

INVITATION QUICK ADVICE

DAERA PRIVATE OFFICE

INV Ref:	INV-1194-2020
To:	Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
CC:	Denis McMahon Brian Doherty Norman Fulton Robert Huey Fiona McCandless David Small Tracey Teague Rosemary Agnew Brexit Policy Press Office
Lead Official:	Rosemary Agnew
Branch:	Brexit Division
Contact number (incl. mobile)	028 9052 4074 077 9947 1431
Date advice returned:	
Invitation from:	Tom McKeown, Moy Park Head of Agri Improvement Projects NI
Invitation type (click box to check):	☐ Event ☒ Meeting ☐ Other (please specify):
Details of event/meeting (including necessary background)	Tom McKeown, Moy Park has requested a meeting with you to discuss mutual challenges such as Brexit, the Environment and a sustainable Agricultural business. Moy Park is a member of the Trade and Agriculture Committee (TAC).
Venue:	To be confirmed
Date and time:	To be confirmed
Recommendation (click box to check):	☒ Accept (specify reason): A meeting with Tom McKeown will reassure Moy Park that their interests remain at the fore of DAERA's discussions.

INV Ref:	INV-1194-2020
(if selecting 'offer official', confirmation of official availability is required)	Decline (specify reason): ☐ Offer Official (please specify):
Priority (click box to check):	☒ Urgent ☐ 1-2 months ☐ 2-4 months ☐ 4 months + ☐ Not applicable
Minister's comments (click box to check):	☐ Accept ☐ Decline ☐ Further information required (please specify):
Minister's signature:	
Date:	

BRIEFING MINISTER INTERVIEW ON LOUGH NEAGH BBC SPOTLIGHT

You have been approached by BBC NI Spotlight to undertake an interview regarding water pollution in relation to Lough Neagh. This interview follows on from the extensive media coverage of the Blue Green Algae blooms in Lough Neagh in 2023 and discussions around the causes of the blooms and the Department's response in preventing water pollution across Northern Ireland.

The BBC requested data on the 15 April 2024 (DAERA/24/195) via the Environmental Information Regulations regarding water pollution statistics for the Lough Neagh catchment area and enforcement notices issued to Moy Park by NIEA. This request was refused on 30 April 2024 as being too voluminous, as it potentially involved 894 records. Follow up discussion with the BBC Spotlight producer (Guy Grandjean) has resulted in a refined request which is due to be issued on 30 May 2024 (Annex A).

Background information and LTT

ISSUE: Action taken by DAERA following the blue green algae blooms in 2023

Background:

- DAERA (including Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)) officials have been meeting regularly on the blue-green algae issue since June 2023 when reports were received of the deaths of dogs in Lough Melvin, Fermanagh and have increased the level of engagement with stakeholders, both in affected areas and more widely, as the situation has developed.
- DAERA and NIEA initiated emergency planning measures in response to the number of reported incidents of blue-green algae in Lough Neagh and across the North Coast beaches.
- An Operational Task Team from across the pollution response, algae identification, bathing waters and fisheries management disciplines was established to provide an operational response to the situation. The work of this group was overseen by senior DAERA, NIEA and DfI officials in a Water Quality Steering Group (WQSG).
- The WQSG has overall responsibility for identifying any viable solutions to address the immediate blue-green algae issues including potential reoccurrence in 2024 and beyond. This includes the identification of the key actions that would improve water quality and mitigate the level of blue-green algae across Northern Ireland's waterbodies.
- To assist the WQSG with its objective a review has been carried out by a high-level Task & Finish Team (the 'Review Team'). The Review Team has 12 members and is chaired by the Head of EMFG, DAERA. The team consists of senior staff from across DAERA, NIEA, DfI and NIW. Its remit is to review the

scientific and other evidence available and identify further action that might be needed alongside the range of significant programmes underway to improve water quality.

