

## Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

### SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

#### 1A. Name of Public Authority.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

#### 1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Ruminant Genetics Programme

#### 1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### 1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Ruminant Genetics Programme

#### 1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

[Future Agricultural Policy Decisions](#) made by the DAERA Minister in March 2022 identified the requirement to develop and deliver a ruminant genetics programme which would increase the rate of genetic gain across the ruminant livestock sectors. This programme is of significant interest to government and the NI agri-food industry. It will deliver wider public good benefits, such as contributing to the achievement of the targets to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions, as detailed in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, as well as providing farmers with the data and evidence necessary to breed healthier and more efficient animals.

**1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

*Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.*

*Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.*

*Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.*

## SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

**2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?**

Yes  No  If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

**2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

As the Ruminant Genetics Programme will affect practically all dairy and beef cattle farmers in Northern Ireland it will therefore impact on people in rural areas. The Ruminant Genetics Programme aims to provide genetic evaluation information for cattle from which producers can make informed breeding decisions to improve the genetic merit of their herds, which will improve the productivity and environmental sustainability of their farm business. It will also provide physical benchmarking reports, at both individual animal and enterprise level, to inform producers of how their businesses are performing relative to their peers and identify areas for further investigation and improvement which, in turn, will result in productivity improvements. These management tools will enable dairy and beef cattle farmers to improve the productivity, resilience and environmental sustainability of their business.

**2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.**

Not applicable – the Ruminant Genetics Programme will only affect dairy and beef cattle farmers. The Programme will not affect people in urban areas.

**2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.**

Rural Businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

**If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.**

**2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

## SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

**3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Yes  No  If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

**3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

**3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.**

The Ruminant Genetics Programme is one of fourteen workstreams within the DAERA Future Agricultural Policy Programme. DAERA undertook an engagement exercise in 2018 with a broad range of stakeholders on future agricultural policy. Stakeholders' views were gathered on a draft [Future Agricultural Policy Framework](#) that would see policies developed on increased productivity, improved resilience, environmental sustainability and improved supply chain functionality. In total there were 1,277 responses, of which 67 were from organisations/representative groups and 1,210 were from individuals.

DAERA also conducted a consultation on the subsequent [Future Agricultural Policy Proposals](#) in December 2021. In total, 339 responses were received, with 30 from farming organisations and 11 from environmental organisations. Of the 284 responses received from individuals, almost half identified as farmers. The 339 responses informed the Minister's [Future Agricultural Policy Decisions](#) in March 2022, which included the decision that DAERA would invest in the development of the Ruminant Genetics Programme.

DAERA have also established an Agricultural Policy Stakeholder Group, which brings together representatives across food, farming and the environment, to ensure that stakeholder views are understood and properly considered during the development of the DAERA Future Agricultural Policy.

Reports referenced: Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland Farmers [Update of Equality \(Section 75\) Indicators for Farmers | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#), Statistical review of NI agriculture 2007 onward [Statistical review of NI agriculture 2007 onward | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#), Key Rural Issues Northern Ireland 2022 [DAERA Key Rural Issues, Northern Ireland 2022 \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

**3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?**

Through the Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework stakeholder engagement, carried out in 2018, and the Consultation on Future Agricultural Policy in 2021, DAERA identified the following social and economic needs of people in rural areas:

There could be a disproportionate effect on people in rural areas if farmers are not viewed as equal partners in the supply chain.

There is a need to be cognisant of different types of farms/farmers/landscape (e.g. hill farmers and lowland farmers; small farms and large farms), different communities (e.g. farmers in border communities and farmers in non-border communities) and different types of producers (e.g. horticulture and agriculture).

People in rural areas have issues around rural poverty, mental and physical health, inequalities in health and social inclusion.

The Key Rural Issues Northern Ireland 2022 report highlighted the contribution of agriculture to rural business with 39% of rural businesses being in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors.

However, poverty levels in households in rural areas which are more than an hour's journey from Belfast are higher than those of rural areas closer to the city.

The Update of Equality (Section 75) Indicators for Farmers reported that the average age of farmers in Northern Ireland was 59 years. Only 8% of farmers were aged under 40 years, and more than a third (36%) were aged 65 years or older (49% over sixty). Almost a third (30%) of farmers stated that they had a long-term illness or disability which limited their daily activities, with the incidence of disability inversely related to farm size.

**If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.**

**3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?**

## **SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

### **4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

The social and economic needs of people in rural areas identified in the Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework stakeholder engagement carried out in 2018 and the Consultation on Future Agricultural Policy Proposals 2021 have been considered. The Future Agricultural Policy Decisions and associated policy development should take into consideration the responses received; namely:

- i) the effect on people in rural areas if farmers are not viewed as equal partners in the supply chain;
- ii) different types of farms/farmers/landscape (e.g. hill farmers and lowland farmers; small farms and large farms) and different communities (e.g. farmers in border communities and farmers in non-border communities);
- iii) broadband quality and public transport and maintenance and road networks, and
- iv) rural poverty, mental and physical health, inequalities in health and social inclusion.

## SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

**5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?**

Yes  No  If the response is **NO GO TO Section 5C.**

**5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

The rural needs of individuals are taken into account in the development of the Future Agricultural Policy Programme, with the policy proposals and schemes being open to all.

The delivery of the Ruminant Genetics Programme will be open and fair, with the Programme available to all dairy and beef cattle farmers and applied equally to all areas across Northern Ireland.

The Ruminant Genetics Programme will continue to evolve and take on further needs, should they arise, and this will be influenced by ongoing impact assessment and/or consultation.

If the response to Section **5A** was **YES GO TO Section 6A.**



**5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

Not applicable.

## SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

**6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.**

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.

<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Francis Breen
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Agricultural Inspector Gd I
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Livestock Genetics and Data Branch, CAFRE
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	24/11/23
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Martin McKendry
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Head of Food Farming and Rural Affairs Group / Grade 3
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	FFRAG
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	10/12/24