

<b>Name of site</b>	<b>Name of Operator/Licence holder</b>	<b>WML Number</b>
LARGE PARK, AGRI-FOOD & BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE (AFBI) HILLSBOROUGH	AFBI	WML 19/49

<b>Name of officers</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	
	30/01/2025	In: 13:00	Out: 13:15

<b>Council Area</b>	<b>Weather Conditions</b>
Lisburn and Castlereagh City	Cloudy, Sunny, Dry

<b>Type of site</b>	Non-Hazardous Treatment & Transfer Anaerobic Digestion	<b>Type of inspection</b>	Scheduled Monitoring
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<b>Site operational Status</b>	Receiving Waste	<b>Site life Status</b>	Operational
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<b>Site areas / Phase inspected</b>	Yes
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Inspection Results      NI= Not inspected      NA= Not applicable      0= Compliant      1-3 Non-compliant

1	0	Specified Operations	14	0	Fires on site
2	0	Permitted Waste types	15	0	Waste acceptance and control Procedures
3	0	Permitted Waste Quantities	16	0	Waste quantity measurement system
4	0	Hours of Operation	17	0	Storage of specified waste
5	0	Staffing and Supervision	18	0	Monitoring and control of gases/ vapours/aerosol
6	0	Availability / understanding of licence / Working Plan	19	0	Monitoring/ control of dusts / fibres/ particulates
7	0	Attendance of Technically Competent Person	20	0	Monitoring and control of odours
8	NI	Maintenance of Financial Provision	21	0	Control of noise
9	0	Engineered site containment / drainage system	22	0	Control of pest infestations
10	0	Site Identification Board	23	0	Control of litter
11	0	Site Security	24	NI	Security and availability of records
12	0	Control of mud and debris	25	NI	Site diary
13	0	Potentially polluting leaks and spillages			

<b>Comments</b> No issues reported.
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<b>Actions</b>
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Letter Request	Continuation sheet
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<b>Officer's Signature</b>	<b>Operator / licence holder signature    Name &amp; position</b>
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<b>Name of site</b>	<b>Name of Operator/Licence holder</b>	<b>WML Number</b>
Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute	Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute	WML 19/49

<b>Name of officers</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	
	22/05/2025	In: 13:40	Out: 13:58

<b>Council Area</b>	<b>Weather Conditions</b>
Lisburn and Castlereagh City	Dry, Sunny

<b>Type of site</b>	Non-Hazardous Treatment & Transfer Anaerobic Digestion	<b>Type of inspection</b>	Scheduled Monitoring
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<b>Site operational Status</b>	<b>Site life Status</b>
Receiving Waste	Operational

<b>Site areas / Phase inspected</b>	Full
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Inspection Results      NI= Not inspected      NA= Not applicable      0= Compliant      1-3 Non-compliant

1	0	Specified Operations	14	0	Fires on site
2	0	Permitted Waste types	15	0	Waste acceptance and control Procedures
3	0	Permitted Waste Quantities	16	0	Waste quantity measurement system
4	0	Hours of Operation	17	0	Storage of specified waste
5	0	Staffing and Supervision	18	0	Monitoring and control of gases/ vapours/aerosol
6	0	Availability / understanding of licence / Working Plan	19	0	Monitoring/ control of dusts / fibres/ particulates
7	1	Attendance of Technically Competent Person	20	0	Monitoring and control of odours
8	0	Maintenance of Financial Provision	21	0	Control of noise
9	0	Engineered site containment / drainage system	22	0	Control of pest infestations
10	0	Site Identification Board	23	0	Control of litter
11	0	Site Security	24	0	Security and availability of records
12	0	Control of mud and debris	25	0	Site diary
13	0	Potentially polluting leaks and spillages			

<b>Comments</b>
Registration for Continued competence course to be sent via email. Copies of WAMITAB completed March 2020 to be emailed also.

<b>Actions</b>
Letter Request
Continuation sheet

<b>Officer's Signature</b>	<b>Operator / licence holder signature Name &amp; position</b>







TRIOLIET

<b>Name of site</b>	<b>Name of Operator/Licence holder</b>	<b>WML Number</b>
Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute	Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute	WML 19/49

<b>Name of officers</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	
	07/10/2025	In: 14:54	Out: 15:22

<b>Council Area</b>	<b>Weather Conditions</b>
Lisburn and Castlereagh City	Wet, Cloudy

<b>Type of site</b>	Non-Hazardous Treatment & Transfer Anaerobic Digestion	<b>Type of inspection</b>	Scheduled Monitoring
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<b>Site operational Status</b>	Receiving Waste
<b>Site life Status</b>	Operational

<b>Site areas / Phase inspected</b>	Full
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Inspection Results      NI= Not inspected      NA= Not applicable      0= Compliant      1-3 Non-compliant

1	0	Specified Operations	14	0	Fires on site
2	0	Permitted Waste types	15	0	Waste acceptance and control Procedures
3	0	Permitted Waste Quantities	16	0	Waste quantity measurement system
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5	0	Staffing and Supervision	18	0	Monitoring and control of gases/ vapours/aerosol
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9	0	Engineered site containment / drainage system	22	0	Control of pest infestations
10	0	Site Identification Board	23	0	Control of litter
11	0	Site Security	24	0	Security and availability of records
12	0	Control of mud and debris	25	NI	Site diary
13	0	Potentially polluting leaks and spillages			

<b>Comments</b>
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<b>Actions</b>
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Letter Request	Continuation sheet
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<b>Officer's Signature</b>	<b>Operator / licence holder signature Name &amp; position</b>
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TRIOLET







# Internal Incident Report

<b>Incident Number</b>	WR 4/25/0533
<b>Incident Title</b>	Allegation of closed period spreading near Ballynahinch Road, Hillsborough
<b>Incident Date</b>	28/10/2025 11:50:00
<b>Investigation Details</b>	<p>Investigation on the AFBI site confirmed that this report was dirty water which had been applied with a trailing shoe on 23 and 24 October.</p> <p>The dirty water tank in question only receives pipeline wash water from the milking parlour.</p> <p>No breach of the CPS rules.</p>

<b>Officer Forename</b>	██████████	<b>Officer Surname</b>	██████████
<b>Pollution Confirmed</b>	No	<b>Source</b>	
<b>Pollutant Category</b>		<b>Pollutant Sub Category</b>	
<b>Cause</b>		<b>Pollution Severity</b>	
<b>PCA</b>	4	<b>Alleged Polluter</b>	
<b>Advisory Letter Issued</b>	No	<b>Fuel Laundering</b>	No
<b>Domestic Oil Spillage</b>	No	<b>Closed Period</b>	No
<b>Algal Bloom</b>	No	<b>X Compliance Breach</b>	No
<b>Fish Kill Severity</b>		<b>Fishkill Figures From</b>	
<b>Kill Count</b>			
<b>Easting</b>	██████████		
<b>Northing</b>	██████████		

Report Executed by ██████████ at 20/03/2026 09:46:29

20251028\_121714 Dirty Water Tank



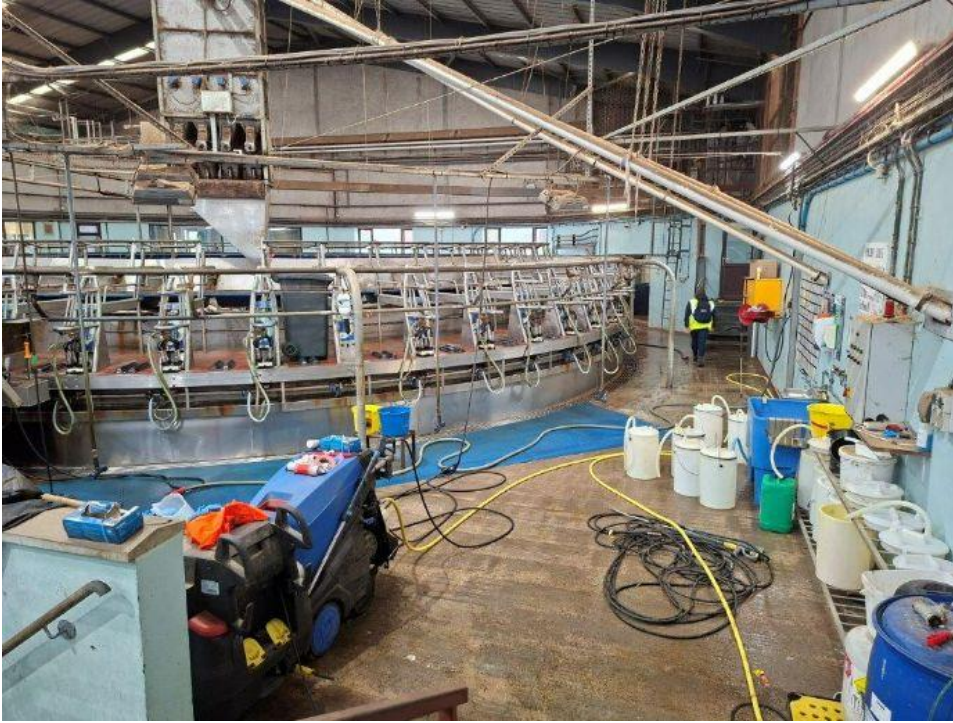
20251028\_121811 Dirty Water Tank



20251028\_122546 Shed at Milking Parlour



20251028\_122608 Milking Parlour 1



20251028\_122657 Milking Parlour 2



20251028\_122801 Milking Parlour 3



20251028\_124011 Field CPS



20251028\_124015 Field CPS



20251028\_124039 Field CPS Trailing Shoe Lines



20251028\_124130 Field CPS



20251028\_124141 Field CPS - REDACTED



20251028\_124441 Field CPS



20251028\_124445 Field CPS



20251028\_124506 Field CPS



20251028\_130643 Trailing Shoe App - REDACTED



# FAWR1 Operations - Farm Animal Welfare Inspection Report

SECTION 1

APHIS test ID:258135284

<b>Business Name and Address:</b> THE FARM MANAGER AGRI FOOD & SCIENCE CENTRE 18A NEWFORGE LANE BELFAST BT9 5PX		<b>Farm Business ID number:</b>	611232
		<b>Result of Inspection:</b>	<span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">Compliant /</span> Non-Compliant
		<b>Reason for Inspection:</b>	Complaint / Targeted / Follow-Up
		<b>Inspection Date(DD/MM/YYYY)</b>	17 / 6 / 25
		<b>How much notice given (if any)</b>	NONE
		<b>Start Time:</b>	12 Noon
<b>Herd/Flock Number(s):</b>	<b>End Time</b>	15 - 00	
UK904551A01, A10002, UK9ABU, 790691, 790691, UK9ABU, 390002			
If more than 48 hours notice was given, state reason(s) why:			
Inspector's contemporaneous notes and recommendations: <i>(continue overleaf if necessary)</i>  I went to AFBI Hillsborough unannounced with [REDACTED] + met up with [REDACTED] head of biosecurity at AFBI  Please see attached emails of our findings that day.			
I have considered all aspects of farm animal welfare as laid out in section 2 of this form. I have brought any failures to the attention of the keeper in writing by serving an improvement notice under the Welfare Of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, Section 10 or in a cover letter.			
<b>Sign</b>	<b>Name in Block Capitals:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	20/6/25	





## SECTION 2 - Record of non-compliance

List non-compliant herds & flocks in this row →	For each breach tick the box in the column below				
	<b>SMR11 - Calves</b>				
List fully compliant herds & flocks in this column ↓	3.1.1				
	3.2.1				
	3.2.2				
	3.2.3				
	3.2.4				
	3.3.1				
	3.3.3				
	3.3.4				
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	3.3.9				
	3.4.1				
	3.4.2				
	3.4.3				
	3.4.4				
	3.4.6				
	<b>SMR12 - Pigs</b>				
	4.1.1				
	4.1.2				
	4.1.3				
	4.2.1				
	4.2.2				
	4.2.3				
	4.2.4				
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	4.7.1				
	4.7.2				
	4.7.3				
	4.8.1				
	4.8.2				
	4.8.3				
	4.8.4				
	<b>SMR13 - General</b>				
	5.1.1				
	5.2.1				
	5.2.2				
	5.2.3				



5.3.1				
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5.5.10				
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5.8.2				

**Case manager's comments and recommendations:**

<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Name in Block Capitals:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 20/06/25
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[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 18 June 2025 14:57  
**To:** Daly, Gemma  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** AFBI Hillsborough

Hi Gemma

I am yet to hear back from [REDACTED] PVP for AFBI Hillsborough. After the visit below, I feel less inclined to chase him up, unless you feel it necessary for completeness. I made no approach to [REDACTED] re pigs as they weren't part of the initial complaint, but perhaps I should (see issue below).

[REDACTED] and spent a long time yesterday examining the stock; dairy and beef, pigs and sheep at AFBI.

We arrived unannounced and asked [REDACTED] from the science side to show us round. Also spoke with [REDACTED] who is an AFBI director.

We saw nothing of concern regarding the cattle, with the exception of some drinkers in grazing paddocks that had water which was green. It appeared that there were so many drinkers per paddock that ones not used by the cattle had this appearance. We suggested draining these and leaving them empty rather than expose cattle to risk of harm from water that may be unsafe. There was no evidence that cattle were using these ones, nor that any harm had been caused.

[REDACTED] had told us that unfortunately 16 pigs of around 10 weeks old had died at the weekend, of presumed salt poisoning (cause to be confirmed by PME at VSD), after a water line failed a couple of days previously. Pigs had been moved in a few days previously and the systems were checked in advance of this including the water. It seems that water was feeding to the drinkers but it wasn't at full flow which wasn't noticed until some pigs developed neurological signs which was taken for meningitis initially. Eventually 16 died before the cause was elicited. The remaining 100+ are all doing fine. [REDACTED] were consulted from the outset and everything done that could be done so I have no reason to take it any further. Systems of metering are being installed so that a repeat could not occur we have been told.

We were shown the remaining pigs from this house and all were in good health.

Aside from the above issues, nothing was noted of concern. The farm is run to a very high standard of welfare, and all management subject to licensing requirements .

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] (DAERA)

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 20 June 2025 13:11  
**To:** [REDACTED] (DAERA)  
**Subject:** FW: DAERA Welfare Inspection

*see back for signatures + agreement*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 19 June 2025 08:46  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** DAERA Welfare Inspection

Dear [REDACTED] and [REDACTED],

Many thanks for the opportunity to show you around the site and to discuss husbandry practices with myself and some of the staff across the site.

I was delighted at the end of the walkabout with your positive feedback on what you had seen during the visit and will relay this back to both staff on the ground and to management.

For the record it is worth noting the following overview from the visit and observations/follow up action points:

- 1) Beef calves in 3 silos ( clean bedding, feedstuff and clean drinking water provided)
- 2) Dairy heifers in cubicles (clean cubicles bedded with sawdust and lime)
- 3) Dairy heifers in small paddocks – limited grass but obvious they were being handled and moved to new location
- 4) Dairy cows in Robotic House getting zero grazed grass from feed intake units
- 5) 3 batches of grazing cows observed in field ( all cows looked clean, good condition and no evidence of lameness) – observation a lot of drinkers in the grazing platform but some had dirty/green water  
**ACTION Dairy water troughs checked out and cleaned regularly**
- 6) Cows in Killens house/dairy collection yard
- 7) Viewed cows getting locomotion monitors added and discussed location scoring with Richard Mott. Also, stockman reported how lameness was dealt with on the farm -nothing that when cows are identified with lameness they are treated in the foot trimming crush with competent AFBI staff
- 8) Viewed calving pens/sick/recovery pens – no cows present but pens clean and tidy
- 9) Viewed dairy parlour from gallery
- 10) Introduced to [REDACTED] and discussed the observation from the dairy (point 5 above requiring action). DAERA vets noted inspection followed report which mentioned a cow with photosensitivity which may have related back to a previous visit in Sept 2024 and requested some veterinary medicine/treatments for the animals to be supplied. **ACTION [REDACTED] to email [REDACTED] with evidence of treatment for [REDACTED]**
- 11) Introduced to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] outlined a welfare concern occurrence over the weekend when 16 growing pigs died believed to have occurred due to inadequate water supply. [REDACTED] shows the accommodation where this happened and also showed all the surviving pigs involved. [REDACTED] provide a comprehensive overview of the wet and dry feeding systems in the finishing unit. [REDACTED] also provided an tour of the sow unit and provided opportunity to discuss with other pig staff. Whilst staff acknowledged the disappointment of this mortality they highlighted the proposed mitigation factors (flow meters) and sign off sheets to prevent such thing happening again in the future. **ACTION [REDACTED] to provide the internal report of this occurrence including lessons learnt.**
- 12) Viewed suckler cows and calves in beef yard
- 13) Viewed individual pens of calves in the isolation house.
- 14) Viewed sheep housing and the 3 pet lambs remaining at Hillsborough. Discussed pet lamb feeding

15) Looks at beef & sheep recording including the daily sign of sheets for each group of animals (& transport details to Loughgall) and the veterinary medicine records

I will liaise with [redacted] and [redacted] to provide updates on the Actions when these are available.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

Report above checked + agreed

[redacted]

20/6/25

20/6/25

## Animal Welfare Inspection

28 October 2025

Attendance: [REDACTED] (AFBI).