- DAERA further established an Interagency Monitoring Group in October 2023. The Group has included representation from all those involved in monitoring Lough Neagh – NIEA, DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Food Standards Agency, NI Water (NIW) and has also included the Public Health Agency with a monitoring protocol recently agreed (SUB-1334-2024)
- In March 2024 DAERA commissioned a short shore-based sampling programme by AFBI in conjunction with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) whereby overwintering levels of cyanotoxins in Lough Neagh were assessed. Results are expected to be received in coming weeks.
- The Department also plans, pending budget confirmation, to commence a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) scheme that aims to identify viable technical solutions to deal with the immediate effects of blue-green algae in Lough Neagh which may then be able to be used in other waterways.
- DAERA has also established an Independent Science Advisory Group (SAG). The SAG has a membership of 12 and is chaired by the DAERA Chief Scientific Advisor. The core membership of the group comprises leading scientists/professional experts from universities and science organisations across the UK and Ireland. The SAG has a remit to provide an advisory and independent scrutiny role, but also to carry out a challenge of the review.
- It was expected that the Lough Neagh report, containing the actions identified by the WQSG, would be produced by 31 January 2024. However, it has taken longer than expected. At the same time, given the return of the Northern Ireland Executive on 3 February 2024, it was felt that it would be beneficial for an incoming Executive and Minister to have their input into the report before it would be considered for publication.
- The Lough Neagh report cannot be seen in isolation from the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP). The EIP, a wide-ranging plan for significantly improving the natural environment, is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021. It was consulted on as a draft Environment Strategy and, once Executive approval has been obtained, it will be published as Northern Ireland's first EIP and laid in the Assembly.
The actions in the Lough Neagh report will support the actions relevant to supporting water quality across Northern Ireland in the longer term in the EIP and, once the EIP has been approved, the specific paper on Lough Neagh, containing the recommended actions, will be brought to a subsequent Executive meeting for consideration and discussion.

Lines to Take:

- Addressing and improving water quality in Lough Neagh has been identified as a key first year priority for the Executive. The publication of the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP), which is a statutory obligation, is required to provide an overarching environmental strategy, which sets the context and accommodates improvements to water quality.

- The approval of the EIP will also pave the way for a specific Lough Neagh Report to be presented to the Executive for its consideration. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the Lough Neagh Report and the requirement for Executive approval, no final decision has been taken on the actions to be included in the final report.
- My Department will imminently publish an interagency Blue-green monitoring protocol outlines the monitoring that my Department will carry out, should we experience similar blooms in 2024. Importantly, the Protocol also explains the roles and responsibilities of the other agencies, councils, business owners and citizens.

ISSUE: Lough Neagh Pollution – Role of NIEA

Background:

- NIEA is responsible for responding to and investigating water pollution incidents throughout Northern Ireland. This includes initiating appropriate enforcement action, under the Water (NI) Order 1999, where businesses or individuals are suspected of having caused significant pollution.
- All cases of pollution are robustly investigated and, where the polluter can be identified, NIEA will pursue formal enforcement action in line with the enforcement policy for **significant** breaches in legislation.
- It is NIEA policy to initiate enforcement action for all high and medium severity water pollution incidents where the polluter can be identified. NIEA prosecutes an average of 19 suspected polluters each year for significant water pollution offences with successful convictions in well over 90% of cases taken before the courts.
- The penalty imposed by the courts is a matter for the judiciary and one which DAERA has no control over. However a discussion between DAERA and Department of Justice officials has been initiated on this matter.
- Within the Lough Neagh catchment there were 138 high and medium severity incidents (excluding Blue green algae reports) investigated between 2021 to 2023 (Subject of the EIR request). Of these investigations there were 98 where a polluter was identified. NIEA has taken enforcement action in **89%** of these cases and the remaining 11% are currently under investigation. Enforcement action has resulted in fines from prosecution cases through the courts totalling £3,350. Other enforcement action has included the issuing of warning letters and cost recovery as well as penalties for breaches in cross compliance.
- The recent NIAO report 'Water Quality in Northern Ireland's Rivers and Lakes' (published 25 March 2024) stated that between 2017-2021 there were cross-compliance penalties totalling £446,000 over 273 cases, resulting in an average of £1,634 per case.
- The penalty applied will vary significantly as it is a percentage of the claim made under a range of qualifying schemes e.g. Basic Payment Scheme.

- NIEA operates a Water Pollution Hotline 0800 807060, available 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. In order to prevent or minimise the impact of pollution, NIEA co-ordinates and manages the response to reports of pollution within set time targets, depending on the severity of the incident.

Lines to Take:

- NIEA receives on average 1800 reports of pollution each year with every report investigated. The majority of cases reported to NIEA are classified upon investigation as low severity, which would not reach the evidential threshold for formal enforcement action. In these cases, NIEA ensure that the pollution is stopped and provide advice to prevent further occurrence.
- Formal enforcement action is normally considered for incidents having a medium or high severity environmental impact. In such cases where it is suspected that a criminal offence has occurred, there is sufficient evidence and it is warranted in line with DAERA's Enforcement Policy, a file is submitted to the Public Prosecution Service, who review the file and decide whether to direct a prosecution.
- The maximum fine for water pollution offences in Northern Ireland is set out in the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. Those found guilty of an offence listed under Article 7 of the Order may face a fine of up to a maximum of £20,000. However, it is wholly the decision of the NI Courts to decide on the level of fine imposed based on their sentencing guidelines following a conviction. My officials have commenced discussions with DoJ officials on this matter.
- In addition to formal prosecution under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, other enforcement actions available to the Department include the issuing of Warning Letters, Notices and breaches of Cross Compliance for agricultural incidents.
- A revised penalty regime to commence in 2026 is currently under development and I will continue to work with officials and Stakeholders to ensure that this regime is proportionate to the level of environmental harm caused.

