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Mr. Charlie McConalogue, T.D,
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine
minister@agriculture.gov.ie
30 September, 2020

Re: the use of peat as an alternative to traditional straw bedding

Dear Minister;

We wrote to your predecessor in September 2018 drawing his attention to the promotion of peat as an alternative to straw bedding by Teagasc and Bord na Mona for industrial animal production.

We note that Bord na Mona has confirmed to the *Farming Independent* this week that, in line with its 'Brown to Green' strategy adopted in 2018, it 'made decisions in 2019 not to harvest peat for animal bedding, not to pursue that market and to sell off any existing stocks.'

The company entered the market in 2017 because extreme weather events were leading to shortages in the straw harvest. Ironically, these extreme weather events are due to global warming which will only be increased by further extraction of peat. The extraction and use of peat is not as Teagasc stated a 'viable alternative' to straw bedding. It is not 'viable' for any purpose and entirely unsustainable.

The extent of these activities is well known to your authorities and to the Environmental Protection Agency. We would be most grateful if you capitalised on this welcome decision by Bord na Mona to ensure that private companies also end these extremely environmentally damaging activities.

Yours, etc.,

Tony Lowes