1. Viewed two batches of sheep.

- a. Batch 1 (approx. 50 ewes plus a teaser ram) grazing in a paddock of red clover field (Neat Brown Hill). [REDACTED] noted this was part of a study to see if red clover had any negative impact on fertility. Ewes had been allocated to the study the previous day and would be moving between a grass field (pm) and a red clover paddock (am) for a week until familiar with red clover diet. Sheep had been foot bathed and MOT as part of their pre-mating programme in the previous few days and a teaser ram was with them. Ewes appeared in suitable condition with no evidence of lameness. Water trough in paddock with a good supply of clean water available for them.
- b. Batch 2 (approx. 25 ewes plus teaser ram) in Far Brown Hill. Animals viewed from vehicle but visible to see they were in suitable condition for pre breeding. Several water troughs in view from laneway and could be seen that these were clean. [REDACTED] had noted this was a beef heifer grazing study and cattle had been paddock grazed up until last Monday when animals moved to Loughgall for TB testing and winter housing. Paddocks had been removed to free field for a group of ewes for mating.

2. Isolation House

Viewed the isolation house which had approximately 54 dairy calves – penned in groups of 2. All pens were well bedded and calves had access to clean fresh water and meal. Empty pens that were not holding calves were clean (had been power hosed) and either left clean or had fresh bedding in them ready for calves. Feed preparation area was clean and evident of good hygiene (clean buckets etc.). Health records were available and up to date. Daily sign off sheet showed the morning and afternoon visits and was up to date (27 Oct pm visit was not signed but all other dates in October had 2 signatures). The NACWO sign-off sheet was available and 2 inspections had been recorded by B Lagan in the previous 2 weeks. Rodent control was evident with a bait box beside the meal store. Meal stored in a steel meal bin and then 2 sealed containers for storing the meal in the shed. A bag of weigh back meal sitting beside these. The overall house was well ventilated and no smell of ammonia etc.

3. Sheep House

Sheep house viewed but no sheep within it. [REDACTED] noted sheep had recently been taken out of the house as their study ended within the past 1-2 weeks. The pens that had sheep in them recently was viewed and water troughs inspected – evident that these had fresh water. Other pens within house had been cleaned and power hosed. The area where lambing pens had been cleaned and evidence of lime on the floor. The lambing protocol for 2025 was still pinned to the wall which provided full details of the procedures for lambing, when to intervene, colostrum management, procedure for recording lambing

events and mortality etc. ■ noted that ewes are penned according to scanning results and fed concentrate accordingly – feeding protocol was pinned to wall. This noted that silage was to be offered restricted and supplemented with meal. ■ noted that a veterinary problem within the flock (which lead to ewe mortality and culling) was prolapse pre partum and this is why the restricted silage has been introduced. ■ also noted that in recent years lambing percentage had been higher than scanning percentage with high levels of multiple births (triplets and quads) which brings added complexity. Rodent bait box evident within the house.

#### 4. Barley Hill

2 groups of experimental beef cross calves viewed. First group in the more mature grass had experienced Coccidiosis post turnout and had a number of digestive upsets. These had been treated and are receiving concentrate plus they had been getting silage/straw in a ring feeder in the paddock to help with the problem. ■ noted that 7 animals had been removed from this group earlier in the month and housed in an isolated silo (Silo17) for extra attention. One had been euthanized by the vet as it did not respond to treatment.

Second group – looked much better (coat appearance) and appear to be settled in a nice plot of grass. Meal troughs in the paddock which had been recently moved as area not tramped. A number of water troughs available for each group and water within these was clean. Within the field there were a number of other paddocks evident that calves had been in previously – some corners had been tramped/poached a little in the bad weather but evident that this was short term and not prolonged.

#### 5. Beef calves in silo

One group in silo 31 (n~25) – lying in clean straw bed – counterpart to group in field – access to silage and water. One group in Silo 17 (6 calves) which had been housed from Barley Hill. Well bedded in clean straw, clean water supply, Clean troughs for meal and silage available for them. These appeared to be recovering well.

#### 6. Calf House

Washing facilities and disinfectant at entrance. A number of pens with ~10 calves per pen. Pens were clean with fresh bedding. Automatic feeders and calves had access to concentrate, fresh clean water and chopped straw. House floor passage was clean. A number of young calves in individual pens – these were well bedded and calves had access to fresh water. No evidence of scour or no ammonia smells within the house. Ventilation tube was operational in central passageway. Colostrum for new born calves was stored in fridge and was well labelled. Veterinary records available in the office and was up to date.

#### 7. Heifer rearing house

Dairy replacement heifers in cubicles which had sawdust bedding. Majority were fed from biocontrol feed boxes with only a small number feeding from the floor of the feed passage. Out of parlour feeders evident for feeding the concentrate. In the office there were animal records illustrating the heat recording which was up to date. ■ noted that dairy replacement heifer numbers were higher in 2024/25 owing to success of sexed semen and that extra housing for these heifers was underway – refurbishment of a previous beef house. This was viewed later and evident of it being in the final stages.

## 8. Dairy cows

- a. Viewed a number of houses with cows. Cows had access to feed either in feed bins or along the feed barrier. A lot of cows were lying in cubicles reflecting the time of day. Cubicles evident of being well cleaned and bedded.
- b. Calving pens were being cleaned out and stockmen were re-bedding these with lime and straw.
- c. Two new born calves in calf cots beside the calving pens. Details of these calves was recorded on a white board, including calf tag, cow tag, calving score, colostrum management etc. The calf cots were well bedded with straw and had heat lamps above them if required. They remain in cots for 24hrs then moved to calf house which was witnessed when we were on site.
- d. Asked stockperson to show us any cows with health issues. He identified two cows which had some level of lameness and showed these cows to us. Neither of which had any significant level of lameness evident. He provided detail of treatment that had been given to these cows, including details of one which has received antibiotics the previous week. This was recorded within the veterinary records provided by [REDACTED]. The stockman noted that he and a few others had been trained in cow foot care and they would regularly monitor and check cows feet if any signs of lameness occurs. He noted at drying off time cows routinely get their feet checked. If small numbers this is done internally by trained staff or if large numbers and external contractor would come in to do this.

## 9. Pigs

[REDACTED] provided a detailed overview and walk through the pig unit from birth to bacon. [REDACTED] got us to sign the visit book and checked we had not been on a pig farm in the run up to the inspection before giving access to the unit. The main sow house containing the breeding herd had automatic feeding and drafting system in place. The sows had access to a number of kennels and had enrichment in terms of straw, balls and chains with various toys attached. The sows had access to an area with a boar which is detected automatically. Gilts and boars in pens are also within this house. A small amount of sawdust is provided to these daily to provide enrichment but to prevent issues with the slurry system.

Sows in farrowing crates which are due to pig tomorrow were shown. The detailed farrowing protocol was discussed. Sows with 3 week old piglets were viewed in the farrowing crates. All animals looked in good condition and feeding records were available to see. The sows in the farrowing crates had water access with meters. Farrowing houses and weaner houses had temperature controls in place which are all alarmed. A number of weaned pigs were shown – these were in slatted pens with enrichment and in temperature controlled rooms. Daily check sheets were available for each house. The feeding system was shown and discussed.

Several rooms with and without pigs were shown. Those without pigs had been cleaned and disinfected. Isolation pens were shown, including one used to house an individual sow which was struggling with the automatic feeding system in the sow house. Whilst this sow was housed in an individual pen she had pigs in adjacent pens to keep her company and appears in good condition and not under any stress.

██████████ also provided a tour of the main finishing unit at the main yard. Three pig houses with pigs were shown. Again all pigs had access to either dry or wet feed and the feeding systems was explained by ██████████. Access to water was shown and checks are in place to monitor this in all pig accommodation.

██████████ provided a tour of the temporary accommodation for pigs in the old beef accommodation. This was the accommodation that had a water issue earlier in the year which resulted in pig mortality which was reported at the previous Welfare Inspection.

██████████ showed the water system in place and how water metres had been added so that these could be monitored when pigs are being housed. ██████████ was able to show a check sheet demonstrating how this had been done.

██████████ noted that rodent control was managed by an outside company that come on a monthly basis. There visits are recorded in the visitor log book at the pig unit and this can be available to view. ██████████ noted the strict biosecurity and that they would follow a similar route to the visit he offered during the inspection.

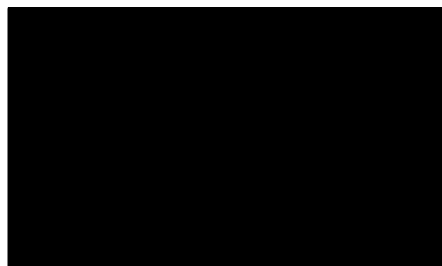
10. TB isolation house

The isolation TB beef cow and a dairy cow were viewed in an isolation house beside the beef unit. Both were in a deep pen of straw and had access to clean water.

11. ██████████ offered to show another group of beef cows and calves that were grazing at the back of the estate. These had been previously viewed from the distance when looking at the sheep – no issues noted and drink troughs all clean.

12. ██████████ provided a brief update of the inspection to ██████████ (Farm Director), ██████████ (Head of Branch) and ██████████ (Head of Division). Summary of inspection was that there was no evidence of animal welfare concerns across the AFBI Hillsborough platform. Animals looked well, had access to feed and clean water and suitable bedding. Evidence of good record keeping in place. Evidence of husbandry management protocols. Evidence of rodent control across the site. Evidence of biosecurity/disinfectant footbaths across the site.

This is an accurate account of findings  
on 28/10/25



# 390002 AFBI Hillsborough

17/06/2025 by \_\_\_\_\_ (DAERA)































































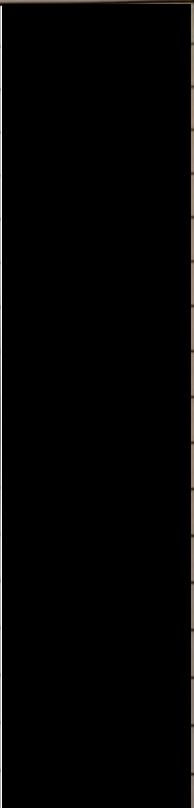
DATE	Name of Vet Medicine	Medicine Batch No.	Animal ID / Batch	Quantity used	Treated for / Reason	BEEF & SHEEP Withdrawal Period (meat)		Name of Person Admin Medicine
						Days	Date withdrawal ends	
14/4	Pen strep	4383-50A		0.25 ml	Do this Seen by vets	31	13/5	
"	Melican	T21022-39		0.25 ml	"	15	29/4	
"	Pen strep	4383-50A		0.25 ml	"	31	13/5	
"	Melican	T21022-39		0.25 ml	"	15	29/4	
18/4	Pen Streap	4383-50A		0.5	Sore leg	31	17/5	
19/4	Melican	T21022-39		0.25	"	15	3/5	
20/4	Bela max	4201-50B		8 ml	Dull not eating	29	19/5	
20/4	Pen Streap	4383-50A		0.25 ml	Sore leg	31	21/5	
20/4	Pen streap	4383-50A		0.25 ml	" "	31	21/5	
22/4	Pen Streap	4383-50A		0.5 ml	" "	31	23/5	
23/4	Pen streap	4383-50A		0.5 ml	Sore leg	31	24/5	
23/4	Pen streap	4383-50A		0.5 ml	Sore leg	31	24/5	
23/4	Bela max	4201-50B		8 ml	Hard lambs	29	22/5	
24/4	Melican	T21022-39		2 ml	" "	15	9/5	
30/4	Melican	T21022-39		2 ml	Mostr	15	14/5	
30/4	Pen	740635		2.5 ml	"	16	15/5	
5/5	Pen Streap	4023-50A		0.5 ml	Dull	28	2/6	
10/5	Draquin	740635		2 ml	Dull/Sore feet	15	23/5	
12/5	Draquin	740635		2 ml	Mastitis	15	27/5	
24/5	Pen streap	4201-50B		2.5 ml	Dull	39	2/7	

# SHEEP HEALTH RECORDS 2024

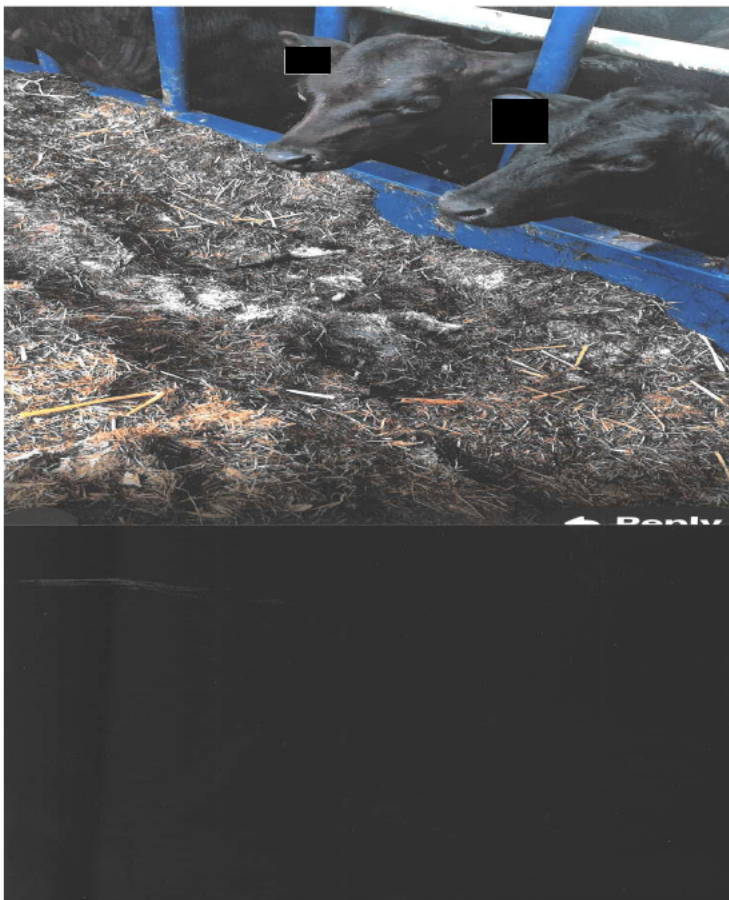
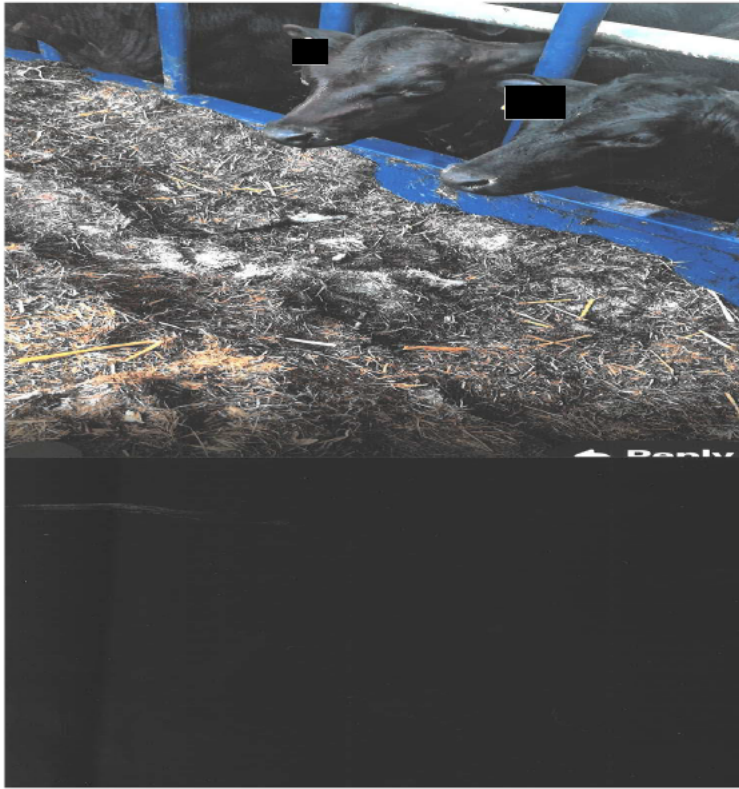


Field/House: Silo 17

No. & Type of Stock - 13 calves.

