

Our reference: **DAERA/24-122**

[REDACTED]

Via email:

[REDACTED]

VSAHG Information Communications Branch
1st Floor
Jubilee House
111 Ballykelly Road
Limavady
BT49 9HP

Email: vsinfocommsbranch@daera-ni.gov.uk

10 April 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your request for information received by the Department on 8 March 2024.

The Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds some of the information that would fall within the scope of the request. Please see response below.

- 2. How many welfare complaints did you receive in relation to the following:**
- a. On-farm animal welfare**
 - b. Welfare at markets; and,**
 - c. Welfare during transport?**
 - d. Welfare at a border post? - Clarification given - BCP complaints should relate to any complaints made by anyone in relation to the treatment of animals at BCPs**

Response:

	<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>	
a.	139	179*	*2023 figures are provisional and yet to be finalised
b.	0	0	
c.	0	0	
d.	0	0	

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3. How many welfare complaints did you investigate in relation to the following:

- a. On-farm animal welfare;**
- b. Welfare at markets; and,**
- c. Welfare during transport?**
- d. Welfare at a border post? – Clarification given- BCP complaints should relate to any complaints made by anyone in relation to the treatment of animals at BCPs**

Response:

	<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>	
a.	139	179*	*2023 figures are provisional and yet to be finalised
b.	0	0	
c.	0	0	
d.	0	0	

4. Are you solely responsible for all enforcement at markets, farms, and borders? Clarification given - all enforcement means are you the sole regulator for farm animal welfare law enforcement or is another body, such as a local authority involved

Response:

Responsibility for the enforcement of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 has been conferred on three enforcement agencies: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and local councils. DAERA is responsible for farmed animals (any animal bred or kept for the production of food, wool or skin or for other farming purposes). Local Councils are responsible for enforcement in respect of non-farmed animals i.e. domestic pets and equines and The Police Service of NI (PSNI) is responsible for wildlife crime, animal fighting and incidents involving wild animals.

The welfare of animals in transport, including at borders, is enforced in Northern Ireland by DAERA.

5. How many of each of the following are under your authority?

- a. Farms;**
- b. Markets;**
- c. Borders;**

Response:

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- a. In 2022, there were 26,089 farms in Northern Ireland, 24,410 of these farms contained cattle, sheep, pigs or birds.
In 2023, there were 26,131 farms in Northern Ireland, 24,379 of these farms contained cattle, sheep, pigs or birds.

This data was obtained from the Agricultural Census which is conducted in June each year. Data is collected on crop areas, livestock numbers and farm labour. The statistics are compiled from a survey of farm businesses augmented by administrative data i.e. Animal Public Health Information System, APHIS, cattle tracing system.

The statistics provide robust estimates of crop areas, numbers of livestock and of farmers and workers on active farm businesses on the survey date of 1st June 2023. The population of farms to which these statistics refer includes all active farm businesses having one or more hectares of farmed land, whether owned, leased or taken in conacre, and those with under one hectare having any cattle, sheep or pigs or with significant poultry or horticultural activity.

A full copy of the 2022 and 2023 Agricultural Census is published on the DAERA website at the following links:

[Agricultural Census 2022](#)

[Agricultural Census 2023](#)

- b.

<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>
26	26

- c. 5 Border Control Posts (BCP) and 5 Travellers Point of Entry (TPE)

- Up to date BCP listings are available here: [Northern Ireland Sanitary and Phytosanitary \(SPS\) Inspection Facilities listings | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

- TPE listings are:

Belfast port
Larne Port
Belfast International Airport
Belfast City Airport
City Of Derry Airport

6. How many of each of the following in your jurisdiction were inspected one or more times?

- a. **Farms***
b. **Markets**
c. **Borders - Inspection relates to any inspection checking animal welfare at a BCP**

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Response:

	<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>
a.	760*	701*
b.	26	25
c.	0	2

*The Department does not hold the requested information for the number of “farms”. Business IDs are used by the Department to maintain a record of the identity of those who submit an application for payment of grants and subsidies or for registering to keep animals. Herd or flock numbers (Animal Group Numbers) are used to register animal groupings within a Business ID. Some businesses may have more than one Animal Group Number. The answers provided for Qs 6a, 7a and 8a are based on the number of Animal Group Numbers.

