Accordingly, given the importance of the tail to equine wellbeing, the Scottish Government would strongly recommend braiding as an alternative to complete removal.

Regarding the petitioner's call for a ban on the removal of hair from a horse's tail, the Scottish Government would consider this to be a disproportionate response. A more proportionate course of action, and one that we will be happy to take, will be to address this issue in updated equine guidance currently being developed in partnership with our equine stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,

**JIM FAIRLIE**  
**MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND CONNECTIVITY**