DATE	Comment - (water / fencer power / meal feed per head / health of stock)	INITIAL
01/06/25	ok Fed.	
02/06/25	ok Fed.	
03/06/25	ok Fed.	
04/06/25	ok fed	
05/06/25	OK Fed	
06/06/25	ok Fed + bedded	
07/06/25	ok fed	
08/06/25	ok Fed	
09/06/25	ok Fed	
10/06/25	ok Fed	
11/06/25	ok Fed	
12/06/25	ok Fed bedded.	
13/06/25	ok Fed.	
14/06/25	ok Fed + bedded	
15/06/25	ok Fed	
16/06/25	ok fed	
17/06/25	ok fed	
18/06/25		
19/06/25		
20/06/25		
21/06/25		
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25/06/25		
26/06/25		

15 Photographs from record AE1/25/2880546



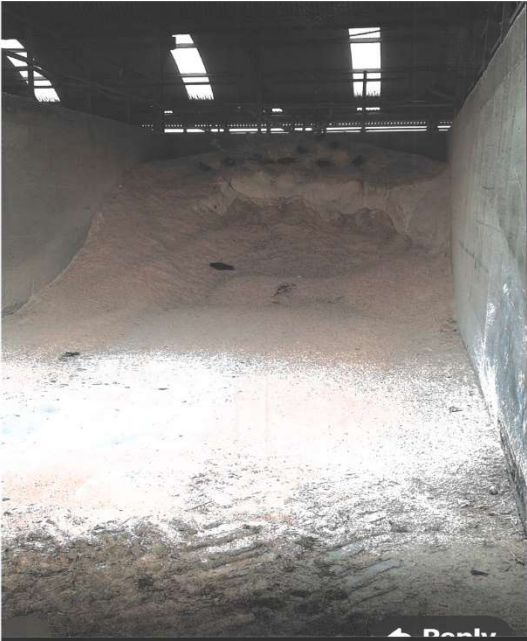


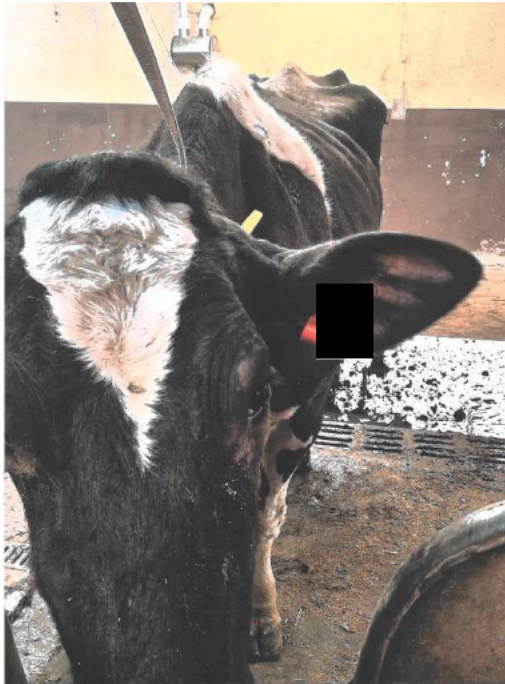
Reply





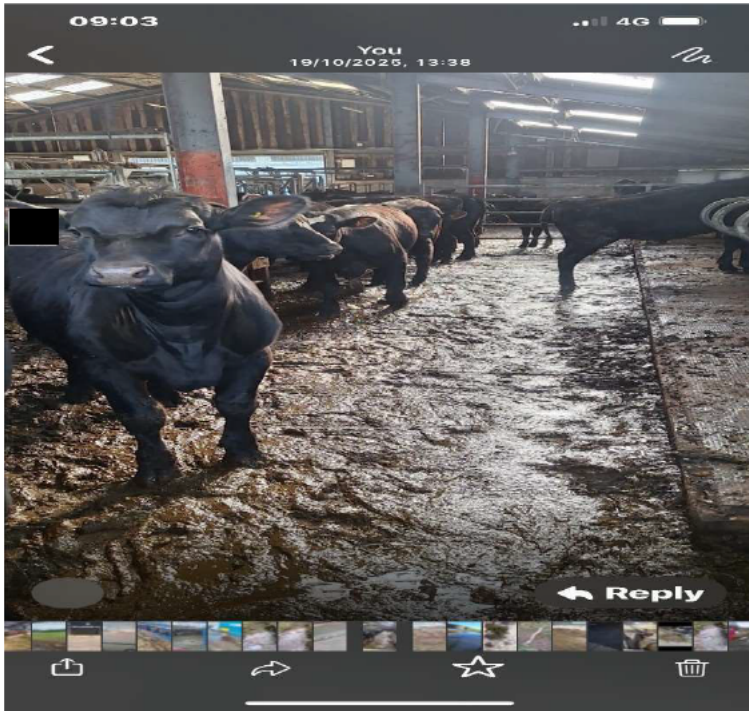


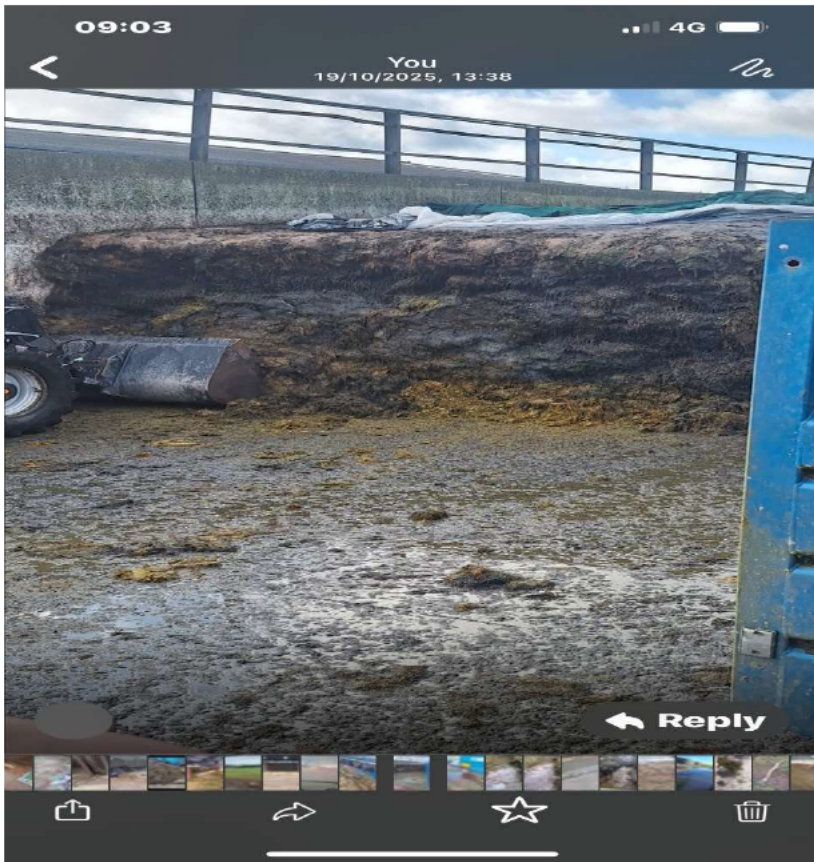
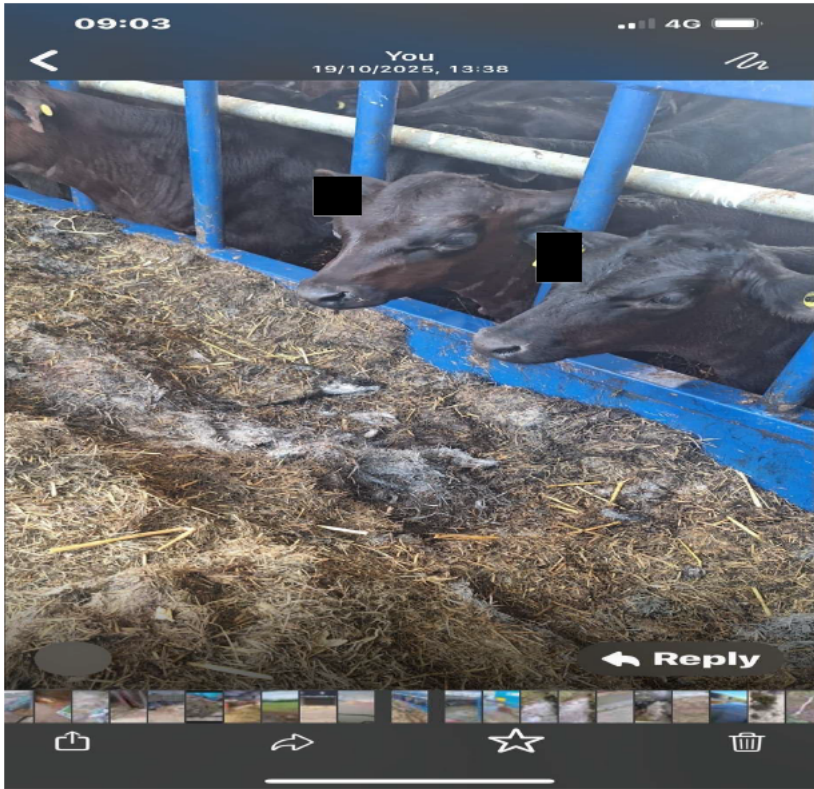


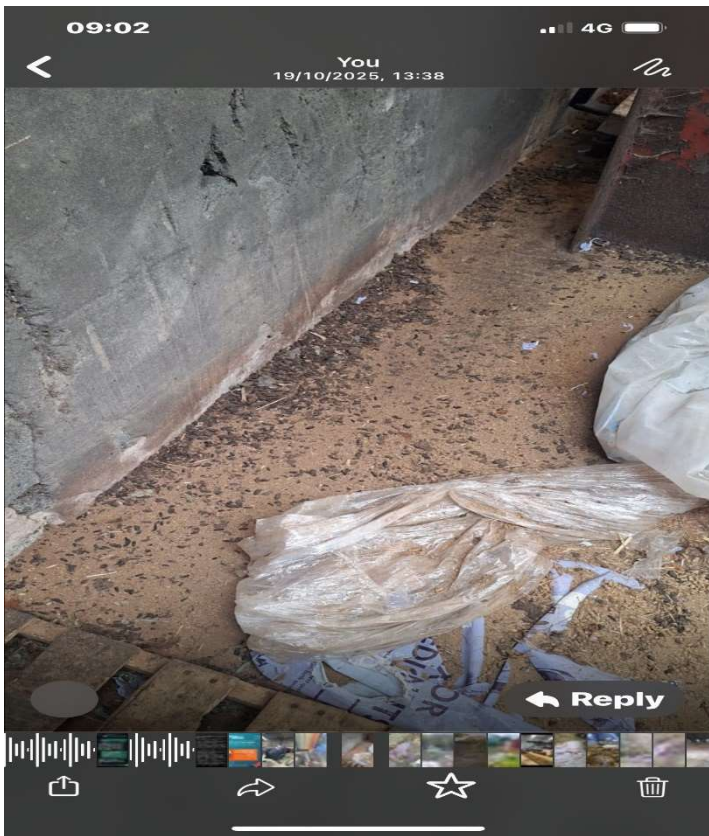
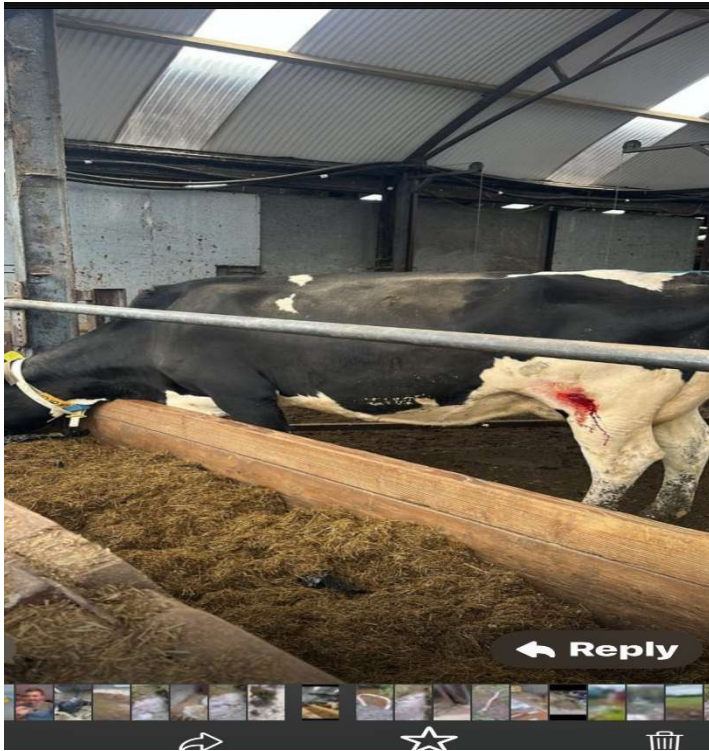


