



Our reference: DAERA/26-305

Via email:

[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)

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

Email: vsinfocommsbranch@daera-ni.gov.uk

8 July 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your email received by the Department on 5 May 2026, which you sought the information in bold below.

Please provide me with a breakdown of the animal welfare complaints received by DAERA for the calendar years 2021 - 2025.

Please provide a yearly breakdown of:

- **The overall animal welfare complaints received by DAERA**
- **Number of animal disposal orders issued**
- **Total number of animals seized**
- **Number of convictions secured**

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

- **The overall animal welfare complaints received by DAERA**

The Department does not hold information on the total number of animal welfare complaints received.

However, it does hold information on the number of inspections carried out in response to complaints. In most cases, an on-farm inspection is carried out following receipt of a complaint. In exceptional circumstances, an inspection may not take place, for example where a complaint is considered vexatious.

Information on the number of inspections carried out following complaints is available in the Animal Welfare Service Delivery Statistical Bulletins, which are published on the Department's website:

[Animal welfare statistics | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

Please note that, for the 2021 and 2022 Statistical Bulletins, the published figures relate to full inspections only. Following receipt of a complaint, a decision is made at local level regarding whether an initial inspection or full inspection is required.

The figures for both initial inspections and full inspections undertaken during 2021 and 2022 are available within the 2023 Animal Welfare Statistical Bulletin.

It should also be noted that these figures relate only to on-farm animal welfare complaints received from members of the public. They do not include animal welfare issues identified directly by Department staff during the course of their duties.

The Statistical Bulletin containing figures for 2025 has not yet been published. It is expected that this information will become available later in 2026.

- **Number of animal disposal orders issued**

Under Section 36 of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, a court may order the destruction of an animal where it is satisfied, on the basis of evidence provided by a veterinary surgeon, that destruction is appropriate in the interests of the animal.

During the period 2021 to 2025, the Department was not involved in any cases in which a destruction order was granted under this provision.

- **Total number of animals seized**

Information relating to the total number of animals seized for welfare reasons during the period 2021 to 2024 is available within the Animal Welfare Service Delivery Statistical Bulletins referred to in the response above.

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.

The Statistical Bulletin containing figures for 2025 has not yet been published. It is expected that this information will become available later in 2026.

- **Number of convictions secured**

Information relating to the total number of convictions secured during the period 2021 to 2024 is available within the Animal Welfare Service Delivery Statistical Bulletins referred to in the response above.

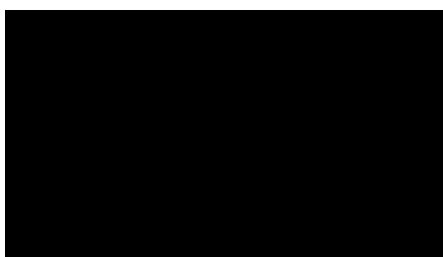
The Statistical Bulletin containing figures for 2025 has not yet been published. It is expected that this information will become available later in 2026.

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Veterinary Service Animal Health Group

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