

**Food, Farming and Rural Affairs
Group**
Agricultural Policy Division



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: DAERA/26-65

██████████ via

Email: ██████████@hotmail.co.uk

Agricultural Policy Division
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast BT3 9EB

Tel: 0300 200 7850

Email: agriculturalpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk

09 February 2026

Dear ██████████

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

I refer to your request for information, received by the Department on 02 February 2026, which sought the information at **Annex A**.

The Department has considered your request and conducted a search of its records. As a result, approximately 4,000 records have been identified which could fall within the scope of your request and as such beyond what would be deemed reasonable for the Department to process. I have therefore applied an exception under EIR Regulation 12 (4) (b) (manifestly unreasonable).

An associated Public Interest Test has been conducted and is attached for your information at **Annex B**.

You may wish to reconsider your request and focus on specific aspects of the request. In order to assist you in providing a narrower, more focused request to the Department under EIR, please consider the following:

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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- Does your query relate to specific meetings?
- Is there a specific time period for your request?

There are a number of published documents that you may find of assistance:

- [Future Agricultural Policy Framework Portfolio | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#) setting out the way forward for Future Agricultural Policy for NI and Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- [Consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#) the consultation pack included the Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for NI Consultation Document, Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report, Background Evidence Paper, Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Regulatory Impact Screening Template. This consultation included proposals for the Beef Carbon Reduction Scheme and Suckler Cow Scheme.
- [Summary of Responses: Consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#) provides a High-Level Overview of Responses along with a more detailed Summary of Responses and a catalogue of Questionnaire and Non-Questionnaire Responses.
- [Future Agricultural Policy Decisions for Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#) summarising the decisions announced by Agriculture Minister Edwin Poots MLA at the Assembly on 24 March 2022 and related Environmental Assessment Papers and Impact Assessments. This includes decisions relating to the Beef Carbon Reduction Scheme and Sucker Cow Scheme.

Should you wish to reframe your request, please submit a new request to daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which 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 Internal Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department 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.

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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,


Agricultural Policy Division

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Request

Beef Carbon Reduction

- All documents, reports, modelling outputs, briefing papers, or analytical work used to determine the maximum slaughter age thresholds for the Beef Carbon Reduction Scheme, including the phased reduction from 30 months to 28, 27, and 26 months
- Details of the methodology used to select slaughter age as the primary eligibility criterion, including whether alternative metrics (such as daily liveweight gain, carcass efficiency, system inputs, or lifetime emissions intensity) were assessed and, if so, why they were not adopted.
- Any analysis undertaken to assess the impact of the slaughter age thresholds on different cattle breeds or breed types (including but not limited to early- and late-maturing breeds), production systems (grass-based versus intensive), or enterprise types (suckler-bred versus dairy-bred beef).
- Any modelling assumptions used in estimating carbon reduction outcomes for the scheme, including assumptions relating to feed type and level, housing duration, growth rates, or system intensity.
- Copies of internal correspondence, meeting minutes, or briefing notes in which risks, limitations, or potential unintended consequences of the slaughter age limits were discussed, including concerns relating to breed suitability, farm system diversity, or feasibility of compliance.
- Details of any Equality Impact Screening, rural proofing exercise, or equivalent assessment carried out in relation to the Beef Carbon Reduction Scheme, and whether differential impacts on farm type or production system were considered.

Suckler Cow Scheme

- All documents, reports, modelling outputs, briefing papers, or analytical work used to determine the Age at First Calving (AFC) and Calving Interval (CI) thresholds set for the Suckler Cow Scheme, including the phased tightening of these thresholds over the four-year period of the scheme.
- Details of any analysis undertaken to assess how the AFC and CI thresholds would perform across different suckler cow breeds or breed types, including but not limited to early-maturing/native breeds and late-maturing continental breeds.
- Any data or evidence used by DAERA to assess breed-related differences in:
 - a. Age at first calving, and

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- b. Ability to meet reduced calving intervals, and how such differences were accounted for in the scheme design.
- Any modelling or assumptions used in developing the scheme that relate to cow mature size, growth patterns, milk yield, body condition recovery, or fertility performance, and whether these assumptions vary by breed or production system.
- Any modelling assumptions or parameters used in the design of the Suckler Cow Scheme relating to suckler cow mature weight or mature size, including:
 - a. The mature cow weight(s) or size assumptions applied;
 - b. Whether a single representative cow weight was assumed or a range of cow weights was modelled; and
 - c. Whether such assumptions varied by breed or breed type.
- Copies of internal correspondence, briefing notes, meeting minutes, or submissions in which potential differential impacts of the Suckler Cow Scheme on different suckler cow breeds or systems were discussed, including any concerns that the scheme could favour certain breeds over others.
- Details of any Equality Impact Screening, rural proofing exercise, or equivalent impact assessment carried out in relation to the Suckler Cow Scheme, and whether potential breed-specific or system-specific impacts were considered as part of that process.

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