

Veterinary Service Animal Health Group
Information Communications Branch



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: DAERA/26-158

██████████

Via email:

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VSAHG Information Communications Branch
1st Floor
Jubilee House
111 Ballykelly Road
Limavady
BT49 9HP

Email: vsinfocommsbranch@daera-ni.gov.uk

02 April 2026

Dear ██████████

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your email received by the Department on 4 March 2026 which you sought the information in bold below.

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

1. **We understand that you are responsible for the conduct of the June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture in Northern Ireland and publish data on the results of this survey including farmed animal populations across Northern Ireland as a whole. Can you please provide the following:**
 - a. **Your latest data on farmed animal population in Northern Ireland broken down by subregion? Please provide when the data was gathered?**
 - b. **Number of farm holdings in Northern Ireland as of June 2025 which are of a type which may keep farmed animals**
2. **Please could you also provide the current registered Country Parish Holdings in Northern Ireland, registered with the following:**

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

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- a. **Less than 50 animals and**
- b. **Over 50 animals**

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs does not allocate Country Parish Holding Numbers. To keep animals in Northern Ireland, other than pets kept in the owner's home, you are required to be part of a DAERA Business and be allocated a DAERA business identification number, additionally herd and flock numbers are required for the registration of herds and flocks.

In relation to Questions 1 and 2 data has been provided from the Agricultural Census, collected on 1st June 2025. The Agricultural Census collects data from all active DAERA farm business. Active farm businesses are defined for agricultural census purposes as those having more than one hectare of farmed land, whether owned, leased or taken in conacre, and those with under one hectare having any cattle, or significant sheep (more than 5 sheep), pigs (more than 10 pigs), poultry (more than 250 birds) or horticultural activity.

In June 2025 there were 25,834 active farms in Northern Ireland of which 24,158 had any number of livestock. Further breakdowns of these 24,158 farms have been provided in the tables attached at Annex A.

Sub-regional breakdowns have been provided for Local Government District and County. Local Government Districts are current administrative districts responsible for local council services. Counties are historic administrative units and retain ceremonial, cultural and functional uses.

3. What is the total number of live farmed animals markets and collection centres in Northern Ireland? The premises referred to in this question are:

a. Farms keeping animals for commercial use

There are 52 approved Export Assembly Centres, the details of which are published at:-

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tracesnt/directory/listing/establishment/publication/index#!/view/XI/ASSEMBLY_CENTRES_UNGULATES

b. Livestock markets that sell and trade live animals

There are 24 livestock markets, the details of which are published at: -

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/livestock-market-approvals>

I can advise that I am not aware of any other establishments which could be described as collection centres currently operating in Northern Ireland.

c. National and international border control posts

There are 2 border control points that accept live animals (Belfast & Larne), but live FARMED animals can only pass through Larne.

d. Vehicles transporting farmed animals for commercial purposes

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There is no statutory requirement under The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 for the Department to record this information.

However, we do hold information on the number of vehicles approved by the Department for:

- journeys exceeding 8 hours for those transporting cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, horses and other equines; and
- journeys over 12 hours within the UK or over 8 hours in any country outside the UK, for poultry or any other species not listed above.

4. Do you enforce farmed animal welfare legislation?

DAERA is responsible for enforcing animal welfare legislation in respect of farmed animals

a) If the answer is no, please explain why e.g. a different public authority does etc. N/A

b) If a different public authority enforces this legislation in your area, please inform us which one? N/A

5. What is your body's annual budget for farmed animal welfare enforcement?

There is no annual budget for farmed animal welfare enforcement, it would be part of VSAHG overall budget.

6. How many people do you employ to carry out farmed animal welfare inspections as part of their duties? If possible, please provide the response in FTE (Full time equivalent).

397 staff member/373.6 FTE as at 26/03/2026

With regard to the remaining questions, as explained in the information sheet enclosed with my acknowledgement letter, under certain conditions, the Department has the right to refuse to respond to a request for information. In this instance, under Section 12(1) of the FOI Act the Department is not obliged to comply with your request for information as the estimated cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit of £600.

The Department has identified that there are approximately 1158 records that may fall within the scope of your request for question question 7- 16. The work required to collate this information will greatly exceed the appropriate limit (24 hours) of staff time which is not currently held in a format that allows for immediate retrieval and will place a disproportionate burden on the Department.

A breakdown of the estimated costs is provided.

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Potential records falling within scope	Potential number of hours to review	Total estimated cost. Hours X £25/hr
1158	47.7	1192.50

Under Section 16 of the FOI Act 2000, the Department has a duty to provide advice and assistance to enable you to refine your request to reduce the cost of compliance to within the appropriate limit of £600. To that end, I should be grateful if you would refine your requests to questions 7c, 7d, 8c and 8d (noting that only some of the information is held), 10A, 10B, 11, 12c, 13c, 14, 15 and 16.

Even if your request is narrowed, some of the requested information may still not be able to be released to you, for example if it is considered exempt under any provision of the Act such as commercially sensitive information or third-party personal data.

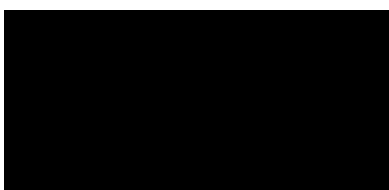
If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

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.

In order to be helpful, I can advise that information relating to questions, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 9, 12a, 12b, 12d, 13a, 13b and 13d will be collated as part of the AROC (Annual report for Official Controls) report. Please contact the Department again in September 2026 for responses relating to these questions

Yours sincerely,



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