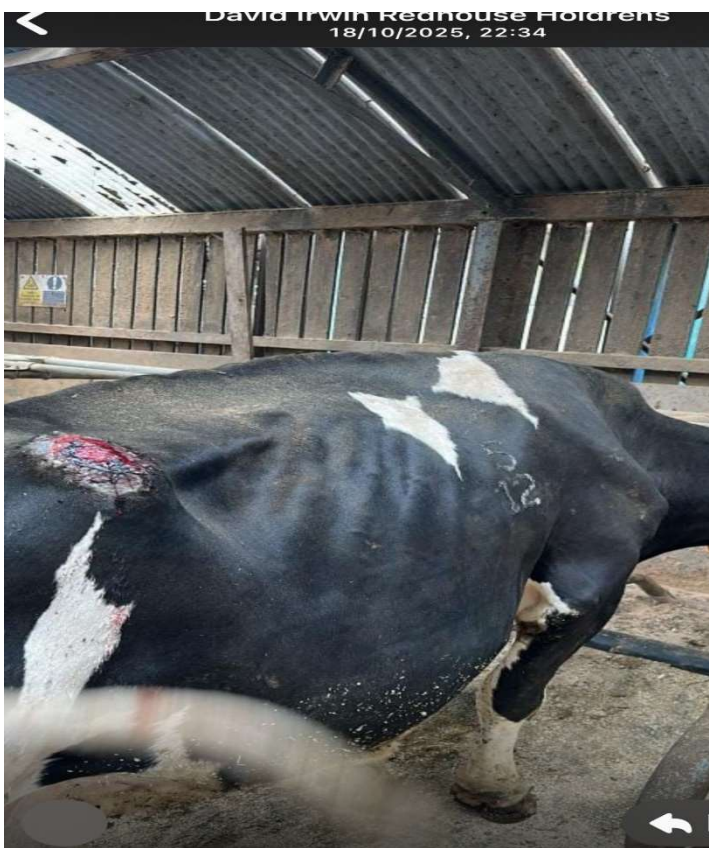
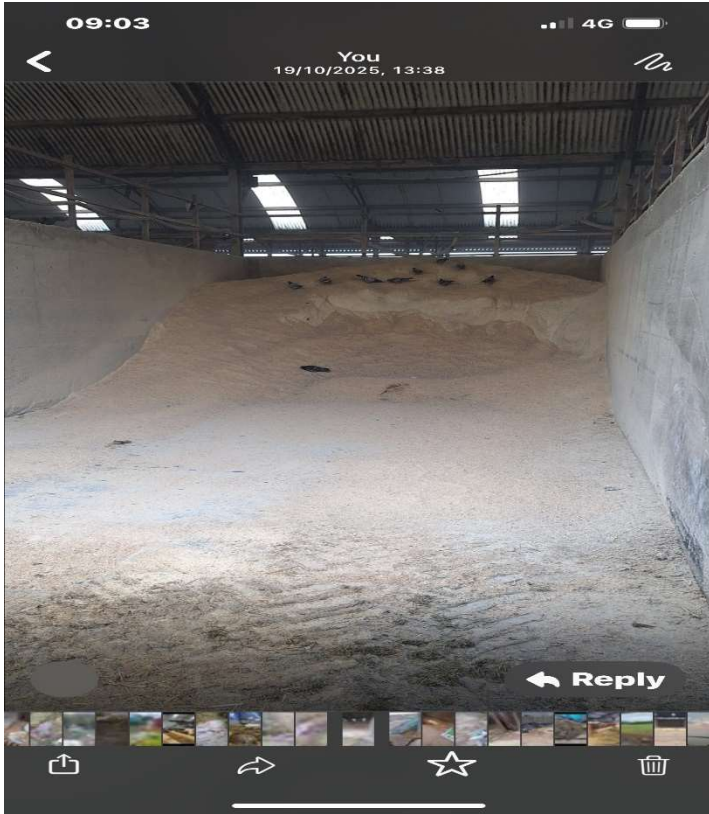


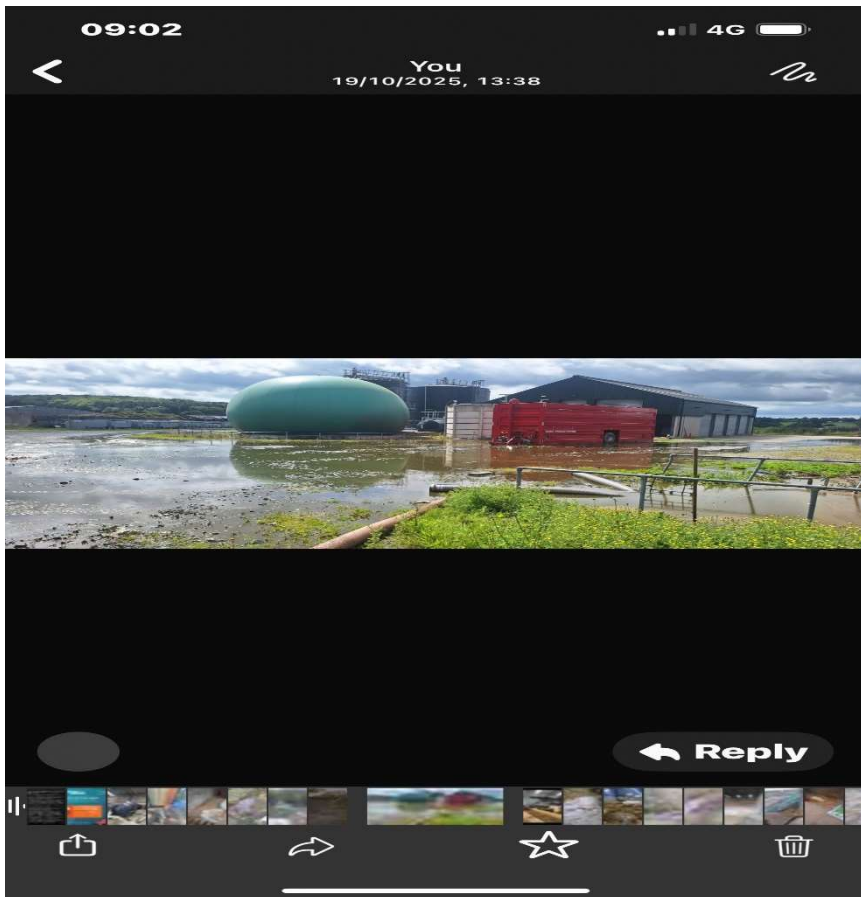
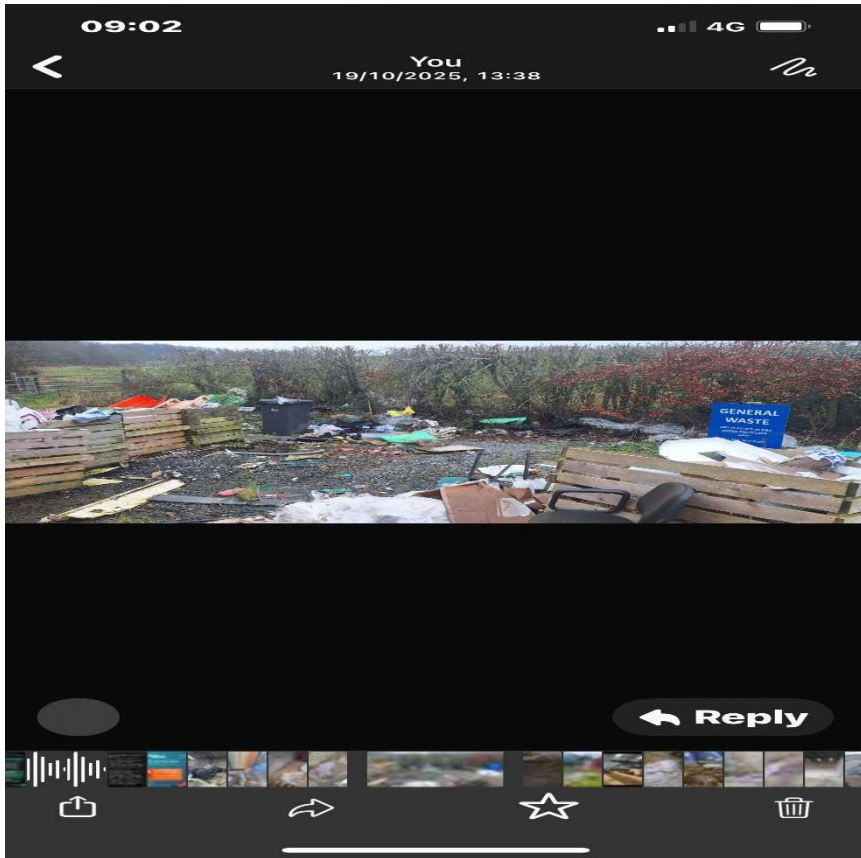
**10 Photos attachments from AE1/25/2623044**











**Extraction of email: AE1/25/1897540**

From: McDowell, Stanley

Sent: 17 June 2025 16:20

To: DAERA PermSec

Cc: McAuley, Nuala ; Caldwell, Alison

Subject: RE: AFBI issues

Dear Katrina,

Separate to the contact with [REDACTED] MLA, trade union have raised concerns in relation to animal welfare at Hillsborough in the form of photographs and videos. I have made the CVO aware. We are also in the process of investigating internally and have sought initial re-assurance from the Director, senior farm managers and the private vet which provides veterinary cover to the site.

Regards

Stanley

AEI | 25 | 1897568

[REDACTED]

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**From:** McAuley, Nuala  
**Sent:** 18 July 2025 15:42  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Raising concerns MLA case outcome letter to Alison Caldwell  
**Attachments:** Raising concerns MLA case outcome letter to Alison Caldwell.DOCX

Folks – please find attached AFBI update re the concerns raised by the MLA .  
Happy to provide further information as required.

Regards  
Nuala

**Extraction of attachment: AE1/25/1897568**

Chief Executive's Office  
AFBI Headquarters  
18a Newforge Lane  
Malone Upper  
Belfast  
BT9 5PX

E-mail: 

Ms Alison Caldwell  
Senior Sponsor  
DAERA  
Jubilee House  
111 Ballykelly Road  
Ballykelly  
Limavady BT49 9HP

**BY EMAIL - 18 July 2025**

**RE: Concerns Raised at AFBI Hillsborough**

Dear Alison,

**Subsequent Animal Health Concerns Raised**

Further to the complaints via the MLA, concerns were raised by NIPSA in relation to animal husbandry and welfare, on 04 June 2025. An initial review has been undertaken and no current cause for concern found.

However, given there were also historic issues highlighted, a more extensive investigation is being undertaken by a senior AFBI Vet, independent of the business area being investigated. They will consider how the incidents arose, the appropriateness of the response and any lessons learned recommendations.

Kind regards



**Nuala McAuley**

**Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs**

AE1/2S/2492975

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth  
**Sent:** 27 October 2025 16:10  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison; McAuley, Nuala; McDowell, Stanley; [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT - AFBI HILLSBOROUGH ALLEGATIONS/ CONCERNS

OK  
Thanks Alison

Elizabeth

---

**From:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 27 October 2025 16:08  
**To:** Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED] McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED]  
McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Subject:** URGENT - AFBI HILLSBOROUGH ALLEGATIONS/ CONCERNS

All  
Just a heads up that I will be coming to you shortly seeking a response from AFBI in relation to the allegations coming through from GB news. The minister wants an update by cop today. Also the AERA chair has been contacted and has written to the Minister and has done an interview. I will send you through the allegations as recorded by DAERA press office when received.  
A response this evening will be required.

Alison Caldwell // DAERA Director Corporate Governace //DAERA [REDACTED] Ex [REDACTED]

AE1/25/2445977

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth  
**Sent:** 27 October 2025 20:02  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison; Dooher, Brian  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] McDowell, Stanley; McAuley, Nuala; [REDACTED]  
DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch; Magowan, Elizabeth  
**Subject:** RE: GB NEWS CONTACT WITH PRESS OFFICE RE AFBI HILLSBOROUGH FARM

Alison

A clarification in green below.

Thanks  
Elizabeth

---

**From:** Caldwell, Alison; [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 27 October 2025 19:35  
**To:** Magowan, Elizabeth; [REDACTED] Dooher, Brian; [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** McCormick, Richard; [REDACTED] McDowell, Stanley  
[REDACTED] McAuley, Nuala; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: GB NEWS CONTACT WITH PRESS OFFICE RE AFBI HILLSBOROUGH FARM

Elizabeth  
As discussed – please see strike through below and also copying to Brian as you have asked. Please let me know of any other changes you need made.

---

**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth; [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 27 October 2025 17:59  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Cc:** Magowan, Elizabeth; [REDACTED] McDowell, Stanley; [REDACTED] McAuley, Nuala  
**Subject:** RE: GB NEWS CONTACT WITH PRESS OFFICE RE AFBI HILLSBOROUGH FARM

Dear Alison

Please find attached AFBI responses in italics.

This has been prepared to brief the minister. We would request that if the DAERA press office wish to use any of the information below that they would make contact with AFBI comms for review.

Happy to discuss

Elizabeth

---

**From:** Caldwell, Alison; [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 27 October 2025 16:15  
**To:** McDowell, Stanley; [REDACTED] Magowan, Elizabeth

McAuley, Nuala

DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch

Cc:

**Subject:** FW: GB NEWS CONTACT WITH PRESS OFFICE RE AFBI HILLSBOROUGH FARM

Stanley/Elizabeth

Please see email below of allegations picked up from DAERA press office phone calls with [REDACTED] of GB news.

Please provide a response from AFBI in relation to the issues raised i.e allegations of slurry spreading; animal welfare issues; rats; badgers; TB outbreak.

The minister has asked for an update by COP this evening so grateful if this could be responded to as a matter of urgency.

Alison

---

**From** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 27 October 2025 16:04

**To:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED] Kyle, David [REDACTED] Crowe, Richard [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] DG\_DAERAPressOffice.Group [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Godfrey, Katrina (DAERA – Perm Sec) [REDACTED]

**Subject:** GB NEWS CONTACT WITH PRESS OFFICE RE AFBI HILLSBOROUGH FARM

Hi everyone,

As you will be aware, [REDACTED] was contacted by [REDACTED] in GB News last Thursday about a story he had about AFBI where he claimed slurry was being spread which had got into Hillsborough Lake. He also claimed he had stomach turning footage of animals on AFBI's farm and asked if he could interview the Minister. He was asked to formally submit an interview and detail the allegations. His interview bid formally came in for the Minister but contained no detail about the allegations. It was turned down on Friday.

We understand from AFBI press office they were contacted too last weekend and over the weekend they asked for him to provide his evidence of the allegations which they said they would take seriously.

[REDACTED] contacted [REDACTED] again this morning, asking to interview the Minister. When asked to submit an email about what the interview was about, he was again loathe to do so.

1) footage of animals in distress on AFBI's farm.

*AFBI can confirm that it upholds the highest industry- accredited standards of animal health, welfare and environmental compliance. AFBI's controls with regard to animal health and welfare go further and include:*

- **Twice-weekly inspections by independent veterinary surgeons;**

- **24/7 veterinary cover**, emergency veterinary covered provided by a local practice;
- **Comprehensive staff training** in animal care and welfare;
- **Detailed record-keeping** of all veterinary treatments and daily welfare checks;
- **Ongoing monitoring** of animal locomotion, body condition, performance, and liveweight;
- **Independent nutritional oversight** to ensure optimal diet formulation.

Part of the work at AFBI Hillsborough also falls under the 'Animals Scientific Procedures Act' (ASPA) which regulates the use of animals in research. Compliance with ASPA necessitates the implementation of additional measures, including strengthened governance structures, enhanced reporting mechanisms, comprehensive training, rigorous checks, and strict controls over all procedures involving the use of animals in scientific research.

AFBI received concerns internally aligned with animal health and welfare and environmental issues in June 2025. The concerns included photos and videos. Included within these was a case of Photosensitisation in a cow and some other minor injuries in cattle. Videos also included some of these animal injuries as well as bedding.

Upon receipt of the concerns, DAERA veterinary service were contacted and undertook an unannounced inspection. ~~DAERA's~~The welfare inspection report is also attached with three minor actions requested. These have now be completed.

Separate to this, the incidents noted in the photos and video, have be subject to internal investigation, which has included an internal review of documentation on veterinary records and an interview with the independent Vet. Initial findings have not reported any non-conformances.

Overall, the incidents raised within the recent concerns have all been investigated with no major issues or concerns with regard to the management of the incidents being identified (one final report is awaited but verbal feedback from the investigator has not identified any issues).

These investigations and controls have provided AFBI with an assurance that its farm practices protect the welfare of its animals.

These internal concerns also noted 'environmental concerns' which included a suspected diesel/oil spill. We are aware of a leak of oil from a tank over 1 year ago. Spill kits were used at the time. This concern was investigated and found that the environmental issues highlighted had been detected and reported to NIEA at the time of occurrence and were deemed low risk.

2) He said rats and badgers were running through the farm.

AFBI Hillsborough is located close to a forest area and there are a number of significant badger setts on the farm and in the forest in close proximity to the Hillsborough farm. It is not uncommon to see badgers and evidence of their presence (i.e. badger tracks) on and around the AFBI Hillsborough farm.

AFBI Hillsborough is also in close proximity to the Hillsborough Lake. This type of environment is known to harbour rats. It is notable that we had a rat infestation in our piggery approximately a year ago, which is the closest farm building to the lake on the farm. This coincided with a change in pest control contractor. Corrective action has included increased and revised pest control protocols which have brought this issue back under control.

