

Minutes of the DAERA stats User Group meeting

Friday 20th June 2025 10am

Via Microsoft Teams / Clare House

Present

MMcL	Mark McLean	DAERA/NISRA
HMcN	Hugh McNickle	DAERA/NISRA
DC	Danielle Clarke	DAERA/NISRA
PB	Phillip Billsborough	DAERA/NISRA
MC	Mark Cartwright	DAERA/NISRA
PD	Paul Darcy	DAERA/NISRA
AB	Alexander Best	DAERA Economics and Evaluation Branch
KO	Kehinde Olagunju	DAERA Economics and Evaluation Branch
IW	Ian Walsh	DAERA/NISRA
DF	David Finlay	DAERA/NISRA
PH	Philip Hamilton	DAERA/NISRA
CS	Claire Shortt	Belfast City Council
PK	Paul Keatley	DAERA Economics and Evaluation Branch
RC	Ronan Coll	CAFRE
DM	Daryll McLaughlin	Northern Ireland Meat Exporters
CG	Conor Gallagher	NIEA
OR	Odhran Russell	DAERA /NISRA
CB	Carley Bailie	DAERA /NISRA
LHM	Laoise Hunter Martin	DAERA /NISRA
EP	Ellie Pentland	DAERA /NISRA
ML	Mathieu Lundy	Ulster Wildlife
DP	David Pickett	DAERA Economics and Evaluation Branch
MG	Matthew Gibson	DAERA /NISRA
CS	Conor Sage	Sustainability (Newry, Mourne and Down
NF	Nicola Fisher	NISRA
KN	Kingsley Nelson	DAERA
FW	Fiona Watters	Environmental Resource Officer
EMACC	Eliza MacCafferty	Control & data management
AA	Dr. Austen Ashfield	Economist, AFBI
NB	Noeleen Black	Keep Northern Ireland beautiful
RC	Rebekah Conn	NIEA
AM	Alan Mitchell	Fermanagh and Omagh DC
DR	David Rankin	Agricultural Agent
PMcE	Peter McEvoy	Ulster Wildlife

Apologies

DM	Des Muldoon	DAERA/NISRA
HH	Hala Haddad	British Trust for Ornithology
KE	Kathryn Ewan	DAERA/NISRA
CMcC	Conor McCormack	DAERA
TG	Tony Gibson	DAERA
AMMcD	Anne-Marie McDevitt	RSPB
SG	Sarah Gilhespy	Rothamsted Research
CO'D	Catherine O'Donnell	NISRA
RR	Ruth Rodgers	Farming life
SH	Silke Hartmann	DAERA
RB	Rodney Brown	Danske Bank
CMcK	Cormac McKervey	Ulster Bank
KP	Keith Patterson	WRAP
HB	Hannah Blair	WRAP

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and introductions

MMcL welcomed everyone to the meeting and personally welcomed Nicola Fisher (Director)

MMcL Then handed over to HMcN

HMcN welcomed everyone and personal welcome to PK
then set out the objectives

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of the last meeting

The previous meeting was held on 26th April 2024. Minutes of the last meeting were approved by all attendees. Updates on discussion from the last meeting will be addressed in work area presentations.

Agenda Item 3: Review of DAERA statistical activities since last meeting and forward work programme by focus area

3.1. Rural Statistics

HMcN gave a presentation on Rural Statistics – see slides for more detail

- HMcN confirmed that European funding was coming to an end.
- Aims include better access to stats and to have more uptake in relevant rural areas.
- Greater breakdown of data to be given to stakeholders.
- Data would be uploaded to the data portal and there would be a better rural split in the data produced.

- There are 850 data zones, and we want to create bespoke rural areas – the census data will be used to build a dashboard. This includes adding more admin data including survey data and lived experience.
- Attendees can feel free to reach out if needing any assistance with how to access the available data.

AM – are you able to split the data into 2 categories urban and rural on the portal?

HMcN – we are actively looking into this, NISRA will be made aware and the aim is to select super data zones in each area

AM – have we seen professors Chris Lloyds work on measuring deprivation?

HMCN – Seen papers, confirmed NISRA colleagues are aware.

3.2. Environmental Statistics

OR gave presentation – see slides for detail

- 2023/2024: Over 1 million tonnes of waste produced. Recycling improved to 50.5%, landfill decreased to 18.4%, and energy recovery increased to 29.7%.
- 54% of protected area features are in favourable condition. Nitrogen dioxide levels in urban areas dropped significantly.
- Carrier Bag Levy Report (third year, now 25p): Transitioning to interactive HTML format for improved accessibility.

