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Established in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Ltd.

It incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society which was founded in 1876

John Finnie MSP,
Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh

Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee today.

Dear John,

Just a short message in support of your call to get rid of the hunting hounds exclusion clause from the Bill to update legislation on dogs worrying livestock.

Several times while monitoring hunts in the in the 1980s I saw packs of hounds and mounted hunters follow foxes through fields of livestock, including pregnant cows and sheep. I never saw a hound attack or deliberately chase livestock but their presence among them caused the cows and sheep to scatter in panic. It was common practise for hunts not only to follow their hounds through fields of livestock but for whippers-in to actively direct hounds into fields of livestock should a fox be seen there.

On one occasion near Stirling I watched a fox being chased through a field of sugar beet where sheep were grazing. I and some others went into the edge of the field where the fox had run out and across the road. We sprayed anti-mate along the fence line to hide the scent of the fox. The farmer was present on the road and he shouted to our police "escort" something along the lines of "Get those ***** idiots out of my field". The police shouted to us "Right, you heard the man. Get back over this side of the fence." The farmer responded with; "Not those ***** idiots, the ***** idiots on the horses who are scaring the **** out of my pregnant yows."

I most recently witnessed exactly the same situation about six years ago when by chance my wife and I were held up in traffic in Dumfriesshire by the local hunt which crossed the road straight into an area where there was a flock of sheep which panicked and scattered as the hounds ran amongst them.

I reckon the reason we don't see more farmers take action over worrying of livestock by the hunt is that many are renting from hunting landowners, some enjoy hunting themselves and the hunt will sometimes pay compensation for any damage they cause. Compensating the farmer does nothing to alleviate the suffering caused to livestock.

I hope your amendment gets the support it deserves.

Kind regards,

John
For Animal Concern

PS I only learned about this a few hours ago through a piece in the Evening Express. If I'd known about it earlier I would have asked our support base to ask their MSPs on the Committee to support the amendment.