*AFBI strive to maintain a 'clean' farm with food sources secured where possible and pest control measures taken monthly, or more routinely where necessary.*

- 3) There had also been an outbreak of TB on the farm.

*The AFBI Hillsborough Cattle herd is currently under movement restrictive due to a recent positive TB test and has been for over a year. In a recent test we have 4 reactors. There are 300 dairy cows, plus their progeny and followers as well as 30 sucker cows and their progeny on the AFBI Hillsborough farm.*

- 4) [REDACTED] also said he had footage of what he insisted was slurry being spread on land outside the permitted period. AFBI has challenged this claim, insisting it was not slurry but dirty water.

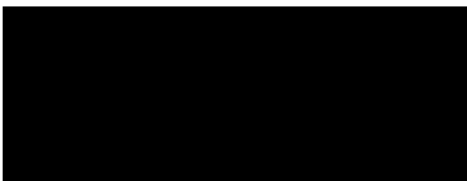
*AFBI suspects that this is in refence to a video that was taken by a member of the public, last week, which we have become aware of through our own staff members seeing it on social media.*

*AFBI refutes the allegation that AFBI was spreading slurry, AFBI was spreading 'dirty water' which represented mainly farmyard runoff, using low emissions spreading techniques. This is allowable within the regulations and was required to empty a tank which is currently being inspected for a maintenance inspection, which forms part of AFBI's environmental controls.*

*AFBI can provide more detail with regard to slurry management if required*

He said he was hoping to interview the AERA Committee chair about the footage and was also seeking a meeting with the Assembly Speaker and former Minister Edwin Poots. [REDACTED] also said there was a meeting taking place on Wednesday of farmers and he insisted it would be in the Minister's interests to be interviewed by him as people at the meeting would be very exercised by the footage.

As things stand, we understand [REDACTED] has not provided AFBI with this detail. Nor has he put any of the information relayed in today's phone call formally to our press office in an email and sough specific comment.



Media Relations  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
Clare House  
303 Airport Road West,  
Belfast  
BT3 9ED

Email: [REDACTED]  
Internal: [REDACTED]  
External: [REDACTED]  
Mobile: [REDACTED]

Twitter: @daera\_ni

All media queries for DAERA should be sent to [pressoffice.group@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice.group@daera-ni.gov.uk)

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

---

**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth  
**Sent:** 27 October 2025 17:59  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Cc:** Magowan, Elizabeth; [REDACTED] McDowell, Stanley; McAuley, Nuala  
**Subject:** RE: GB NEWS CONTACT WITH PRESS OFFICE RE AFBI HILLSBOROUGH FARM  
**Attachments:** AFBI report from [REDACTED]

Dear Alison

Please find attached AFBI responses in italics.

This has been prepared to brief the minister. We would request that if the DAERA press office wish to use any of the information below that they would make contact with AFBI comms for review.

Happy to discuss

Elizabeth

---

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**Sent:** 27 October 2025 16:15  
**To:** McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED] Magowan, Elizabeth  
[REDACTED] McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Subject:** FW: GB NEWS CONTACT WITH PRESS OFFICE RE AFBI HILLSBOROUGH FARM

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Alison

---

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**Sent:** 27 October 2025 16:04  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED] Kyle, David- [REDACTED] Crowe, Richard  
[REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] DG\_DAERAPressOffice.Group [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Godfrey, Katrina (DAERA – Perm Sec) [REDACTED]  
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*Upon receipt of the concerns, DAERA veterinary service were contacted and undertook an unannounced inspection. DAERA's welfare inspection report is also attached with three minor actions requested. These have now be completed.*

*Separate to this, the incidents noted in the photos and video, have be subject to internal investigation, which has included an internal review of documentation on veterinary records and an interview with the independent Vet. Initial findings have not reported any non-conformances.*

*The incidents raised within the recent concerns have all been closed out as being appropriately managed.*

*These investigations and controls have provided AFBI with an assurance that its farm practices protect the welfare of its animals.*

*These internal concerns also noted 'environmental concerns' which included a suspected diesel/oil spill. We are aware of a leak of oil from a tank over 1 year ago. Spill kits were used at the time. This concern was investigated and found that the environmental issues highlighted had been detected and reported to NIEA at the time of occurrence and were deemed low risk.*

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*AFBI can provide more detail with regard to slurry management if required*

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Media Relations  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
Clare House  
303 Airport Road West,  
Belfast  
BT3 9ED

Email: [REDACTED]  
Internal [REDACTED]  
External [REDACTED]  
Mobile: [REDACTED]

Twitter: @daera\_ni

All media queries for DAERA should be sent to [pressoffice.group@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice.group@daera-ni.gov.uk)

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** Caldwell, Alison  
**Sent:** 28 October 2025 13:26  
**To:** [REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Subject:** FW: DRAFT statement for GB News

[REDACTED]  
Please see attached – there may be some information in this useful for the [REDACTED] response.  
Thanks  
Alison

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 28 October 2025 10:06  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED] Godfrey, Katrina (DAERA – Perm Sec)  
[REDACTED] 2024 DAERA Spad [REDACTED] Crowe, Richard  
[REDACTED] Dooher, Brian [REDACTED] Kyle, David  
**Cc:** DG\_DAERAPressOffice.Group [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: DRAFT statement for GB News

Folks,

FYI

[REDACTED]  
**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 28 October 2025 09:48  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
DG\_DAERAPressOffice.Group [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** DG\_AFBI Corporate.Comms [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** DRAFT statement for GB News

Good morning,

Please see below DRAFT statement in reply to GB News request last night. This is a draft statement pending CEO approval, we aim to release this today

Best wishes,

---

**DRAFT AFBI Statement**

AFBI operates a scientific farm platform at its Hillsborough site, with its key purpose of conducting research to support and enhance the economic and environmental sustainability of farming systems in Northern Ireland.

We take any allegations extremely seriously and have robust procedures to investigate any concerns raised.

With regards to your email on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025, AFBI strenuously refutes any suggestions of poor farming practices with regard to animal health and welfare and slurry management at our Hillsborough farm.

AFBI can confirm that it upholds the highest standards of animal health and welfare. AFBI's controls include accreditation to industry quality standards and twice weekly checks by an independent veterinary surgeon.

At the Hillsborough site, we operate under strict protocols and procedures to ensure the responsible management of nutrients across our farm platform.

>>> ENDS <<<

---

[REDACTED] Corporate Comms/Press Office  
AFBI Headquarters, 18a Newforge Lane, Malone Upper, Belfast, BT9 5PX

T: [REDACTED] | M: [REDACTED] | E: [REDACTED]



AEI 12512608233

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

---

**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth  
**Sent:** 07 November 2025 09:27  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison; [REDACTED] AFBI Press-Office; DG\_AFBI Corporate.Comms  
**Cc:** McAuley, Nuala; [REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch; [REDACTED] McDowell, Stanley  
**Subject:** RE: Media queries from GB News

Alison

I fully appreciate the urgency. It appears most of the photos are from at least 12 – 48 months ago so we are collating a short narrative per photo/video at present to inform the discussion as fully as possible. I am concentrating this morning on building this. I will also need to relay the outcome of red tractor and NIEA from yesterday in this message which will require urgent action on some estates related matters.

If however a quick call with those interested in DAERA is useful please let me know and I will do my best to accommodate a verbal update

Elizabeth

---

**From:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 07 November 2025 06:59  
**To:** Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] AFBI Press-Office [REDACTED] DG\_AFBI Corporate.Comms [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Media queries from GB News

Elizabeth

Given the importance of this issue and the need for the department to fully understand what the allegations/issues are, any information received by AFBI and AFBI's assessment of it needs to be provided **urgently** this morning to the department. The committee were discussing what they have yesterday (which may or may not be the same) and I expect will send it shortly - but the department should be getting any information AFBI now has directly, not waiting on the committee having to provide it.

Alison

---

**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 06 November 2025 20:10  
**To:** [REDACTED] AFBI Press-Office [REDACTED] DG\_AFBI Corporate.Comms [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED] Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Media queries from GB News

[REDACTED]

This morning I have been sent what was sent to Red Tractor. When I review the photos and add what they are/explanations I will send over – which will likely be tomorrow afternoon at the earliest

Elizabeth

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 06 November 2025 18:11  
**To:** AFBI Press-Office [REDACTED] DG\_AFBI Corporate.Comms  
[REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED] McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Media queries from GB News

Hi [REDACTED]  
We had asked [REDACTED] to clarify and provide further information to us. To date he has not done so.

Best wishes

---

**From:** AFBI Press-Office [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 06 November 2025 16:12  
**To:** DG\_AFBI Corporate.Comms [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Media queries from GB News

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 6, 2025 4:12:14 PM (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London  
**To:** AFBI Press-Office [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** DG\_DAERAPressOffice.Group [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Media queries from GB News

Hi there,

Just wondering if [REDACTED] has been in touch with you recently?

Wondering if he has provided footage to you depicting any of his allegations? He has been in touch to say AERA committee has received footage.

Best,

[REDACTED] Press Office | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Contact: [REDACTED] Tel: [REDACTED] DD: [REDACTED]  
All media queries for DAERA should be sent to: [pressoffice.group@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice.group@daera-ni.gov.uk)

AE1/25/2623042

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth  
**Sent:** 07 November 2025 16:25  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison; DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch; DAERA Press-office (No Reply)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] DG\_AFBI Corporate.Comms; Magowan, Elizabeth;  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** AFBI - videos from media  
**Attachments:** d2fa8261-3044-4472-b333-93aac5204f34.MP4; 225cd2a6-b45b-4f9a-8b70-40d76fbbf39a.MP4;  
7429ebdb-3cf0-4e7d-8426-066ae58ab385.MP4;  
7ed46b07-0a71-4352-8802-99408d909be2.MP4

Good Afternoon

The attached and below refers to the videos which were sent to GB news and which we suspect have been sent to members of the AERA committee.

AFBI have reviewed these videos and the following provides our initial knowledge of the circumstances. We are sharing now to support any communications required urgently. A second email will follow with similar to the above for the photos that have been passed to us.

**Video 1 (d2fa826-3044-4472....) – Spreading soiled water over Willows for irrigation and  
Video 2 (225cd2a6 - ....) – Spreading soiled water into forest**

Based on local staff knowledge, it is estimated both these incidents took place Dec 2023/Jan 2024 – the water spread represented dirty water (mainly rain water flowing off yards). AFBI staff are confident that this is dirty water since no residue is present on the sight tube as well as local knowledge on the need to empty dirty water tanks, especially at this time of year when capacity was becoming a challenge and especially after heavy rainfall. It is notable that the dirty water collected from AFBI's yards is significant due to the challenging infrastructure. As such AFBI Hillsborough regularly need to spread dirty water during the closed period (which is permitted under NAP regulations).

Current members of staff have noted that normal practice is to spread dirty water onto fields, using LESSE. While the willows do often receive dirty water via irrigation during the winter period, current staff have noted that the spreading of dirty water over the top of the willows or into the forest is not normal practice. AFBI staff working on the farm have confirmed that managerial instruction was, and still is, to spread dirty water in fields using LESSE.

**Video 3 (7429ebdb-3cf0.....) Area in Silo used to hold minerals for daily feeding**

It is not known when this was taken. This is an area which is used to hold minerals for animal diets. The cleaning of these types of areas is undertaken on a weekly basis. While a routine task is now mandated with regard to cleaning and tidying, it has always been the expectation that staff maintain areas to a satisfactory manner. As such it is assumed that the member of staff who recorded this video, has taken it prior to the cleaning of area which would have been expected but which is now a mandatory task. Both the recent (Nov 2025) DAERA and Red Tractor inspections would have reviewed these types of areas and no issues were identified.

**Video 4 (7ed46b07...) – Milk overflowing from slurry tanker for Bovaer study**

It is estimate this incident took place mid/end Dec 2024.

A DAERA funded project is currently investigating the use of the Bovaer feed additive to reduce the emissions of methane from dairy cows. Unfortunately AFBI's milk processor have a policy to not accept milk from Bovaer fed cows. As such the milk from the Bovaer fed cows on this trial is disposed off through AFBI's slurry infrastructure. In order to facilitate this, a slurry tanker is used to transfer the milk from the parlour to a slurry tank. This practice started on 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024. This was an isolated incident and no reported overflow of milk as seen in the video has occurred since. It was estimated there was circa 30-40 litres of milk had overflowed onto the ground. The location of this overflow was not close to any drainage channels to watercourses and it is expected this overflow would have been captured in the dirty water drainage system.

Happy to discuss

Elizabeth

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth  
**Sent:** 07 November 2025 17:21  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison; [REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Magowan, Elizabeth; DG AFBI Corporate.Comms; McDowell, Stanley; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** AFBI - photos from media  
**Attachments:** IMG\_6472.jpeg; IMG\_6473.jpeg; IMG\_6469.jpeg; IMG\_6470.jpeg; IMG\_6462.jpeg; IMG\_6463.jpeg; IMG\_6467.jpeg; IMG\_6459.jpeg; IMG\_6464.jpeg; IMG\_6465.jpeg

Good Afternoon

The attached and below refers to the photos which were sent to GB news and which we suspect have been sent to members of the AERA committee.

AFBI have reviewed these photos and the following provides our initial knowledge of the circumstances. We are sharing now to support any communications required urgently. A second email will follow with similar to the above for the photos that have been passed to us.

**IMG 6472 – Animals in house with slurry on floor**

This appears to be taken at AFBI Loughgall, Deerpark Farm. On 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023, partly due to an overflowing water/burst drinker filling the tank, the slurry came up through the slats. Sensors had been installed shortly prior to this incidence in the tanks but failed to support the management of levels in this implementation period. Upon finding this incident, staff arrange for 8000 gallon of slurry to be removed to alternative slurry storage. Slatted areas were also scraped down that evening. At all times animals had access to raised dry cubicles to lie on. The cleanliness of the animals in the image supports the incident being short term and for the animals to have an alternative dry lying area.

**IMG 6473 – Cow**

AFBI Hillsborough routinely monitor and record the body condition (BCS) is all cows. This average BCS is approximately 2.5, typical of dairy animals. The BCS of this cow was 2 through the lactation in question. It is thought this photo was taken in July 2025. Health records note that this animal took pneumonia shortly after July. Veterinary intervention was sought and treatment undertaken under veterinary supervision. The animal was subsequently culled.

**IMG 6469- Beef youngstock at feed barrier**

It is estimated this picture was taken around July/August 2023. The ear tag number in the picture correlates to calves which were born in March 2023, and the animal size would indicate that this animal would be circa 4 months old. Feeding Protocols at AFBI Hillsborough state that 'refused' silage should be removed from feed areas and replaced with fresh silage daily. Current farm management practices ensure that these protocols are followed. The recent unannounced DAERA and Red Tractor inspections did not find any issues with regard to this area of management.

**IMG 6470 – silo face**

Farm staff recall a silo face of this nature in 2023. A poor batch of silage was produced mainly due to the silo having to be closed and re-opened to accommodate the overflow of silage from multiple cuts. This type of material is commonly 'fed' to the on site digester. The equipment being used in this image supports that this silage was not being used for feed but was being used for the digester since a general bucket was being used to transfer the material to a blue Kane trailer in the right-hand corner of the picture you will see a blue Kane trailer. This commonly used for moving Farmyard Manure to the Midden or the AD plant.

**IMG 6462 – cow with cut on leg**

AFBI are aware of this incident which has also been investigated internally. The injury occurred on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 and was treated successfully under veterinary supervision. The recent unannounced Red Tractor and DAERA inspections have raised no concerns regarding animal welfare at AFBI Hillsborough.

#### **IMG 6463 – meal on floor in beef store**

It appears this picture was taken in the beef store before April 2023 as this area has had a waste compactor placed in front of it since that time.

The general area of 'the beef store' is used to hold feed for animals. The cleaning of these types of areas is undertaken on a weekly basis. While a routine task is now mandated with regard to cleaning and tidying, it has always been the expectation that staff maintain areas to a satisfactory manner. As such it is assumed that this photo was taken prior to the cleaning of the area which would have been expected but which is now a mandatory task. Both the recent (Nov 2025) DAERA and Red Tractor inspections would have reviewed these types of areas and no issues were identified.

