



Kathryn Clements  
Ministry of Justice

1 November 2024

Via e-mail: [Kathryn.Clements@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Kathryn.Clements@justice.gov.uk)

Dear Ms Clements:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to urge the Ministry of Justice to ditch plans to use *sheep as lawnmowers* at HMP The Verne on the Isle of Portland. Instead, you have a brilliant opportunity to enrich the lives of inmates without endangering the lives of others. Perhaps inmates could be employed as *carrot wardens* or *potato stewards* on the land.

Sheep are gentle, sentient animals with excellent memories. They can recognise at least 50 individual faces and identify different facial expressions, preferring a smile to a frown. Sheep used for their fleece are routinely abused on farms and in shearing sheds. [PETA has shared exposés of 117 wool-industry operations](#) around the world – including in the UK – that document workers kicking, punching, and slitting the throats of conscious, struggling sheep. Each year, millions of lambs bred for their flesh are slaughtered, a terrifying ordeal, when they're just 10 weeks old.

As ruminant animals, sheep produce large amounts of methane – a potent gas that is warming the planet. Climate scientists stress the urgent need to rapidly decrease methane emissions to slow global warming. And sheep grazing hinders conservation – leading to landscapes that are, as described by environmentalist Ben Goldsmith, “almost entirely stripped ... of their green mantle”, as “trees, scrub, wildflowers, and birdsong are largely absent” and “[a]ll you find are sheep”. Conversely, removing animals farmed as food from land increases biodiversity.

Instead of using sheep as lawnmowers, The Verne could give inmates the opportunity to serve as wardens of the land, cultivating sustainable, healthy produce like carrots – food that no one has to die for. Becoming *carrot wardens* would boost their mental health, allow them to develop practical skills, and pique their interest in non-violent occupations.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Tredgett  
Farming and Corporate Projects Liaison

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