***Add your address and contact details here***

***Your MP***

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

Dear

I am writing to support Meat Hygiene Inspectors (MHI), Official Veterinarians and their support staff who are employed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). As your constituent, I am asking for your support in demanding that the FSA value MHIs who protect the public and stop trying to give over their responsibility for food safety to industry.

When the public were asked whether *“Slaughterhouses should be required to have their food safety and quality standards independently assessed by external, Government inspectors”*, 87% agreed.

On fewer inspections, 74% of adults (across all political persuasions) in England and Wales say they would be concerned about changes that would see fewer independent inspections by FSA vets and inspectors and more inspections by private contractors and slaughterhouse staff themselves.

In 2013, there were 587 directly employed MHIs. By the end of March 2017, there were 413. There can be no public trust without the MHIs in place to safeguard the integrity of the human (and pet) food chain. Otherwise, the industry is being allowed to police itself and the public will turn away from eating a product it considers unsafe.

The FSA believes that the industry should be responsible for a safe and clean product. Without this being checked and re-checked, the industry will not perform to consumer expectations. Then, the entire supply chain will be affected, including our farmers.

Professor Chris Elliott stated in his interim report on the integrity and assurance of food chain networks:

*“As a society, we have a right to expect Government and industry to discourage dishonesty both for its own sake and specifically because we need to have faith that the food we consume is free from deliberate adulterations:*

* *which may harm us physically and immediately*
* *which may give us longer term health issues*
* *which repulse us*
* *which are contrary to our religious or ethical choices*
* *which are cheating us financially.”*

You may also have seen a petition from a father who sadly lost his child to contaminated meat. It currently has nearly 215,000 signatures. You can find this petition here: <https://www.change.org/p/don-t-risk-lives-keep-meat-inspections-independent>.

Therefore, I ask that you support MHIs and write to the FSA to demand that they abandon plans to give responsibility to industry or a private contractor. Trust in the meat industry is underpinned by civil servants and local authority workers giving me confidence in the meat and/or dairy I eat.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,