#### **IMG 6467 – Meal in silo**

Discussions are ongoing within AFBI and with DAERA estates to bring forward improvements on the AFBI Hillsborough farm. One of these projects aligns with the management and storage of feed materials. Due to a malfunction of one of the overhead gantry bins the meal in the photo had to be stored in a dry silo until a longer term solution is found. Feed is normally covered when stored in an open silo such as this.

#### **IMG 6459 – cow with cut on Hinch**

AFBI are aware of this incident which has also been investigated internally. The injury was treated on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and was treated successfully under veterinary supervision. The recent unannounced Red Tractor and DAERA inspections have raised no concerns regarding animal welfare at AFBI Hillsborough.

#### **IMG 6467 – untidy waste compound area**

It is unknown when this picture was taken, however there are now skips in that general locality and has been for the past few years. Discussions also continue within AFBI and with DAERA estates with regard to putting in place a dedicated waste compound area for the site. There are also ongoing discussion with the waste collection contractor to manage waste collection effectively. Staff are expected to keep areas tidy to a satisfactory standard. This has recently been made a mandatory task for all teams on the AFBI Hillsborough site.

#### **IMG 6459 – Slurry spill at AD Plant**

It is estimated that this picture was taken spring/summer 2023. AFBI is aware of this incident. An external contractor failed to fully close the valve after filling the tanker, the slurry then leaked out. It was detected quickly by AFBI staff who closed the value and initiated the protocol to mitigate impact on any surrounding water courses. NIEA were also informed and visited the site. NIEA were content with the actions taken.

#### **Further information:**

- 1) A recent inspection from NIEA has highlighted a 'minor pollution incident' in a nearby water course likely to have been a result of effluent escaping from the farmed platform's storm drainage. A recent Red tractor inspection had also identified a risk of effluent escape at some points on the farm. AFBI management had already identified some areas as high risk with regard to effluent escape and general challenges to manage dirty water, especially from the yard areas. AFBI had commenced discussions on infrastructural improvements that could significantly reduce the risk. Due to these above inspections, AFBI now have a very short period of time (i.e. ~7 days) to complete the improvements required in order to address the 'minor pollution incident' in particular.
- 2) Recent inspections from DAERA, NIEA and Red Tractor have confirmed no other issues aligned with animal health, welfare or environmental issues.

Happy to discuss

Elizabeth

AE1/25/2864390

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 December 2025 14:21  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** McAuley, Nuala; [REDACTED] DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI Hillsborough - Red Tractor

Hi [REDACTED]

I am just following up on [REDACTED] query below and checking whether you provided us with a response as we have stated in various briefing that this Red Tractor audit has taken place, so we just want the current position if the Minister is asked where this investigation is at.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED] | Corporate Governance Division  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED

Tel: [REDACTED] Ext [REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

---



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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 20 November 2025 15:42  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** AFBI Hillsborough - Red Tractor

Hi [REDACTED]

At the last accountability meeting it was mentioned that there would be a Red Tractor inspection of AFBI Hillsborough after the allegations were made. Has this inspection taken place yet and if so, could the findings be shared.

Many Thanks

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Jubilee House | Ballykelly Road | Limavady | BT49 9HP

Tel: [REDACTED] | Ext: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED]

---



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

An Roinn  
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Deapirtment o'  
**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

---

**From:** McDowell, Stanley  
**Sent:** 03 December 2025 15:55  
**To:** DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Cc:** Magowan, Elizabeth; [REDACTED]; Caldwell, Alison  
**Subject:** RE: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Thanks [REDACTED]

We will review asap and respond. As you say, at an initial scan through most seem to be the same as we previously forwarded a couple of weeks ago with some additional ones.

Kind regards

Stanley

-----Original Message-----

**From:** DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 03 December 2025 15:40  
**To:** McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]; Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Hi Stanley,

Please see attached photos which have been provided by the AERA committee regarding the AFBI Hillsborough allegations. It looks like a number of photos are the same as previously received however there also seems to be some new photos. Grateful if you can review and provide explanations for these as soon as possible.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division Department of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Jubilee House | Ballykelly Road | Limavady | BT49 9HP

Tel: [REDACTED] Ex: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]

AEI/25/2887178

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 December 2025 11:00  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI Hillsborough - Red Tractor

[REDACTED] for info and saving to CM please

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED

Tel: [REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

---



Department of  
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[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

An Roinn  
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 December 2025 16:16  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: AFBI Hillsborough - Red Tractor

Hi [REDACTED]

I have reminded the relevant area and will revert asap.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Agri Food & Biosciences Institute AFBI | Finance and Corporate Affairs  
Division | 18A Newforge Lane Belfast BT9 5PX | [REDACTED] Mobile: [REDACTED] E-Mail: [REDACTED]



AGRI-FOOD  
& BIOSCIENCES  
INSTITUTE

Leading | Protection

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 02 December 2025 14:21  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: McAuley, Nuala <[REDACTED]>; DAERA  
AFBI Sponsor Branch <[REDACTED]>  
Subject: FW: AFBI Hillsborough - Red Tractor

Hi [REDACTED]

I am just following up on [REDACTED] query below and checking whether you provided us with a response as we have stated in various briefing that this Red Tractor audit has taken place, so we just want the current position if the Minister is asked where this investigation is at.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED

Tel: [REDACTED] | Ext: [REDACTED] | E-mail: [REDACTED]



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

An Roinn  
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 20 November 2025 15:42  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: McAuley, Nuala <[REDACTED]>  
Subject: AFBI Hillsborough - Red Tractor

Hi [REDACTED]

At the last accountability meeting it was mentioned that there would be a Red Tractor inspection of AFBI Hillsborough after the allegations were made. Has this inspection taken place yet and if so, could the findings be shared.

Many Thanks

[REDACTED] | Corporate Governance Division  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Jubilee House | Ballykelly Road | Limavady | BT49 9HP

Tel: [REDACTED] | Ext: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED]



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

An Roinn  
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of  
**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

AEI/25/2887747

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 December 2025 11:04  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE  
**Attachments:** pics001.jpg; pics002.jpg; pics003.jpg; pics004.jpg; pics005.jpg; pics006.jpg; pics007.jpg; pics008.jpg; pics009.jpg; pics010.jpg; pics011.jpg; pics012.jpg; pics013.jpg; pics014.jpg; pics015.jpg

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

[REDACTED]  
For info and saving to CM please

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED

Tel: [REDACTED] | Ext: [REDACTED] | E-mail [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 December 2025 18:37  
**To:** McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED]; Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Stanley and Elizabeth

There is also a video, some of which relates to these pictures but also some additional material. I am not sure if you will be able to view it in the format I am sending this evening but if not we will get it to you some other way tomorrow morning.

[REDACTED]  
Thanks  
Alison

-----Original Message-----

**From:** DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 03 December 2025 15:40  
**To:** McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]; Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]

Subject: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Hi Stanley,

Please see attached photos which have been provided by the AERA committee regarding the AFBI Hillsborough allegations. It looks like a number of photos are the same as previously received however there also seems to be some new photos. Grateful if you can review and provide explanations for these as soon as possible.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division Department of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Jubilee House | Ballykelly Road | Limavady | BT49 9HP

Tel: [REDACTED] Ext: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]

AEI / 25 / 2887781

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 December 2025 11:16  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

For info and to update sub and for saving to CM.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division Department of  
Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Clare House | 303 Airport Road West |  
Belfast | BT3 9ED

Tel: [REDACTED] Ext: [REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 December 2025 19:10  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]; McDowell, Stanley

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Thanks Alison

That link worked OK.

As discussed we will comment on all making reference to the videos and comments we have already sent previously to flag where the duplication is.

We will also provide an overview of the dates and inspections with their outcomes. It will take us a couple of days at least to collate this.

As mentioned Red tractor and NIFCC audits were closed today successfully. It might be useful to make Minster and PS aware if meeting the aera committee in the morning.

Elizabeth

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]

Sent: 03 December 2025 18:37

To: McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED] Magowan, Elizabeth

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Stanley and Elizabeth

There is also a video, some of which relates to these pictures but also some additional material. I am not sure if you will be able to view it in the format I am sending this evening but if not we will get it to you some other way tomorrow morning.

[REDACTED]

Thanks  
Alison

-----Original Message-----

From: DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch [REDACTED]

Sent: 03 December 2025 15:40

To: McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED]

Cc: Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]

Subject: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Hi Stanley,

Please see attached photos which have been provided by the AERA committee regarding the AFBI Hillsborough allegations. It looks like a number of photos are the same as previously received however there also seems to be some new photos. Grateful if you can review and provide explanations for these as soon as possible.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division Department of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Jubilee House | Ballykelly Road | Limavady | BT49 9HP

Tel: [REDACTED] | Ext: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED]

AE1/25/2949699

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** Caldwell, Alison  
**Sent:** 10 December 2025 16:15  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE  
**Attachments:** AFBI Comments on Pictures and Video from AERA Committee Final.docx

[REDACTED]  
Grateful if you and team could consider and incorporate into ministerial briefing.  
Alison

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 10 December 2025 13:57  
**To:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Dear Alison

Please find attached a word document in response to your email below.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me. We would also be grateful, if it was possible, if you could provide us with the process being adopted within DAERA with regard to this matter. As you can imagine this is a very sensitive matter and we would appreciate input (or at least sight of) any correspondence being made with the AERA committee.

Kind regards  
Elizabeth

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 December 2025 18:37  
**To:** McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED] Magowan, Elizabeth

**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Stanley and Elizabeth

There is also a video, some of which relates to these pictures but also some additional material. I am not sure if you will be able to view it in the format I am sending this evening but if not we will get it to you some other way tomorrow morning

[REDACTED]  
Thanks  
Alison

-----Original Message-----

From: DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch [REDACTED]

Sent: 03 December 2025 15:40

To: McDowell, Stanley <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Magowan, Elizabeth <[REDACTED]>

[REDACTED] Caldwell, Alison

Subject: AFBI HILLSBOROUGH - PHOTOS FROM THE AERA COMMITTEE

Hi Stanley,

Please see attached photos which have been provided by the AERA committee regarding the AFBI Hillsborough allegations. It looks like a number of photos are the same as previously received however there also seems to be some new photos. Grateful if you can review and provide explanations for these as soon as possible.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division Department of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Jubilee House | Ballykelly Road | Limavady | BT49 9HP

Tel: [REDACTED] Ext: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]

AEI/25/2954399

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Magowan, Elizabeth  
**Sent:** 10 December 2025 14:11  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Caldwell, Alison; [REDACTED] McDowell, Stanley; [REDACTED] Magowan, Elizabeth  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI Hillsborough - Red Tractor  
**Attachments:** 740.pdf; 3358.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear [REDACTED]

In response to your email below:

An audit of the diary, beef and sheep production practices was undertaken by NIFCC on 6<sup>th</sup> Nov 25 to align with Red Tractor and NIFCC certification respectively.

These audits identified a number of minor severity non-compliances. The non compliances mainly represented updating some records, especially using the Red Tractor templates, inability to access the required records on the day which were subsequently followed up, the removal of very high level cobwebs in the milking areas, a service certification for the robot milking system and a new lock on a door and minor infrastructure works to manage effluent from some old silos. All issues were addressed by AFBI Hillsborough swiftly and relevant evidence was submitted to Red Tractor and NIBL FQAS in the w/c 24/11/2025. As a result the attached letters (dated 3/12/2025) confirm that all findings were addressed to the satisfaction of NIFCC and resolved in the time period required (4/12/25).

Happy to discuss if needed

Elizabeth

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 20 November 2025 15:43  
**To:** Magowan, Elizabeth [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: AFBI Hillsborough - Red Tractor

Afternoon Elizabeth,

Please see request from ASB, grateful if you could advise.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Division | 18A Newforge Lane Belfast BT9 5PX | [REDACTED]

Agri Food & Biosciences Institute AFBI | Finance and Corporate Affairs

Mobile: [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]



AGRI-FOOD  
& BIOSCIENCES  
INSTITUTE

Leading | Protection

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 20 November 2025 15:42  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED]  
Subject: AFBI Hillsborough - Red Tractor

Hi [REDACTED]

At the last accountability meeting it was mentioned that there would be a Red Tractor inspection of AFBI Hillsborough after the allegations were made. Has this inspection taken place yet and if so, could the findings be shared.

Many Thanks

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Jubilee House | Ballykelly Road | Limavady | BT49 9HP

Tel: [REDACTED] Ext: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]



Department of  
Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

An Roinn  
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Department o'  
Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers

AEI/25/2954344: Attachment (1)

Ref. No: 740

4th December 2025

AGRI-FOOD & BIOSCIENCES INST  
AGRI-FOOD & BIOSCIENCES INST.  
LARGE PARK  
HILLSBOROUGH  
BT26 6DR

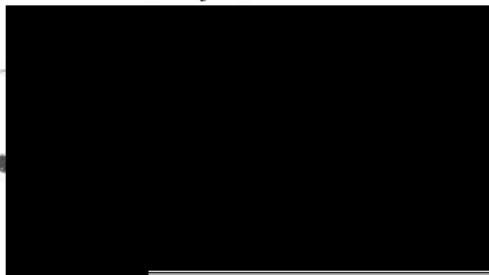
Dear AGRI-FOOD & BIOSCIENCES INST

**RED TRACTOR FARM ASSURANCE DAIRY SCHEME Dale Farm Cooperative  
24610495  
DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the documentary evidence that you recently submitted to the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Dairy Scheme, this has rectified the outstanding non-conformance(s).

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely



FQAS Reg. No: 3358

4th December 2025

FARM MANAGER  
LARGE PARK  
HILLSBOROUGH  
BT26 6DR

Dear FARM MANAGER

**NORTHERN IRELAND FARM QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEME  
DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the documentary evidence that you recently submitted to the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme, this has rectified the outstanding non-conformances(s).

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area of the letter.

**AFBI Comments on Pictures and Videos sent to AEAR committee****9<sup>th</sup> December 2025****Background and inspections to date:**

On 3 Dec 2025 DAERA ASB forwarded to AFBI 15 photos and a video which AFBI understand were forwarded by the Chair of the AERA committee. AFBI notes that the photographs and video were referred to AERA committee meetings as arising from 'a whistleblower'.

The information below provides context and an AFBI response to the photos and video. It also outlines which of these photos had previously been received by AFBI.

There is overlap in a number of photographs received and previous reports. In June 2025 a Trade Union (TU) rep forwarded a pack of photos from an anonymous source to AFBI's CEO. In November 2025 Red Tractor shared photos and videos with the Director of SAFSD which they had received from GB news. Most of the photos forwarded by Red Tractor are also in those forwarded by the AERA committee.

In July 2025, upon receipt of the TU pack, AFBI's CEO instigated a number of actions to investigate in line with AFBI's Raising Concern policy. Two of the key actions, and which are most applicable to this report, were 1) CEO informed DAERA Vet service (CVO) that concerns had been raised with him re animal health and welfare at AFBI Hillsborough and that the material forwarded included photographs and videos and 2) as part of the Raising Concern investigation, the CEO requested a senior Vet at AFBI Stormont to investigate the instances relating to animal health and welfare, including review of the appropriateness of the care provided to those animals which had incurred injury in the photos provided.

Following the notification from the CEO, DAERA vet service undertook an unannounced visit in July 2025. There were no material issues noted during that visit and any minor findings were closed swiftly. The DAERA Vet was content overall that there were no concerns with regard to animal health and welfare at AFBI Hillsborough. This report is available upon request.

The findings from the internal investigation (undertaken by the AFBI senior Vet and which focused on the health, welfare and treatment of animals) are noted below where applicable. The full report is available upon request.

