Met Office predictions are still valid, despite the lack of a ‘barbecue summer’, says David Spiegelhalter

Simon Jenkins’ tirade against weather forecasters (The Met Office thinks August will be wet. Buy futures in sun cream now, 31 July) shows a misunderstanding of what science can deliver. Jenkins contrasts “scientists who lecture ministers on the exactitude of their calling” with “public predictions so smothered in caveats and qualifiers as to be drained of significance”. He seems to expect precise predictions of the future despite denigrating such butchery happened to you at a few weeks old without anaesthetic. I don’t think it would be unreasonable to imagine it would hurt a lot. Add to that a life of arid misery, a cramped, fed up trip from Australia to the Middle East at the end of your productive life, then slaughtered in a pit, and you might gain an insight into the plight of these poor sheep. It’s called humanity and we can all have it.

Paul Cameron
Haslebury Plucknett, Somerset

Although mulesing is perceived by some as barbaric and cruel, farmers and vets believe that the short-lived pain of a lamb after mulesing is nothing when compared with the agony of a slow death caused by flystrike.

Victoria Fraser
Victoria, Australia

The Response column offers those who have been written about in the Guardian an opportunity to reply. If you wish to respond, at greater length than in a letter, to an article in which you have featured either directly or indirectly, please email response@guardian.co.uk or write to Response, The Guardian, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU. We cannot guarantee to publish all responses, and we reserve the right to edit pieces for both length and content.