

Reference Number : DAERA/26-522



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

Fairmin, Environment

Veterinary Service Animal Health Group
Information Communication Branch

Via Email:

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

Email: vsinfocommsbranch@daera-ni.gov.uk

Dear

28 August 2026

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:

Operational guidelines and procedures followed by the DAERA Humane Slaughter Team during cattle culling operations (including, but not limited to, Bovine Tuberculosis or other disease control culls).

Specifically, I would like to request copies of the following records and documents:

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) & Guidelines: Any current operational manuals, Standard Operating Procedures, codes of practice, or official guidance issued to or used by the DAERA Humane Slaughter Team when performing on-farm or off-site cattle culls.

Humane Slaughter Methods & Welfare Protocols: Protocols regarding the approved methods of restraint, stunning, and dispatch (e.g., captive bolt, firearm procedures, confirmation of death) to ensure animal welfare compliance during culling activities.

Training & Qualification Standards: Documentation setting out the training requirements, legal certifications, or competency standards required for personnel operating within or on behalf of the DAERA Humane Slaughter Team.

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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Audit & Compliance Records: Guidance or templates used for monitoring, logging, and auditing welfare standards during culling operations.

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that we hold some of the requested information.

The Department has decided not to disclose some of the information held Under Section 21 (Information Accessible by Other Means) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as information relevant to your request is already publicly accessible. These reports are now publicly available we have provided the link to download and review.

[Guidelines for the euthanasia of animals | American Veterinary Medical Association](#)

[About - Humane Slaughter Association](#)

[Welfare of Animals Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#)

In addition, the Department has decided not to disclose some of the information you requested as it considers Section 38 (Endangering Health and Safety) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to apply. In these instances, the Department is legislatively required to consider the public interest in disclosure. An associated Public Interest Test has been conducted and is attached for your information at **Annex I**.

The Department has also decided not to disclose some of the information as it is being withheld under the following exemption of the Freedom of Information Act: Section 40(2) – Third party personal data of which you are not the data subject.

In these instances, the Department is required to consider if disclosure would breach the first Data Protection Principle, which states that processing must be lawful, fair and transparent.

The Department has considered this element within the test attached at **Annex J** and has determined that no lawful basis for disclosure under FOI exists. Please bear in mind that any disclosure must be considered in terms of disclosure to the “world at large” and not just to you, the requester. Consequently, third party personal data falling within the scope of this request has been withheld.

The information that can be released is attached at **Annex A-H**.

- The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) used by the Humane Slaughter Team (HST) for killing different species is attached at **Annex A**
- HST Terms of Engagement is provided at **Annex B**
- HST Risk Assessment is provided at **Annex C**
- Template for HST Training Records is provided at **Annex D**.

Please note that you may have to expand some of the columns on the CSV file to view all of the information.

- HST Qualifications is provided at **Annex E**
- CVO letter re Crown Immunity is provided at **Annex F**
- DOJ Firearms Order is provided at **Annex G**
- Crown Immunity Letter as issued to each of the HST members is provided at **Annex H**

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