

**Strategic Planning and Corporate Services
Group**
Corporate Governance Division



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: **DAERA/26-164**

██████████ Via email:

██████████

██████████ [@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:██████████@whatdotheyknow.com)

AFBI Sponsor Branch
Corporate Governance Division
1st Floor
Jubilee House
111 Ballykelly Road
Limavady
BT49 9HP

Email: AfbiSponsorBranch@daera-ni.gov.uk

22 April 2026

Dear ██████████

**Environmental Information Regulations 2004 /
Freedom of Information Act 2000**

Thank you for your email received by the Department on 2 March 2026 which you sought the information in bold below.

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds some of the information you requested.

The Department has considered the data requested and determined that while some information falls under EIR regulations, the remaining data within the scope of the request falls under FOI. The Department has decided to invoke a number of Environmental Information Regulations exceptions and Freedom of Information exemptions.

I'm writing to request information under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) regarding the recent investigations into the AFBI Hillsborough site.

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

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I'd like you to provide all the photo and video evidence DAERA or the NIEA received from complainants about animal welfare and environmental issues at the site from January 2025 to the present. Please also include any photographic or video records captured by your own inspectors during their site visits to AFBI Hillsborough in that same period.

Along with the visuals, I'm looking for the full reports and findings from the multi-agency inspections involving DAERA, NIEA, and Red Tractor that were mentioned in AFBI's statement on February 5th. Finally, please provide any internal emails or briefing notes between DAERA and AFBI management that discuss the social media allegations and the "Raising Concerns" investigation.

If the video files are too large for email, just let me know how I can download them.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Waste Regulation Unit (WRU) carried out three unannounced scheduled monitoring inspections within the period requested. Copies of the compliance assessment forms and associated photographs are attached as **Annex A to Annex K**

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Water Catchment Unit (WCU) carried out an unannounced inspection at AFBI Hillsborough on 28 October 2025 in respect of an allegation of Closed Period Spreading (NIEA Incident WR 4/25/0533) and water pollution. Redacted copies of the Incident Report (WR 4/25/0533) and associated photographs are attached as **Annex L and Annex M**

In respect of the information requested in relation to an allegation of water pollution, the requested information is withheld under EIR Regulation 12(5)b, "The course of justice and inquiries exception". A Public Interest Test has been completed in relation to this exemption.

The NIEA also reviewed video footage supplied in relation to an unapproved method of spreading dirty water / slurry. An internal case study record is withheld under EIR Regulation 12(4)e "Internal Communications", and a Public Interest Test has been completed in relation to this exemption.

DAERA Veterinary Service carried out inspections on 17 June 2025 and the 28 October 2025. The inspections reports are attached as **Annex N and Annex O**

Photographs taken at the inspection on the 17 June 2025 are attached as **Annex P**.

In respect of the data requested in relation to inspection reports and photographs some of the information is personal data this information will be withheld under Regulation 12(3).

Additionally, the Department's Corporate Governance Division received photographs and videos relating to animal welfare and environmental issues from both AFBI and the AERA committee within the period requested. The photographs are attached at **Annex Q & R**. As the videos are too large to attach to the request, the Department will provide these to you via pen drive. To do this the

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Department has requested you provide a postal address to which this pen drive may be sent. The pen drive has been password protected and you will receive this password via separate email. Please confirm the address to which you want this material sent.

In respect of information requested in relation to emails or briefing notes between DAERA and AFBI management, some information has been withheld/redacted under the following exemptions/exceptions:

- Some personal data has been withheld under FOI Section 40 (2) Personal Information
- Some information has been withheld under FOI Section 41 Information Provided in confidence as the Department has a duty of confidence to information provided to us by individuals as part of the raising a concern process.
- Some information has been withheld under EIR Regulation 12 (3) and Regulation 13 (1) relation to personal data.

This information has been provided with these exemptions/exceptions applied at **Annex S and T**.

Please see related **Annex U** Public Interest Test in respect of EIR Regulation 12(5)b, and 12(4)e, and **Annex V** Lawful Processing and Fairness Test in respect of Section 40(2), Regulation 12(3) and Regulation 13 (1).

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,


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