7. How many of each of the following in your jurisdiction showed non-compliance with animal welfare law following an inspection:

- a. Farms;
- b. Markets;
- c. Borders -Clarification given - Inspection relates to any inspection checking animal welfare at a BCP

Response:

	<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>	
a.	51*	69*	*response provided for Animal Group Numbers
b.	12	19	
c.	0	0	

8. How many of each of the following were inspected more than once in your jurisdiction?

- a. Farms;
- b. Markets; and
- c. Borders - Clarification given - the purpose of question 6 and 8 is to work out the difference in numbers between premises that were inspected only once and premises that were inspected more than once

Response:

	<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>	
a.	129*	131*	*response provided for Animal Group Numbers
b.	25	24	
c.	0	0	

9. What were the total number of inspections that were conducted in your jurisdiction at each of the following:

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- a. Farms;
- b. Markets; and
- c. Borders – Clarification given -Inspection relates to any inspection checking animal welfare at a BCP

Response:

	<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>
a.	467*	512*
b.	218	156
c.	0	2

*Note that the figures provided at Q6a are for Animal Group Numbers (herds/flocks). The reason why the figures at Q9a are less than at Q6a, is because more than one Animal Group Number connected with a Business ID e.g. one cattle herd and one sheep flock, may be inspected during an inspection.

- 10. What was the total number of inspections conducted in your jurisdiction at each of the following that found non-compliance with animal welfare law?**
- a. Farms;
 - b. Markets; and
 - c. Borders - Clarification given -Inspection relates to any inspection checking animal welfare at a BCP

Response:

	<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>
a.	65	113
b.	68	72
c.	0	0

- 11. Please list whether an official improvement notice or a prosecution was issued or commenced by you on each of the occasion an inspection revealed non-compliance at each of the following:**
- a. Farms;
 - b. Markets
 - c. Borders

Response:

a. In all cases where a non-compliance is found at an on-farm animal welfare inspection, a referral is made to the Area Based Schemes Payment Agency and a notice or cover letter is served providing details of any non-compliance and the action needed to reach compliance. In cases where non-compliances relate to serious incidents and/or persistent offenders, evidence is gathered and cases compiled with a view to prosecution.

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b. In order to secure compliance and protect animal health and welfare at markets, DAERA can deploy a range of measures. The action taken will be dependent on factors such as severity of non-compliance, history of non-compliance and a Market Operator's actions to try and rectify the situation. Action taken includes verbal advice, issue of warning letters, follow-up inspections and prosecution.

c. N/A

12. How many prosecution proceedings did you commence or refer to the Public Prosecution Service for offences named in the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011?

a. Of those proceedings, how many resulted in a successful prosecution?

Response:

	<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>	
	3	1	
a.	0*	0	*these 3 cases are still before court

13. How many improvement notices did you serve under section 10 of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 for failures to comply with section 9(1) of that Act?

Response:

<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>
1	12

Please note that cover letters are issued more often than improvement notices.

14. How many prosecution proceedings did you commence or refer to the Public Prosecution Service for offences named in Section 6 of the Welfare

a. Of those proceedings, how many resulted in a successful prosecution

Response:

	<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>
	0	0
a.	0	0

15. How many compliance notices were issued by your inspectors for failures to comply with The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006?

Response:

Year 2022

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154 (5 of these relate to farmed animals)

At present, only figures for 2022 are available. 2023's will be available in September 2024, after we complete our Annual Report of Official Controls (AROC) return.

17. How many individuals subject to any of the above enforcement action had previously committed an animal welfare offence?

Response:

<u>Year 2022</u>	<u>Year 2023</u>
0	2

18. How many people do you employ to carry out farm animal welfare inspections as part of their duties?

a. How many farm animal welfare inspections did they complete?

Response:

391 staff members as at 29/3/2024

Year 2022

a. 30545* (24877 of these relate to farmed animals)

*This figure includes on farm inspections and those relating to the welfare of animals in transport (checks at meat plants, checks at markets, roadside checks, point of departure checks [long journeys] and checks at ports).

At present, figures for 2022 only are available. Figures for 2023 will be available in September 2024, after we complete our Annual Report of Official Controls (AROC) return

19. How many people do you employ to carry out enforcement of the Diseases of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 as part of their duties?

Response:

664 staff members as at 25/03/2024

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department
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of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE, SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

[Redacted title]

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