In summary the internal Vet from AFBI Stormont reported that all procedures and actions had been undertaken as required to treat the injured animals in the photos. As a general comment in the post-investigation report, in all cases listed, issues were escalated quickly and treatment was provided to all animals in a timely manner with awareness and intervention of all cases by the Private Veterinary Practitioner (PVP) engaged by AFBI either through scheduled twice weekly health visits or via emergency call out. No concerns were expressed by anyone interviewed about animal care and welfare at Hillsborough. In reviewing these 5 cases in the opinion of the investigator there was no

case of concern related to these 5 specific cases in terms of the timeliness of notification and treatment.

In early November, SAFSD director became aware of GB news wishing to publish a story with regard to *'questionable practices at AFBI Hillsborough in terms of animal health and welfare and environmental..'*

The SAFSD Director called Red Tractor and NIFCC requesting inspections to be carried out on the AFBI dairy and beef herds and sheep flock on 28/10/2025. Red Tractor noted they had received photos and videos from GB news that morning and were considering an inspection as a result. These inspections were conducted on 06/11/2025. SAFSD Director provided these photos with commentary to DAERA ASB on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

GB news had also contacted DAERA with similar allegations and as a result in the period from 28/10/2025 to 28/11/2025 a number of other inspections and follow up visits by DAERA and NIEA took place at the Hillsborough Farm (DAERA Vet service, NIEA water quality, and DAERA Agri-Food Inspection Branch). AFBI Hillsborough management and staff provided full co-operation with the inspecting staff.

Reports are available upon request but the following summarizes the outcomes of these inspections:

- Report on Animal Welfare inspection conducted by DAERA on 29/10/25 – **no non-conformances or even minor issues were observed.**
- NIEA inspection – noted that the spreading of dirty water in Oct 2025 was compliant. However, a low level severity pollution incident in the form of a fungal growth in a near-by water way was detected. Minor infrastructural works were urgently completed and NIEA confirmed by email (on 20/11/2025) that **the fungus in the waterway that had previously been detected had receded.** Additional works are required to fully mitigate the risk to local water ways. AFBI continue to work with DAERA estates on these matters.
- Red Tractor – letter received on 03/12/2025 confirming that **all non-conformances have been resolved.**
- NIBL FQAS – letter received on 03/12/2025 confirming that **all non-conformances have been resolved.**

The Red Tractor and NIBL FQAS audits identified a number of minor non-compliances. The non compliances mainly represented updating some records, especially using the Red Tractor templates, inability to access the required records on the day which were subsequently followed up, the removal of very high level cobwebs in the milking areas, a service certification for the robot milking system and a new lock on a door and some minor infrastructural works to mitigate risk of effluent run off (similar to NIEA). All issues were addressed by AFBI Hillsborough swiftly and relevant evidence was submitted to Red Tractor and NIBL FQAS in the w/c 24/11/2025. As a result NIFCC confirmed all had been closed satisfactorily.

- DAERA Agri-Food Inspection Branch undertook an unannounced inspections on 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025 (with a focus on feed and dairy respectively). A report was received on 4/12/25. Main findings were to remove bird droppings from areas close to feeding areas, effectively excluding birds (so far as possible), ensure all feed materials were in vermin and bird proof containers and to fix a bulk tank washer. At the time of writing this report, actions were underway to address these findings.

#### **AFBI response to Photos and Videos provided to AERA committee:**

It should be noted that there is repetition between the Video reel and the photos and indeed some photos represent the same thing.

The majority of the photos appear to relate to circumstances in 2023/2024. Since this time there have been changes in line managers and line management structures. Recent initiatives have also taken a new approach to managing the site. Other photos relate to animals, and it is notable that these had already been investigated by AFBI and that separately DAERA's Vet inspections who have not identified any issues with regard to animal health and welfare.

The below provides commentary per circumstance due to the repetition between photos and the video. Where applicable, photos which were previously investigated aligned with the TU pack noted above have been highlighted and the findings from those investigations noted.

#### **Picture number 1 & 2, point 10 and 25 in video reel - Beef youngstock at feed barrier**

It is estimated this picture was taken around July/August 2023. The ear tag number in the picture correlates to calves which were born in March 2023, and the animal size would indicate that this animal would be circa 4 months old. Feeding Protocols at AFBI Hillsborough state that 'refused' silage should be removed from feed areas and replaced with fresh silage daily. Current farm management practices ensure that these protocols are followed. The recent unannounced DAERA and Red Tractor inspections did not find any issues with regard to this area of management.

#### **Picture number 3 and point 9 on video reel - cow with cut on leg**

AFBI are aware of this incident which has also been investigated internally. The injury occurred on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025. The cow was treated successfully under veterinary supervision and returned to the herd. The internal investigation by a senior Vet from AFBI Stormont confirmed this. The recent unannounced Red Tractor and DAERA inspections have raised no concerns regarding animal welfare at AFBI Hillsborough.

#### **Picture number 4 and point 3 in video reel – Dairy cows in a pen**

There is no indication of dates of when this picture was taken. It appears some editing of this image has taken place as the image has changed when comparing the versions between the video and the 'still'. This pen is used for holding cows before calving and is cleaned out several times per week when in heavy use. The cows in the image are clean, suggesting they were not in unclean conditions for any length of time. Cows would be moved to the

heavily bedded pens seen in the background when calving was imminent. This is a restless period for cows as can be seen from the fresh straw round the edges compared with the centre of the pen. It would be assumed that this picture was taken prior to cleaning this pen as it does not match surrounding pens.

#### **Picture number 5 and point 23 in video reel – Front face of Silo**

Farm staff recall a silo face of this nature in 2023. A poor batch of silage was produced mainly due to the silo having to be closed and re-opened to accommodate the overflow of silage from multiple cuts. This type of material is commonly 'fed' to the on-site anaerobic digester. The equipment being used in this image supports that this silage was not being used for feed but was being used for the digester since a general bucket was being used to transfer the material to a blue Kane trailer in the right-hand corner of the picture you will see a blue Kane trailer. This is commonly used for moving Farmyard Manure to the Midden or the AD plant.

#### **Picture number 6 – Old Silage on floor**

This picture was taken beside the feed boxes in the youngstock post wean house. These boxes are specialist scientific feed intake boxes. Silage can often be thrown out of these boxes from animals as they are eating which then gets lodged under the boxes and around the framework holding the boxes. The material on the floor appears to be material which has been cleaned and removed from under and around the feed boxes as part of a monthly clean and gathered for collection and disposal in the midden. This material would not have been accessible to animals. AFBI records are available to demonstrate that only good to high quality silage and/or TMR is offered on a regular basis.

#### **Picture number 7 – Slurry pump with black wrapping**

This picture is estimated to be taken prior to March 2023, as the slurry pump in the picture is a SlurryKat pump which has a green rotary blade. In March 2023 a new NC 3800 slurry pump was procured which has a red rotary blade which has been used for mixing slurry since. It would seem from this picture there has been some material caught on the rotary blade which is not uncommon within the farming industry and one small piece of black plastic can then be shredded into tiny pieces around the rotary blade as per the picture.

#### **Picture number 8 and point 15, 17 and 22 in video reel – Spill Kit in river**

This incident occurred on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024. AFBI Farm management reported a potential heating oil leak into a watercourse likely from a sight gauge tube on an oil tank which had blown over in bad weather around the beef and sheep unit. AFBI Farm management implemented the contingency plan and installed spill kits immediately into the river once aware.

AFBI Farm Management contacted NIEA, who came to site on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 and surveyed and confirmed in a report, (REF. WR4/24/0023) that there was no visible impact on the Hillsborough Lake and this incident was classed as low severity on NIEA records and the exact discharge point was hard to determine.

It was assumed that the spill kit was successful in containing any pollution.

The picture shows the spill kits in the river as proof of successful implementation of the contingency plan and good practice.

**Picture number 9 and point 2 in video reel – Slurry Spill at AD Plant**

Having knowledge of the location of other equipment in this picture over the past number of years and that AFBI is aware of this incident, it is estimated that this picture was taken in the spring/summer of 2023. An external contractor failed to fully close the valve after filling the tanker, the slurry then leaked out. It was detected quickly by AFBI staff who closed the valve and initiated the protocol to mitigate impact on any surrounding water courses. NIEA were also informed and visited the site. NIEA were content with the actions taken.

**Picture number 10 and point 24 in video reel – Untidy Waste compound area**

It is unknown when this picture was taken, however there are now skips in that general locality and has been for the past few years. Discussions also continue within AFBI and with DAERA estates with regard to putting in place a dedicated waste compound area for the site. There are also ongoing discussions with the waste collection contractor to manage waste collection effectively. Staff are expected to keep areas tidy to a satisfactory standard. This has recently (July 2025) been made a mandatory task for all teams on the AFBI Hillsborough site.

**Picture number 11 and point 21 in video reel – Rear of Blue Kane Trailer**

It appears some editing of this image has taken place as the image has changed when comparing the versions between the video and the 'still'. While AFBI can't be 100% confident as more context is needed to understand this circumstance, it is possible that this is linked with the comments above for pic 5 where this blue kane trailer was used to transfer the poor silage to the midden. It is therefore possible this trailer was either parked in the midden or the silo which are both areas where any effluent being leaked from the trailer would have been caught in the respective drainage system.

**Picture number 12 and point 20 in video reel – Meal in Silo**

Discussions are ongoing within AFBI and with DAERA estates to bring forward infrastructure improvements on the AFBI Hillsborough farm. One of these projects aligns with the management and storage of feed materials. Due to a malfunction of one of the aged overhead gantry bins the meal in the photo had to be stored in a dry silo as a temporary measure. All bulk feed is currently stored in bins and a project is currently underway to replace aged bins on the AFBI Hillsborough farm.

**Picture number 13 and point 4 and 18 in video reel– Animals in house with slurry on floor**

This appears to be taken at AFBI Loughgall, Deerpark Farm. On 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023, partly due to an overflowing water/burst drinker filling the tank, the slurry came up through the slats. Sensors had been installed shortly prior to this incidence in the tanks but failed to

support the management of levels in this implementation period. Upon finding this incident, staff arranged for 8000 gallon of slurry to be removed to alternative slurry storage. Slatted areas were also scraped down that evening. At all times animals had access to raised dry cubicles to lie on. The cleanliness of the animals in the image supports the incident being short term and for the animals to have an alternative dry lying area.

#### **Picture number 14**

AFBI Hillsborough routinely monitor and record the body condition (BCS) of all cows. Average BCS of the dairy cows at Hillsborough is approximately 2.5, typical of dairy animals. AFBI is aware of this animal. The BCS of this cow was 2 through the lactation in question. It is thought this photo was taken in July 2025. Health records note that this animal took pneumonia shortly after July. Veterinary intervention was sought and treatment undertaken under veterinary supervision. The animal was subsequently culled.

#### **Picture number 15 and point 8 on video reel – Cow with cut on Hinch**

AFBI are aware of this incident which has also been investigated internally. The injury was treated on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and was treated successfully under veterinary supervision. The recent unannounced Red Tractor and DAERA inspections have raised no concerns regarding animal welfare at AFBI Hillsborough. The internal investigation also confirmed that the animal was treated appropriately.

#### **VIDEO REEL**

Items highlighted in yellow were on the video reel and were additional to the pictures above. Comments re provided accordingly.

- 1. Silage/Dung in Midden**
- 2. AD slurry spill (Pic 9)**
- 3. Animals in loose box pen (Pic 4)**
- 4. Animals in house to with slurry on floor (Pic 13)**
- 5. Video of Badger in the dairy house**
- 6. Video of Silo with Minerals in it**
- 7. Video of beef meal store crate area**
- 8. Cow with cut on Hinch (Pic 15)**
- 9. Cow with cut on leg (Pic 3)**
- 10. Beef Youngstock at feed barrier (Pic 1 and 2)**
- 11. Video of soiled water spread on willows**
- 12. Video of soiled water spread in forest**
- 13. Sign of blue green algae at Hillsborough lake**
- 14. Video of Hillsborough Lake and Swans**
- 15. Spill Kit in river (Pic 8 likely)**
- 16. Video of rain water between Pig housing and old beef housing**
- 17. Another picture of Spill Kit (Pic 8 likely)**
- 18. Animals in house to with slurry on floor (Picture 13)**
- 19. Video of concrete bay at beef and sheep unit**
- 20. Picture of meal in silo with Birds**
- 21. Picture of Fallen Stock trailer**

- 22. Another picture of spill kit (Pic 8 likely)
- 23. Picture of Silo face (Pic 5)
- 24. Waste compound area (Pic 10)
- 25. Beef Youngstock at feed barrier (Picture 1&2 and point 10 above in video reel)
- 26. Video of beef meal store crate area (same as number 7 above in video reel)
- 27. Video of soiled water spread on willows (same as number 11 above in video reel)

#### **Video 1 – Silage/FYM storage**

This video links directly to picture number 5.

As noted above for Pic 5, Farm staff recall a poor batch of silage produced in 2023. This type of material is commonly 'fed' to the on site digester. As noted above this poor material was moved to the Midden for use in the AD plant. The picture on the video reel then represents the storage of that poor silage in the midden.

#### **Video 5 –Badger in the dairy house**

This video was taken on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 in the morning soon after staff arrived on site to start the morning milking. The video submitted has been edited and excludes the start of the video where a badger was found sleeping overnight at the base of a bale of straw. The full video is available if required. The member of staff safely raised the badger's attention and chased it out of the house. The Hillsborough farm is surrounded by a forest in which there are a number of badger setts. It is possible that this badger entered when doors were open to allow management operations or support the ventilation of the building.

#### **Video 6 – video of minerals in the silo**

It is not known when this was taken. This is an area which was used to hold minerals for animal diets until recently. The cleaning of these types of areas is currently undertaken on a weekly basis. While the vast majority of feed materials are securely stored, a small project commenced in Oct 2025 to upgrade areas and bins on the Hillsborough site to ensure all feed materials are contained in bird and vermin proof containers. Furthermore, a routine task is now mandated with regard to cleaning and tidying of areas as it is the expectation that staff maintain areas to a satisfactory standard. As such it is assumed that the member of staff who recorded this video, has taken it prior to the cleaning of the area which would have been expected but which is now a mandatory task. The recent (Nov 2025) Red Tractor inspections reviewed these types of areas, and no issues were identified. The recent inspection from DAERA's Agri-food branch has requested that AFBI ensures that all feed materials are contained in bird and vermin proof containers.

#### **Video 7 – Video of beef meal store crate area**

It appears this picture was taken in the beef store before April 2023 since a waste compactor was placed in this area of the store at that stage. The area has also been repurposed since then and the area has been thoroughly cleaned. The feed supplier also changed in Oct/Nov 2024. The general area of 'the beef store' is sometimes used to hold feed for animals. The cleaning of these types of areas is undertaken on a weekly basis. While a routine task is now mandated with regard to cleaning and tidying, it has always been the expectation that staff

maintain areas to a satisfactory manner. As such it is assumed that this photo was taken prior to the cleaning of the area which would have been expected but which is now a mandatory task. Both the recent (Nov 2025) DAERA and Red Tractor inspections would have reviewed these types of areas and no issues were identified.

#### **Video 11 – Spreading soiled water over Willows for irrigation and**

#### **Video 12 – Spreading soiled water into forest**

Based on local staff knowledge, it is estimated both these incidents took place Dec 2023/Jan 2024 – the water spread represented dirty water (mainly rain water flowing off yards). AFBI staff are confident that this is dirty water since no residue is present on the sight tube as well as local knowledge on the need to empty dirty water tanks, especially at this time of year when capacity was becoming a challenge and especially after heavy rainfall. It is notable that the dirty water collected from AFBI's yards is significant due to the challenging infrastructure. As such AFBI Hillsborough regularly need to spread dirty water during the closed period (which is permitted under NAP regulations).

Current members of staff have noted that normal practice is to spread dirty water onto fields, using LESSE. While the willows often receive dirty water via irrigation, current staff have noted that the spreading of dirty water over the top of the willows or into the forest is not normal practice. AFBI staff working on the farm currently have confirmed that managerial instruction was, and still is, to spread dirty water in fields using LESSE.

