

Reference Number: DAERA/26-513



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

Veterinary Service Animal Health Group
Information Communication Branch

[Redacted]

Via email:

[Redacted]

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

Email: vsinfocommsbranch@daera-ni.gov.uk

25 August 2026

Dear [Redacted]

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your email received by the Department on 03 August 2026 which you sought the information in bold below.

I seek disclosure of all information held by DAERA relating to the recent application to the court for a deprivation order concerning cattle euthanised in the Fivemiletown area. This includes:

- 1. All documents, internal communications, emails, reports, briefing notes, and correspondence relating to the decision to pursue a deprivation order to euthanise these animals as opposed to seizing them and selling them as the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 make adequate provisions for**
- 2. Minutes, notes, or records of any welfare, enforcement, operational, or management meetings held within the past six weeks in which DAERA actions in relation to these animals was discussed or any decision or agreement was reached regarding the preferred course of action.**
- 3. Any information, internal advice, assessments, or decision-making materials relating specifically to the determination that euthanasia was the preferred option, rather than seizure and sale or any alternative disposal method.**

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4. Any correspondence issued to the DAERA minister to suggest that animal's destruction was "instructed" by the court
5. Details of the veterinary assessment, including who made the assessment that it was in these animals interest to be destroyed
6. Details of the risk assessment carried out prior to using live ammunition in direct access to the public

I can confirm that the department has completed its searches and holds information within the scope of your request.

However, the department has decided not to disclose this information at this time, as it is exempt from disclosure under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Information Intended for Future Publication).

A public interest test has been carried out and is attached at **Annex A**.

As you may be aware, Minister Muir has provided a detailed summary of the actions taken by the department and the accompanying context in his Written Ministerial Statement to the Assembly on 06 August and during the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs meeting held on 10 August 2026. These publications may be of interest to you.

You can read the statement via this link: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/written-statement-northern-ireland-assembly-6-august-2026>.

Coverage of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs meeting on Monday 10 August 2026 can be viewed here: <https://niassembly.tv/committee-for-agriculture-environment-and-rural-affairs-meeting-monday-10-august-2026/>

An independent external review is being taken forward to review the action taken by the department and the terms of reference has been published on the department's website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/terms-reference-independent-external-review>. The Minister has also committed to publishing the main findings and recommendations from the review once it has been completed.

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,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.A small black rectangular box redacting the name of the sender.

Veterinary Service Animal Health Group

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