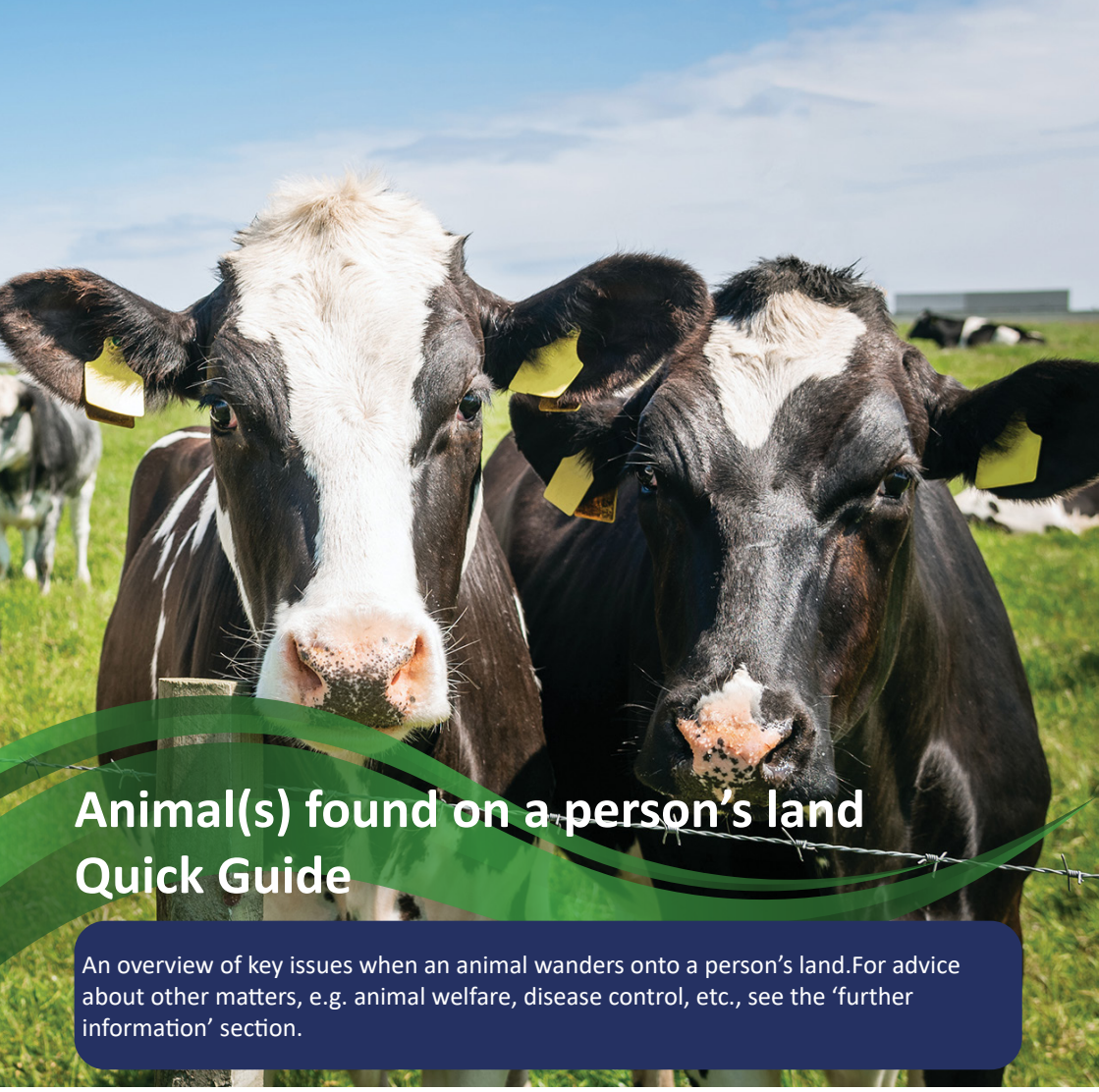


Animal(s) found on a person's land Quick Guide

An overview of key issues when an animal wanders onto a person's land.For advice about other matters, e.g. animal welfare, disease control, etc., see the 'further information' section.

Department of
Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Depairtment o'
Fairmin, Environment an' Kintra Matthers

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The Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (Article 9)

The 1976 Order provides for when livestock have strayed onto someone's land.

"Livestock" includes cattle, horses, donkeys, sheep, pigs, goats, poultry, and domesticated deer.

What to do if animals have strayed onto your land

Anyone who finds any of these animals on their land can detain the animals.

Straying livestock is not a matter for DAERA or Local Councils. The PSNI, should, however, be notified.

Does the land owner/occupier have to look after an animal that has strayed onto his/her land? (Land owner/occupier rights)

No. Although the land owner/occupier has the right to detain livestock that has strayed onto his/ her land, there is no obligation to detain.

Where a land owner/occupier decides to detain the straying livestock, he/she must treat the livestock with reasonable care and supply it with adequate food and water while it is detained.

A land owner/occupier who detains livestock found on his/her land and then fails to treat it with reasonable care and supply it with adequate food and water could be liable to prosecution on welfare grounds.

Livestock detained owner/keeper of the straying livestock is not known

A land owner/occupier who detains livestock found on his/her land, where the owner/keeper is not known, must notify the PSNI within 48 hours.

The right of the land owner/occupier to detain the livestock ends if the livestock is claimed by its owner and the owner pays an amount to cover any damages caused and/or expenses incurred.

In most circumstances, after 14 days if no owner is identified, the land owner/occupier can then sell the livestock at a market or public auction. If this is not viable, he/she might consider contacting an animal welfare or re-homing charity.

Owner/keeper of the straying livestock is known

If the land owner/occupier knows the person to whom the livestock belongs, he/she may detain that livestock but must notify the livestock owner within 48 hours.

The right of the land owner/occupier to detain the livestock ends if the livestock is then claimed by its owner and the owner pays an amount to cover matters such as damages caused and expenses incurred.

Livestock not detained

Where a land owner/occupier chooses not to detain livestock found on his/her land and no-one is providing it with reasonable care or adequate food and water, the land owner/occupier might decide that a welfare issue may arise in the future.

The landowner may, therefore, wish to advise the body responsible for the enforcement of animal welfare - DAERA in the case of farmed animals or the Local Council in the case of other non-farmed animals such as horses/donkeys.

The enforcement body will carry out an assessment and take appropriate action, if it decides that there is a welfare issue. See links below for contact details.

Can livestock be turned loose onto a road?

No- under Article 93 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993, it is an offence for anyone to turn any horse, donkey, cattle, sheep, goat, pig or domesticated deer loose onto a road.

Your local DVO can advise on matters of identification, disease control, and welfare of farmed animals
DAERA Direct Regional offices | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Your Council can advise on matters of welfare of non-farmed animals:
https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/article/1423/Animal-Welfare

Details of the Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 1976:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1976/1040/contents

Details of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/16/contents

Quick Guide: "Animal Welfare":
https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/introduction-animal-welfare

Details of quick guides for straying animals
www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/straying-animals

Responsibilities of Enforcement Bodies
https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/responsibilities-enforcement-bodies

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