

Written submission to the Public Bill Committee of the Environment Bill

Concerning an amendment tabled by Daniel Zeichner MP regarding lead ammunition used for the taking of wild quarry using shotguns

This evidence is being submitted by John Gregson, Partner & Communications Manager, CSR, Health & Agriculture on behalf of Waitrose & Partners.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Waitrose & Partners (formerly Waitrose) is a British supermarket chain selling groceries across the United Kingdom. We are among the ten largest retailers of groceries in the UK and export to >50 countries worldwide. We are part of Britain's largest employee-owned retailer, the John Lewis Partnership.
- 1.2. We are the largest retailer of game in the UK. We sell prepared wood pigeon, partridge and pheasant at seasonal times. We are supplied by a single game dealer who ensures all game sourced from leading British shoots is reared to the highest standards. We monitor the shoots we source from and expect them to adhere to our bespoke standards of animal welfare and shoot behaviour.

2. Evidence

- 2.1. Having become aware of the risks to human health associated with elevated dietary lead intake, and of the frequently high lead levels found in wild game brought to bag with lead ammunition, we have pledged that from the 2019-20 season onwards we will begin phasing out lead shot use on the Estates we source game from. Estates will be required to use lead gun alternatives such as steel or bismuth. By season 2021/ 22 all Waitrose & Partners game will be brought to bag without the use of lead ammunition.
- 2.2. During the phase out over the 2019-2020 season our gamebird products carried the following warning: *Based on public health advice vulnerable groups, in particular children, pregnant women, and women trying for a baby should not consume this product due to the possible presence of lead shot residue. May contain lead shot.*

3. Recommendation

- 3.1. We believe that when free of lead contamination from ammunition game meat can form part of a healthy diet for everyone. We are therefore supportive of the amendment to the Environment Bill which, if accepted, will regulate for the replacement within three years of lead ammunition used in shotguns for the taking of live quarry by alternative ammunition types. Such regulation will provide the certainty needed for a complete transition to alternative types of shotgun ammunition thus enabling a guaranteed supply of game meat that has not been brought to bag using lead ammunition for the UK retail market and for export. Based upon our own experience with suppliers, we believe that the three-year period proposed for the phase-out will be adequate.