ML – what role does NISRA/DAERA have in making the data consistent?

OR – We reach out to forestry for figures and confirm any changes to processes and provide any changes to methodology of data collection. Noted PfG and coastal water policy.

AP1 – ML to contact NISRA to discuss further

3.3. Climate Change & GHG Projections

DF gave presentation – see slides for detail

- NI GHG projections - September 2024 – publication was delayed due to quantification of Climate Action Plan
- NI Carbon Intensity Indicators - December 2024 – tracks effectiveness of carbon reduction policies
- Consultation on Climate Action Plan released 19 June 2025 – 12-week period

MG noted in relation to the Emissions Projection Tool that Ricardo updates are due next week and updates for stakeholders due in July.

- 3 publications moving to HTML

AM – do ONS publish local government data not NISRA?

HMcN – no change, ONS produce the data

ML – what is the process for filling NI specific data gaps?

CS – will LGD and Public Body Reporting be used to fill NI data gaps?

DF – Ricardo highlights data gaps in inventory. Working with PPP who put data together – HMcN looking at data for climate action plan 2.

3.4. Agricultural Surveys

DC gave presentation - see slides for detail

- Farm Census, move to Blaise reporting platform in June 2025 improves security and user experience. Modules for 2025 to include experimental questions on cattle housing and land leasing.

Feedback noted that a print and save feature for surveys is beneficial for users and stakeholders

DR - would it be possible to have complete questionnaire of what will be asked in survey prior to release?

DC – dummy survey code could be issued, will consider for next year.

DC noted surveys are more accessible online as the user is directed through the survey based on their responses.

3.5. Food and Drinks Processing

DC gave presentation – see slides for detail

- Publication under review to ensure statistical best practice and compliance. Data sharing issues with Invest NI being addressed; engagement with stakeholders planned once resolved and new methodology developed.

3.6 Social Sciences

DC gave presentation – see slide for detail

- New area of work

3.7. Farm Income and Agricultural Market Statistics

PK gave presentation – see slides for detail

- Reports now feature user-friendly graphs alongside traditional tables.

- Quarterly meetings held to discuss data and inform decision-making.
- Feedback. Alan Mitchell: Farm Income and Farm Census data highly valued by stakeholders, particularly the F&O Agricultural Liaison Group who hold quarterly meetings held to discuss data and inform decision-making and to produce presentations and policy.
- Feedback, Claire Short - Food Strategy for Belfast lacks evidence so need to use the Statistical Review of Agriculture for data, there is a need for breakdowns on food waste and emissions; queries to be directed to Philip Hamilton and Conor McCormack.

AOB – N/A

DC brought the meeting to a close saying all feedback would be carefully considered and followed up by relevant statisticians or economists. She stated his intention to host these events on an annual basis, and a meeting invite will be circulated for the next meeting in due course, in the meantime he asked that any nominations for membership of the group be directed to herself or the statistical team.

Action Points

1. Dashboard Development: Ensure the upcoming Rural Statistics dashboard being developed with NISRA TechLab supports refined urban/rural splits and distance-based analysis from Belfast. Action: Rural Statistics Team; Deadline: Autumn 2025
2. Data Consistency: Continue collaboration between NISRA/DAERA and partners to review and update environmental statistics. Action: NISRA/DAERA Environmental Statistics teams; Ongoing
3. GHG Inventory Data: Address NI-specific data gaps by engaging with Ricardo and stakeholders, with targeted reporting in upcoming CAP publications. Action: Climate Change Statistics team; Next update: July 2025
4. Agricultural Census Access: Explore providing a dummy code and advance questionnaire access for agents before survey launch. Action: Agricultural Surveys Team; Consider for 2026 cycle
5. Food Waste & Emissions Data: Direct stakeholder queries to Conor McCormack (emissions) and Philip Hamilton (food waste) for detailed breakdowns; Immediate
6. HTML Publications: Complete the transition of all main reports (Carrier Bag Levy, Emissions Project Tool, etc.) to HTML format for ease of access. Action: SASB/EEB; By end of 2025
7. Stakeholder Engagement: Plan further engagement with internal and external stakeholders on Food and Drinks Processing publication once data sharing is resolved. Action: Food and Drinks Processing Team; Upon resolution

Date of next meeting: TBC