

The Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2BQ

By email:

bbccharterreview@dcms.gov.uk

enquiries@dcms.gov.uk

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Dear Secretary of State

We write as a group of animal-loving public figures from across the UK's creative industries, including many who are proud to work with the BBC, to express our support for the recent [letter from leading animal protection organisations](#) regarding the BBC Charter review and opportunities for the Corporation to reflect the UK's new animal sentience law.

The BBC is one of the UK's most trusted institutions and has shaped generations through its storytelling, journalism and natural history programming. Few broadcasters have done more to foster public admiration for the natural world.

The British public has a deep love and respect for animals and concern for their welfare. While this is something the BBC has in many ways reflected and helped cultivate, it is also vitally important to ensure that the way the lived experiences of animals is portrayed in public broadcasting does not obscure or obfuscate the often unpleasant reality.

We support calls for the BBC Charter to more clearly recognise animal sentience and to strengthen how this principle is reflected across editorial standards, commissioning, governance and workplace policy. This is not about campaigning. It is about ensuring that coverage of issues involving animals proportionately reflects reality; incorporating science, ethics and breadth of public concern.

At times BBC coverage of and commentary on areas such as factory farming or the use of animals in sport can present a softened and incomplete picture. For example, 85% of the approximately one billion animals farmed for food in the UK are kept in industrial indoor farms, and yet these are rarely seen on flagship series such as Countryfile, which largely portray pasture-based outdoor farming. This risks obscuring the reality for viewers but it also misses an opportunity to support a national conversation about the ways in which these systems affect animals, communities and the environment.

Similarly in horse racing, covered extensively by the BBC, hundreds of horses die every year but this fact is minimised in reporting, and commentaries lean heavily towards industry voices.

We believe it is time to mandate the BBC to present a complete picture of our relationship with animals, and the impact of our actions on them, and to eliminate any perception of partiality.

The British public's interest in and passion for animal wellbeing is unequivocal, reflected by the government in the legal recognition of animal sentience in 2022. We are hopeful that this Charter review will enable the BBC to evolve in line with the spirit and intent of this important new law, and in line with our expectations as a country that aspires towards compassion for all animals.

Yours sincerely

Chris Packham

Peter Egan

Dr Marc Abraham

Dr Brian May

Diane Morgan

Wendy Turner Webster

Carol Royle

Anthea Turner

Jenny Seagrove

Kirsty Gallacher

Will Young

For correspondence: cbass@humaneworld.org