



26 September 2025

Dr Matthew Stone
Chair National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC)
C/O Ministry for Primary Industries
PO Box 2526
Wellington

Dear Dr Stone,

I am writing to share SPCA's recent submission on the public consultation on amendments to the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011 to draw attention to the welfare problems with bird gel repellents.

Currently, bird gel repellents are considered fit for purpose for exemption from registration because they are not "toxic to animals treated with or exposed to the compound to an extent that causes unnecessary or unreasonable pain or distress".¹ In our submission, we advocated for bird gel repellents to be removed from the list of compounds exempt from registration in Schedule 2 of the ACVM (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011 due to the severe welfare harms birds experience after coming into contact with these products.

Bird gel repellents are applied directly to surfaces or placed in small dishes to deter birds from roosting, nesting, and perching in areas such as car parks, buildings, sports arenas, and parks where accumulation of their faeces is considered a nuisance or human health hazard.

Most bird gel repellents work by sticking to a bird's foot after they come into contact with the gel. The bird should be able to remove their foot after contact yet, still find the gel aversive enough to deter the bird from returning to the area where the gel is present. Bird gel repellents may contain aversive chemicals that cause irritation when smelled, ingested, or come in contact with the bird's skin.

¹ [s7\(d\) Fitness for Purpose: importation, manufacture, or sale of exempt compounds](#)



Unfortunately, despite bird gel repellents marketed as safe to use for birds, there have been ongoing incidents of birds captured, injured, and killed after coming into contact with the products. Small birds exposed to bird gel repellents cannot groom the substance from their skin or feathers. Birds covered in gel are at risk of serious welfare harm including pain, frustration, and distress related to injuries, inability to move, hunger, dehydration, and suffocation. Even with veterinary intervention, most birds were either euthanased or died. Our Inspectorate has responded to many of these incidents, which we detail further in our attached submission.

SPCA recently launched a [webpage](#) to encourage members of the public to report harm from bird gel repellents to the Ministry for Primary Industries to ensure that the regulator is more informed of incidents of harm. However, in addition to the severe welfare harms for birds, we think there is justification for a regulatory response because bird gel repellents are indiscriminate in how they target animals, are poorly monitored due to the perceived safety of the product, and alternatives exist for deterring birds.

We have written to Minister Hoggard to inform him of our recent submission on the ACVM (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011 and similarly asked him to consider the harms of bird gel repellents indicate they need greater regulation.

In our letter to the Minister, we have made the point that a regulatory response occurred for similar issues of severe welfare harms from glueboard traps used for rodents. The [Animal Welfare \(Glueboard Traps\) Order 2009](#) restricts the sale and use of glueboard traps for rodents in New Zealand because of the severe harm these types of traps cause animals.²

We note that [s32](#) of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 grants the Governor-General the power to declare traps or devices to be prohibited or restricted by Order in Council, made on the advice of the Minister tendered after consultation by that Minister with the National Animal Welfare

² All sale and use of glueboard traps were banned except under Ministerial approval from 1 January 2015 due to the severity of pain and distress rodents experienced when trapped on the glueboard. Since 2015, the number of approvals for sale and use has declined and only 2-3 per year have been granted since 2020.



Advisory Committee (NAWAC). Under [s57](#) of the Animal Welfare Act, two of the functions of NAWAC are to discharge its functions under s32 in relation to the making of Orders in Council by declaring traps or devices to be prohibited or restricted traps or devices and, in relation to the conditions that should be attached to the sale or use of any restricted trap or restricted device.

We acknowledge that despite effectively acting as a glue trap for small birds, bird gel repellents are not intended to trap or hold animals, and are not regulated as traps under the [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#). Therefore, we advocate that bird gel repellents are more heavily regulated under the ACVM (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011.

We urge NAWAC to support the determination that bird gel repellents are not fit for purpose for exemption from registration under the ACVM (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011 because they cause unnecessary or unreasonable pain or distress.

We have attached our submission on this matter for additional information. SPCA welcomes further discussion on this matter if needed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dr Arnja Dale", is written over a horizontal line.

Dr Arnja Dale
Chief Scientific Officer