Dear Mr Birchall

Thank you for your letter of 17 September 2013 addressed to the Secretary of State for Transport concerning the transport of livestock and compliance with the regulations governing driving time. It has been passed to the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) for reply as we are responsible for ensuring the compliance of operators and drivers with road traffic legislation.

In an effort to reduce the impact of our enforcement activities on livestock, VOSA carries out the majority of its targeted enforcement at the premises of the operator rather than stopping a vehicle in transit. However, on those occasions when we do stop vehicles in transit, the welfare of the livestock is paramount.

Where vehicles carrying livestock or poultry are subject to VOSA check, if there are concerns about the welfare or treatment of animals during transit or whilst at a check examiners will contact the Animal Health Officer. Similarly, if a vehicle carrying livestock or poultry is to be delayed for more than 30 minutes for the purpose of an examination, prohibition or otherwise then the examiner with contact the Animal Health Officer.

Unfortunately, without more detailed information in respect of the incidents on 4 and 6 September we are unable to investigate the possible non-compliance with drivers’ hours rules. If, however, you are able to provide me with the vehicle and operator details we would be pleased to look into the matter.
The VOSA publication 'Rules on drivers' hours and tachographs: goods vehicles in GB and Europe' details the rules governing driving times for lorry drivers. It is available to view or download from the government website: www.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

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