

Veterinary Service Animal Health Group
Information Communications Branch



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/26-68

[REDACTED]

Via email:

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17 February 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your email received by the Department on 03 February 2026 which you sought the information in bold below. I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that we hold some of the information requested.

It is reported that there are a number of puppy farms in Northern Ireland where female dogs are kept in a state of imprisonment and bred continuously on a semi industrial scale. It is further reported that there are up to 600 breeding bitches in one or associated units.

Can you confirm:

(1.1) how many licensed puppy farms with more than 20 bitches in NI? Please detail farms and numbers of breeding bitches?

The Department is not responsible for licencing dog breeding establishments and does not hold this information.

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(1.2) Who licences these farms and what inspections are carried out?

(1.3) Have any of the operators been convicted of any offence?

(1.4) Has your Department checked whether these producers of pups take proper care to control the health quality of the pups by having both sire and dam regularly subjected to Kennel Club recommended health checks. If so – who carries out these checks and is a database kept?

(1.5) Has your department any plans to ban these farms and/or the practice mass production of puppies? If not why not?

(1.6) Please provide any details of USPCA involvement in the control of these facilities?

In relation to your questions regarding dog breeding establishments, (1.2) – (1.6), district councils have statutory responsibility for the licensing of dog breeding establishments. The Department does not collect any information on the inspection and licencing of dog breeding establishments. Nor does it collect any information on how councils, as autonomous bodies, choose to enforce the legislation.

The Department has appointed an independent Expert Advisory Group to review the operation of dog breeding regulations in Northern Ireland. This group will produce a report with recommendations for the Minister's consideration. The report is expected to be published in April.

2. It is reported that Non Stun Halal Slaughter is prevalent in NI.

Can you confirm:

(2.1) What proportion of cattle, sheep, chickens and goats are slaughtered by this method?

In DAERA approved premises – zero, all animals are stunned before slaughter.

2.3. Please confirm the number of animals slaughtered by this method in an average year?

No animals (ZERO) are slaughtered by Non Stun Halal In DAERA approved premises. In NI, all animals are stunned before slaughter.

2.2. What percentage of facilities offer this type of slaughter?

No DAERA approved premises offer Non Stun Halal Slaughter in NI.

2.3. Who carries out this slaughter?

As referred to questions 2.2 and 2,3 No information held as this practice is not applied in NI.

A list of approved Abattoirs (Slaughterhouses) is maintained on the FSA website

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/approved-food-establishments>

2.4. What steps are taken to minimise the stress and cruelty to the animal.

The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 regulations, accessible at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2014/107/contents/made>

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govern animal welfare at time of slaughter and independent Official Veterinarians deliver assurance on behalf of DAERA at approved establishments.

2.5. Have you any plans to stop this practice? If not why not?

The practice of Non-Stun Halal Slaughter does not occur within DAERA approved premises in NI.

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 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,




Veterinary Service Animal Health Group

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