

Reference Number: DAERA/26-515



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

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 request the disclosure of all records, documents, communications, and materials held by DAERA relating to the incident, including but not limited to:

- **Legal authority — All statutory powers, regulatory provisions, enforcement authorities, and legal advice (internal or external) relied upon to justify or authorise the killing of the cattle. This includes any interpretation of relevant legislation, guidance, or case law.**
- **Chief Veterinary Officer advice — All veterinary assessments, risk analyses, disease-control considerations, welfare evaluations, and written or oral advice provided by or on behalf of the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) concerning the necessity, proportionality, or appropriateness of killing the animals.**
- **Decision-making records — All documents evidencing the decision-making process, including:**
 - **meeting minutes**
 - **internal briefings**
 - **operational planning documents**
 - **risk assessments**

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- authorisation papers
- internal emails or correspondence
- identification of the officials responsible for authorising and directing the operation
- Ministerial oversight — All records demonstrating Ministerial involvement, oversight, approval, or awareness, including:
 - submissions to the Minister
 - Ministerial directions
 - comments or instructions from the Minister or Private Office
 - any political, policy, or reputational considerations raised
- Operational documentation — All operational logs, incident reports, staff instructions, safety assessments, and communications relating to the conduct of the killing, particularly the decision to carry it out in full public view.
- Public-impact considerations — Any assessment, discussion, or documentation relating to the public impact of the operation, including reputational risk, media strategy, psychological impact on witnesses, or community-relations considerations.
- Post-incident review — Any internal review, audit, lessons-learned document, or evaluation conducted following the incident.

I can confirm that the department has completed its searches and holds some, but not all, of the 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/>

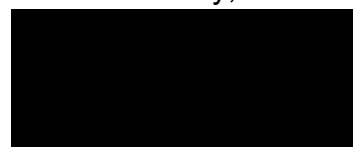
An independent external review is being taken forward to review the action taken by the department and the terms of reference has been published on the department's website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/terms-reference-independent-external-review>. The Minister has also committed to publishing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



Veterinary Service Animal Health Group

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