

Reference Number : DAERA/26-720



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

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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

Email: vsinfocommsbranch@daera-ni.gov.uk

24 September 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your email received by the Department on 16 September 2026 which you sought the information in bold below.

- A. Stephen Murray's Certificate of Competence: confirmation of the certificate he was required to hold for the commercial transport undertaken on 3 March 2026; whether a valid certificate was held on that date; its issue and expiry dates; and how a copy or official confirmation can be obtained.**
- B. Highland Equine Transportation & Services: confirmation of the transporter authorisation and any other operator/vehicle approval required for Farrah's onward commercial journey on 3 March 2026; whether those authorisations were valid on that date; and the Animal Transport Certificate, journey record or equivalent transport record Highland was required to create, carry or retain. I also ask whether an invoice to Equitrans and a WhatsApp log alone would satisfy the applicable record-keeping requirements.**
- C. Farrah's blood-test documentation: the original laboratory/test record connected with Farrah before the movement, including what test was undertaken and what it was testing for, the sample date, who took or submitted the sample, the laboratory and report/reference number, the result, and the horse identification recorded against that sample. I particularly ask for**

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confirmation that the test can be independently matched to Farrah through his passport and/or microchip.

- D. Farrah's health/veterinary certification:** confirmation of the official health certificate or other animal-health certification required for Farrah's actual movement into Great Britain, together with corresponding record for Farrah, the certifying veterinarian/authority and any blood-test or other veterinary documentation relied upon as part of that certification.
- E. Official import or movement notification:** where an IPAFFS, TRACES, border/import or other official notification/check was required for Farrah's actual route, identification of the corresponding record and the health/test documentation linked to it. If no such record was legally required because of Farrah's actual origin and route, I ask for confirmation of what requirements did apply.
- F. Equitrans's primary international paperwork and master transit logs:** clarification of what documents are meant by, or should comprise, the "primary International paperwork and master transit logs" referred to in the solicitor's correspondence; whether Equitrans was required to retain them; and whether the relevant authority can obtain or inspect the originals. I need the records sufficient to identify Farrah within the commercial movement and connect him to the relevant health, blood-test and transport documentation.
- G. Record retention and access:** confirmation of who should now hold each of the above records, how long they are required to be retained, whether the relevant authority can verify them directly and, if not, the procedure by which I or my solicitor can obtain them for the legal proceedings.

I can advise that the Department has considered your request and offer the following response in relation to the specific elements of the request.

A. Based on information provided by you within your original request it would appear that Stephen Murray is possibly employed by Highland Equine Transportation & Services who are based in Inverness. That being the case, records for his Certificate of Competence would likely be held by his employer and the competent authority in Scotland which would be the Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA). DAERA have performed a search of their records for Certificates of Competence in respect of Stephen Murray, and no records have been found.

B. Based on information provided within your request we are able to ascertain that Highland Equine Transportation & Services are based in Inverness and as a result their transporter authorisation, vehicle approvals and Animal Transport Certificate would be held by the competent authority in Scotland which would be the Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA). Therefore, DAERA does not hold the information requested.

C. DAERA are unable to confirm that any blood tests exist for Farrah as blood testing related to export certification is dependent on the journey route undertaken by Farrah and the associated export certification required, if any. There is insufficient information provided within your request to ascertain the details of the journey route undertaken by Farrah and whether or not blood tests would be required to support any potential export certification. Additionally blood test results, if required, are not held by DAERA as standard but are instead retained by the certifying veterinarian.

D. DAERA are unable to confirm if any export certification was provided by DAERA as your request did not provide sufficient information to enable us to confirm Farrah's identity (e.g. passport or microchip details) or the journey route undertaken to reach Great Britain.

E. DAERA are unable to confirm if any import or movement notifications exist for Farrah as your request did not provide sufficient information that would enable us to confirm Farrah's identity (e.g. passport or microchip details) or the journey route undertaken to reach Great Britain and we are, for the same reason, unable to confirm what other requirements may have applied.

F. DAERA are unable to confirm the existence or ownership of any "primary International paperwork and master transit logs" as the terminology does not reflect the types of documents that may be held by DAERA for the purpose of the movement of horses to GB. In addition, DAERA are unable to respond to this element of the request as it did not provide sufficient information that would enable us to confirm Farrah's identity (e.g. passport or microchip details) or the details of journey route undertaken to reach Great Britain.

G. DAERA are unable to confirm any details in respect of the retention of documentation related to export certification or movements of horses to Great Britain as the request did not provide sufficient information to enable us to confirm Farrah's identity (e.g. passport or microchip details) or the journey route undertaken to reach Great Britain.

The ability of DAERA to provide the information requested within the Freedom of Information request has been impacted by the limitations of the information provided within the original request.

The additional information mentioned in the response (passport/microchip details for Farrah and the specifics of the actual journey undertaken to reach Great Britain) may assist DAERA to respond more fully to any further Freedom of Information request on the subject.

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.

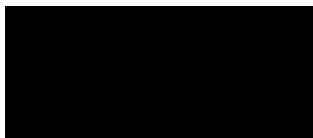
If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk 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,

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