#### **Video 13 – sign of algae at lake**

The Lake is not under the management of AFBI Hillsborough. AFBI cannot comment on this photo.

#### **Video 14 – video of swans on Hillsborough Lake**

The Lake is not under the management of AFBI Hillsborough. AFBI cannot comment on this photo.

#### **Video 16 - Rain water between Pig housing and old beef housing**

While it is difficult to be 100% sure, it appears this area represents the concrete laneway leading to the 'top carpark' running between the pig and old beef housing. Due to the topography of ground, heavy flows of water can occur on this laneway following heavy rainfall. Drainage exists along the upper and lower parts of the laneway but on occasions of heavy rain, the water can overflow.

#### **Video 19 - Concrete wash bay**

It is not clear when this image was taken. The area is the dedicated wash bay at the beef and sheep unit. It is used for power washing heavily soiled farm machinery and equipment.

The lack of tidiness of this area is not considered acceptable. However, it is not recognised as current practice either. As noted above for other areas, it is now a mandatory practice to ensure all areas are clean and tidy to satisfactory standards.

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**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 23 January 2026 09:33  
**To:** McDowell, Stanley; Mulcahy, Grace; McAuley, Nuala  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Caldwell, Alison; DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Subject:** AERA Committee appearance next Thursday  
**Attachments:** AERA Committee Readout 22.01.2026.DOCX; Letter.pdf

Good morning,

Please find attached the AERA Committee readout from yesterday, which references the Minister's response to the Committee regarding the AFBI Hillsborough footage. This appears to indicate that questions on the material and the actions taken may be raised.

For your information, I have also attached the letter from the Minister to the AERA Committee.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED] Corporate Governance Division

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED

Te [REDACTED] Ext: [REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]


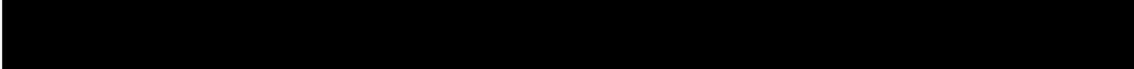
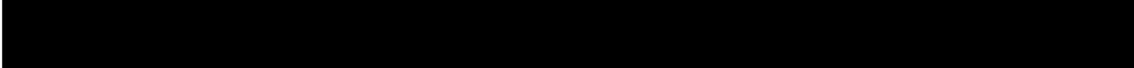
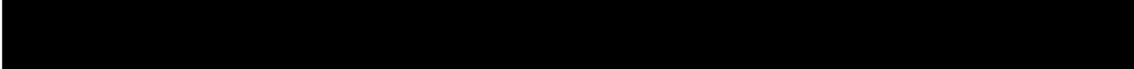

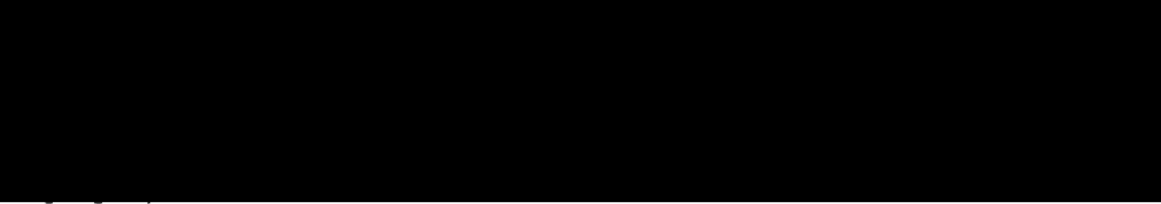

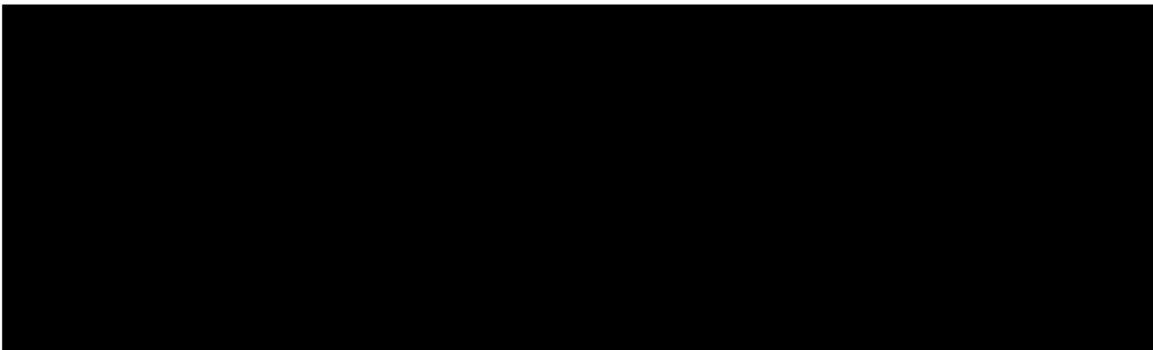
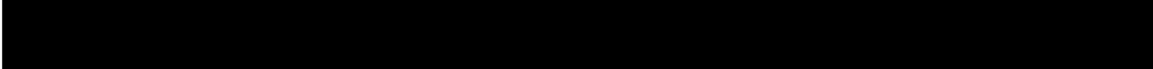
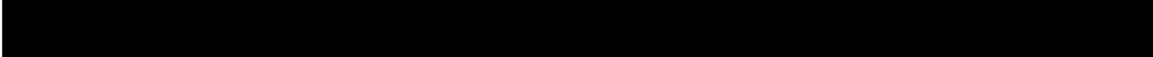
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**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**  
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An Roinn  
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

**AERA Committee readout**

<b>AERA COMMITTEE DATE:</b>		Thursday 22 January 2026
<b>VENUE:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Parliament Buildings</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>OTHER:</b>
<b>OPENING COMMENTS:</b>		
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS APOLOGIES:</b> None. GW attended via Zoom.		
<b>OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	As below	
<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:</b> None		
<b>CHAIR'S BUSINESS</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• </li><li>• </li><li>• </li><li>• </li><li>• </li><li>• Correspondence from Minister dated 20.01.2026 re recent images from AFBI. Content to note. RB – Committee will be aware that AFBI are to brief Committee on 29.01.2026. Clerk requests any additional questions from Members by 23.01.2026.</li><li>• </li></ul>		
<b>DRAFT MINUTES:</b>		
<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• </li><li>• </li><li>• </li></ul>		

## AERA Committee readout


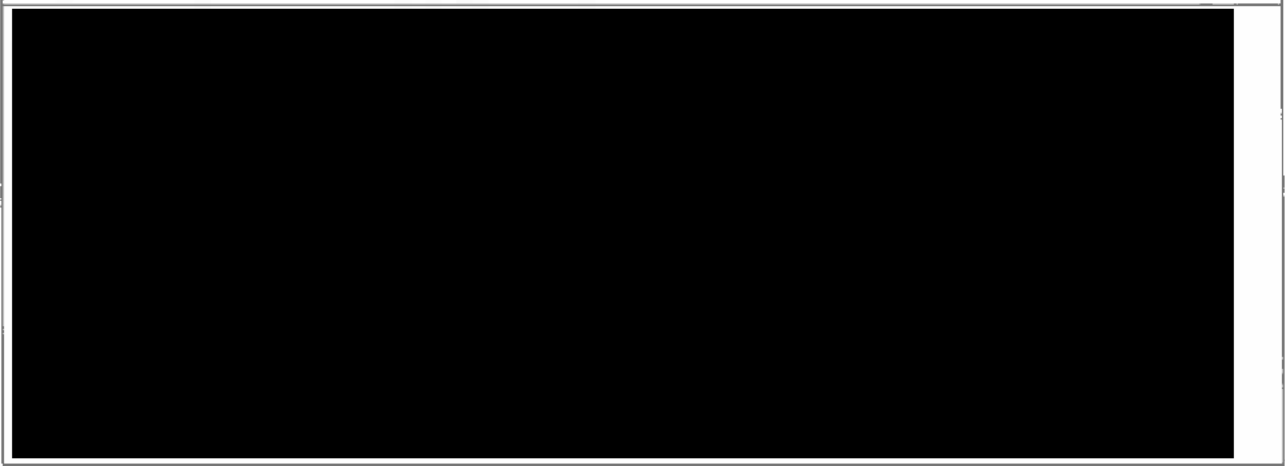



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# AERA Committee readout

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## AERA Committee readout

[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	
AOB:	
• None	
<b>WATCH AGAIN LINK: <u>Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - Thursday 22 January 2026</u></b>	
<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	Thursday 29 January 2026, Room 21, Parliament Buildings
<b>NOTE WRITTEN BY</b> [REDACTED]	<b>DATE:</b> 22 January 2026

**From the Office of the  
Minister of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs**



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

[www.daera.ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera.ni.gov.uk)

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AERA Committee Chair  
Northern Ireland Assembly  
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Parliament Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BT4 3XX  
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Our Ref: COR-0024-2026

Date: 20 January 2026

Dear Robbie,

#### **PHOTOS / FOOTAGE RELATING TO AFBI HILLSBOROUGH**

I am writing in relation to the images and video footage relating to AFBI Hillsborough which were provided to the Department before Christmas.

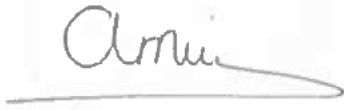
As you know my Department was already aware of allegations being made in relation to practices at the AFBI Hillsborough site and was taking these extremely seriously. This included Departmental officials from both NIEA and by DAERA's Veterinary Service and Animal Health Group carrying out inspections at the site when the matters were first raised in October 2025. These inspections on the whole found that there were no major issues of concern.

In relation to the recent material provided by the Committee, I can advise that the Department was already aware of much of the material and had already considered explanations from AFBI on these. Similar explanations have also been sought and considered in relation to any new material provided by the Committee.

I have also more recently received assurances from the AFBI Chair that an independent inspection of the site by Red Tractor, which provides accreditation for farm standards, was also carried out. While this inspection noted some minor issues which have since been addressed, accreditation status was maintained. Additionally, the Chair has advised that the AFBI Board will continue to take an active interest in standards at the site.

I hope that the actions taken by my Department and indeed by AFBI provide the Committee with assurance on how this matter has been dealt with.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andrew Muir", written in black ink. The signature is positioned above a solid horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

**ANDREW MUIR MLA**  
**Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

AE1/26/205399

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** McDowell, Stanley  
**Sent:** 23 January 2026 10:39  
**To:** [REDACTED] Mulcahy, Grace; McAuley, Nuala  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Caldwell, Alison; DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch  
**Subject:** RE: AERA Committee appearance next Thursday

Thanks [REDACTED]

We were conscious that the issue may arise but will review and see if there is additional material that we need to include in our briefing info

Thanks

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 23 January 2026 09:22  
**To:** McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED] Mulcahy, Grace [REDACTED]  
McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Caldwell, Alison [REDACTED]  
DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** AERA Committee appearance next Thursday

Good morning,

Please find attached the AERA Committee readout from yesterday, which references the Minister's response to the Committee regarding the AFBI Hillsborough footage. This appears to indicate that questions on the material and the actions taken may be raised.

For your information, I have also attached the letter from the Minister to the AERA Committee.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED] | Corporate Governance Division  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED

Tel: [REDACTED] | Ext: [REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

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AEI 1261244583

**DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch**

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**From:** McDowell, Stanley  
**Sent:** 27 January 2026 18:23  
**To:** DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch; McAuley, Nuala  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]; Caldwell, Alison; Magowan, Elizabeth;  
**Subject:** RE: AFBI's appearance at AERA

H [REDACTED]

Please see proposed answers below.

I have kept the proposed answers relative brief but appreciate that we may need to expand upon on the day

Kind regards

- **Outline the process for a Red Tractor (RT) inspection?**

*A Red Tractor (RT) inspection covers various aspects of farm management and documentation such as animal husbandry, animal health and welfare, and environmental stewardship. A RT audit is normally completed every 12-18 months. Normally RT notify the farmer when renewal of their certificate is required and arrange an inspection accordingly, with the audit itself typically completed within 1 day. Any issues that may be identified at an audit are communicated via written correspondence with a period of time allowed for evidence to be provided to address the issue.*

- **Was formal notice give to AFBI of the RT inspection?**

*In this particular case AFBI invited RT to undertake an inspection to provide independent assurance that the farm was complying with the relevant standards.*

- **What, if any, were the findings and recommendations of the RT inspection?**

*The inspection identified a number of minor non-compliances. The issues identified were addressed swiftly and relevant evidence was submitted as required within the deadline. We have confirmation that the findings were addressed satisfactorily and certification was retained.*

- **What would AFBI say in relation to each of the alleged breaches or alleged failures?**

*AFBI take any concerns or allegations raised extremely seriously. We have investigated all of issues and concerns raised and provided explanations on these to DAERA.*

*AFBI is certified to a number of schemes including Red Tractor and Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification (NIFCC). This coupled with the inspections carried out by DAERA and NIEA and AFBI's own internal processes provide a substantial level of assurance that AFBI Hillsborough in complying with the good farming practice and the expected farming standards.*

---

**From:** DAERA AFBI Sponsor Branch [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 26 January 2026 10:07  
**To:** McDowell, Stanley [REDACTED]; McAuley, Nuala [REDACTED]

Cc: [Redacted]

[Redacted] Caldwell, Alison [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: AFBI's appearance at AERA

Hi Stanley,

Our DALO has been in contact with the Committee Clerk this morning who has provided the following additional questions which Members plan to ask of AFBI at Thursday's oral briefing. We have been asked to liaise with yourselves on this and also ask you to provide a copy of your proposed answers.

- Outline the process for a Red Tractor (RT) inspection?
- Was formal notice give to AFBI of the RT inspection?
- What, if any, were the findings and recommendations of the RT inspection?
- What would AFBI say in relation to each of the alleged breaches or alleged failures?

Grateful for a response as soon as possible.

Kind Regards

[Redacted] Corporate Governance Division  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Jubilee House | Ballykelly Road | Limavady | BT49 9HP

Tel: [Redacted] Ext [Redacted] Email [Redacted]



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Department o'  
**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**From:** McDowell, Stanley  
**Sent:** 11 June 2025 17:28  
**To:** Dooher, Brian  
**Subject:** Concerns raised re Animal Welfare at the AFBI Hillsborough site

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** FOR INFO

Brian

Further to our earlier call, I am writing to make you aware that concerns have been raised with me via the trade union (NIPSA) in relation to animal welfare at the AFBI Hillsborough site.

The concerns are largely in the form of a series photographs and videos which have allegedly been taken at the Hillsborough site by a member or members of staff. At this point, we have not verified that they are definitely from Hillsborough but equally have no reason to believe that they're not. The covering email refers that some of the photographs were taken a number of months ago (~March) while others are reported as being more recent.

In brief the photographs / video relate predominantly to (a) standards of husbandry as in bedding and cleanliness of water troughs etc and (b) animal health issues in relation to a (small) number of animal injuries and what looks to be a case of photosensitisation. There are also a photograph(s) of the remains of a sheep carcass.

I have made the Director of the area aware and they have had an initial conversation with the private veterinary practitioner (who is also the Named Veterinary Surgeon under the Animal Scientific Procedures Act). The PVP is regularly on site (approx. 2 per week) and is generally content with standards of husbandry etc with no immediate concerns re animal health and welfare on the site.

In line with AFBI's whistleblowing / raising concern policy there is obviously a need for the issues to be fully investigated.

To ensure independence in the investigative process and to provide the necessary assurance to DAERA and to you as CVO, we would appreciate your / VSAHG assistance and / or investigation of the issues raised.

I am of course happy to discuss further as necessary

Regards

Stanley

**Dr Stanley McDowell BVM&S MSc DLSHTM PhD MRCVS** | Chief Executive Officer | Agri Food & Biosciences Institute AFBI | 18A Newforge Lane Belfast BT9 5PX | ☎ 028 9025 5688 | E-Mail: [stanley.mcdowell@afbini.gov.uk](mailto:stanley.mcdowell@afbini.gov.uk)