

Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Water Regulation and Enforcement
Division



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: DAERA/26-637



Water Catchment Unit
Water Regulation and Enforcement Division
Northern Ireland Environment Agency
17 Antrim Road
Tonagh
Lisburn
BT28 3AL

Email: WMU.FOI@daera-ni.gov.uk

11/09/2026

Dear ,

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

With regard to your request for information received by the Department on 19/8/26 which sought the following information:

Request for environmental information — agricultural inspections, pollution incidents and enforcement in the Lough Neagh catchment.

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds the information you requested which is attached and below.

Information requested (1 January 2020 to 31 December 2025, by year)

- 1. Inspections carried out. The number of on-farm inspections in the catchment under each relevant regime — cross compliance, the Nutrients Action Programme (NAP), the Phosphorus (Use in Agriculture) Regulations, and the Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil (SSAFO) Regulations — broken down by regime and by year.**

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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Please note the Phosphorus (use in Agriculture) Regulations (NI) 2014 and the majority of the Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil (SSAFO) Regulations (NI) 2003 have been revoked and the requirements are now contained within the Nutrient Action Programme Regulations (NI) 2019. All planned inspections are now conducted under the Nutrient Action Programme Regulations (NI) 2019 and between the specified period were also assessed for Cross Compliance.

YEAR	No. of Planned Inspections in L Neagh catchment	No. of Referral Inspections in L Neagh catchment	Total No. of inspections in L Neagh catchment
2020	43	88	131
2021	44	70	114
2022	63	66	129
2023	73	73	146
2024	127	81	208
2025	155	75	230

2. Inspection outcomes. For those inspections, the number passed and the number in which one or more breaches were identified, broken down by breach type (for example nutrient/manure management, slurry storage capacity or condition, buffer zones and watercourse protection, and closed-period spreading).

Table showing overall outcome of all planned and referral inspections within Lough Neagh catchment:

YEAR	Planned inspections		Referral inspections		Total No. of clean inspections	Total No. of inspections with breaches
	No. of clean inspections	No. of inspections with breaches	No. of clean inspections	No. of inspections with breaches		
2020	32	11	32	56	64	67
2021	38	6	43	27	81	33
2022	53	10	39	27	92	37
2023	50	23	36	37	86	60
2024	83	44	36	45	119	89
2025	123	32	39	36	162	68

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Table showing breach type by year for Planned Inspections in the L Neagh Catchment – note some farm inspections had multiple breaches discovered

Breach ref	Description	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
3.1.3	Closed season spreading - slurry	4					
3.1.6	Pollution to waterway	6	3	1	6	9	9
3.1.7	Non uniform spreading	1					
3.1.10	Spreading - Location likely to pollute	1					
3.1.14	Unapproved method of spreading	1					
3.1.15(a)	Crop requirements P - grassland					1	
3.1.17(a)	Crop requirements - high P manure					1	
3.1.19	N loading above 170	1	4	1	10	21	10
3.1.20	Insufficient storage			1	2	1	4
3.1.22	Tanks/silo management	3	1		5	7	7
3.1.23 (a)	Midden with inadequate collection	2	2	1			3
3.1.26	FYM storage in buffer		1	1		1	
3.1.36	Records		1	3	9	8	9
3.1.36 (a)	Manure records	2	1	3	4	6	9
3.1.37	Fertilisation plan-derogated farm			1	1	2	1
3.1.37(a)	Fertilisation plan (Non-derogated farm)			2	7	4	6
3.1.38	Incomplete/no accounts					1	1
3.1.41	Derogated farm - insufficient soil tests					1	
3.2.2	Birds - On land classified as a SPA - Damage to SPA					1	
3.2.6	Birds - On land classified as a SPA					1	
3.2.7	Birds - all lands					3	
3.3G.2	No groundwater authorisation			1			

Table showing breach type by year for Referral Inspections in the L Neagh Catchment - note some farm inspections had multiple breaches discovered

Breach ref	Description	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
3.1.3	Closed season spreading - slurry	2	2		1	2	6
3.1.6	Pollution to waterway	44	25	20	19	29	27
3.1.7	Non uniform spreading	5	1	1	1	7	
3.1.8	Fertiliser applied to steeply sloping fields					1	
3.1.9	Spreading - unsuitable wet/frozen	1	2	1	1	3	3
3.1.10	Spreading - Location likely to pollute	1	2		2	3	2
3.1.12/3.1G.2	Spreading in buffer	4	10	5	9	7	7
3.1.14	Unapproved method of spreading	3				8	3
3.1.22	Tanks/silo management	37	19	13	13	18	20
3.1.22 (a)	Silage bales within 10m	1					
3.1.22(b)	Supplementary feeding site within 20m of waterway	1					

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Breach ref	Description	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
3.1.23 (a)	Midden with inadequate collection	4	1	2	3	1	1
3.1.24	FYM storage over 120 days/ same location year on year	1	2				
3.1.26	FYM storage in buffer	3	2	1	1	2	
3.1.28	Buffer - poultry heap			1			
3.1.30	Poultry heap - no notification			1		1	
3.1.31	Poultry heap - no membrane			1		1	
3.1.36 (a)	Manure records		3				
3.2.2	Birds - On land classified as a SPA - Damage to SPA						2
3.2.6	Birds - On land classified as a SPA						1
3.2.7	Birds - all lands					2	1

- 3. Substantiated water pollution incidents.** The number of substantiated agricultural water pollution incidents recorded in the catchment, broken down by year and by severity/impact category (for example high, medium and low), together with the receiving watercourse or water body where that is held.

Please see attached at Annex A.

- 4. Enforcement action.** The enforcement action taken in the catchment in response to the above, broken down by year and by type — for example advisory or warning letters, formal cautions, enforcement or remediation notices, prosecutions, and any fines or penalties imposed.

Please see information attached at Annex B.

- 5. Targets versus delivery.** Any NAP or cross-compliance inspection targets set for the catchment (or for the areas covering it) and the number of inspections actually delivered against those targets, by year.

YEAR	Target No. of Planned inspections (Total territory)*	Delivered No. of Planned Inspections (Total territory)	Delivered No. of Planned and Referral Inspections (Total territory)	Delivered No. of Planned and Referral Inspections (Lough Neagh catchment)
2020	130	130	223	131
2021	132	132	220	114
2022	249	249	313	129
2023	247	247	314	146
2024	244	244	437	208
2025	243	243	394	230

* Usual planned inspection rate is 1% of claimants, this was reduced to 0.5% in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID restrictions.

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6. Nutrient loading data. Any data DAERA/NIEA holds on agricultural nutrient loading (phosphorus and/or nitrogen) into the Lough Neagh catchment, including any source-apportionment or modelling outputs held, for any part of the period.

The Department does not hold the specific information requested. However, the following external information may be of interest:

New Harmonica:

<https://newharmonica.eu/index.php/downloads/publications/16-infographic-over-nutrient-sources-neagh-bann-catchments/file>

Project Summary – Resilience Phosphorus UK

In addition, data sourced from the AFBI Long-Term Ecological Research project is attached at Annex C and may be of interest. Please note that AFBI accepts no liability for any outcomes arising from the use, interpretation, or application of the information provided. The data presents estimated annual standardised nitrogen and phosphorus fraction loads (kg/ha) for Lough Neagh inflow rivers from 2020 to 2025. This includes dissolved inorganic nitrogen, total oxidisable nitrogen, nitrate, nitrite and ammonia, as well as total phosphorus, total soluble phosphorus, soluble reactive phosphorus and particulate phosphorus.

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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 manner in which 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,