ISSUE: Regulation of Moy Park

Background Note:

- NIEA regulates a number of Moy Park's processing sites under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013. Their permits contain emission limits on discharges to surface water and discharges to the sewer network.
- Between 2021 and 2023, Moy Park's chicken processing sites at Seagoe Industrial Estate, Craigavon and Killyman Road, Dungannon have both exceeded their emission limits for their discharge to the sewer consents on 162 occasions at its Craigavon plant and 233 occasions at its Dungannon plant.
- Dungannon and Ballynacor WwTW where the above-mentioned sites discharge have been assessed as compliant by NIEA against its Water Order Discharge Consent for treated effluent discharge quality parameters in the past 3 years. Therefore the notified exceedances to sewer have not had a detrimental impact on water quality.
- NIEA has not taken enforcement action as these exceedances to the sewer network are considered low risk as the discharge is further treated at the wastewater treatment works before final discharge to the watercourse. The discharge limits are set by NI Water in their consent to discharge and these limits are included within the installation's PPC permit.
- If NI Water raise any concerns regarding the discharges from a PPC permitted site, these are forwarded to the Inspectorate and associated PPC site for review and further action, if necessary. Within the period 2021-2023 this has not occurred and as such no enforcement action has been taken. However, NIEA is engaging with the operator of both sites to improve their compliance against the Northern Ireland Water discharge limits.
- Moy Park (Dungannon site) has provided evidence of engagement with Northern Ireland Water and has a plan to improve its compliance.
- NIEA is aware that the Craigavon Moy Park site has plans for an effluent plant upgrade for which is at the final planning stages prior to submission to the planning department.
- During the period 2021-2023, Moy Park has also had eight exceedances of its emission limits to surface water from all their permitted sites (Craigavon, Dungannon, Ballymena and Randalstown). Enforcement action was not taken on these exceedances because they either did not meet the threshold to be treated as substantial non-compliances or because they were deemed to be due to extreme weather conditions such as torrential rain or extremely dry conditions. Repeated breaches that did not meet the threshold could also be treated as a substantial non-compliance and lead to enforcement action. On each occasion the operator was required to set out the actions being taken to prevent a repeat of the exceedance.

Lines to Take:

- Although there were a large number of exceedances in their discharge to the sewer network from Moy Park's permitted sites, enforcement action has not been taken by NIEA as these exceedances are considered low risk due to the fact that they go to NI Water's wastewater treatment plants for further processing prior to discharge to a watercourse.
- However, NIEA are engaging with the operator of both sites to improve their compliance against the Northern Ireland Water discharge limits.
- For the period between 2021 – 2023, in regard to Moy Park's Dungannon and Craigavon sites sewer discharge exceedances, there have been no confirmed pollution incidents in relation to the discharges from the associated wastewater treatment plants.
- Where surface water exceedances were reported at Moy Park's sites, these were investigated and actions taken by the operators to prevent a recurrence.

ISSUE: Regulation of NI Water

Background:

- NIEA regulates sewage related discharges to the water environment via a consenting process under the Water Order 1999 (as amended). These Discharge Consents require NI Water to treat sewage to a level which can be sustained by the receiving water environment and to maintain such treatment to avoid pollution of a water course.
- All sewer systems are designed with emergency spill points known as network Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) or as Emergency Overflows (EOs) at wastewater pumping stations. These overflows are required to reduce the risk of sewage escaping from sewers.
- NIEA regulates Storm Overflow CSOs and EO's under Water Order Discharge Consents. It is a regulatory requirement within these consents that overflows are designed to operate in heavy rainfall conditions to prevent wastewater flooding in properties. NIEA is working with NI Water on its programme of installing and commissioning storm-overflow monitors which will inform when spill events are occurring. It is NIEA's intention to publish annual performance reports once accurate and reliable data is provided by NI Water.

- Discharges to sewer from industrial premises such as Moy Park are controlled under trade effluent consents, authorised by NI Water which set the limits on a range of parameters on what is accepted into their sewage network. NI Water monitors the quality of discharges to sewer and applies its enforcement policy for breaches of trade effluent consent limits.
- NI Water aims to engage with customers to agree Action Plans to bring their discharge back within consent limits, but on occasions where it is deemed necessary, it will take further enforcement action. To note breaches of trade effluent consent limits do not necessarily mean an exceedance at the WWTW, as the treatment works has capability to treat higher effluent loads.
- There are three Moy Park trade effluent locations in the vicinity of Lough Neagh; namely Moy Park Dungannon (discharges into NI Water's Dungannon wastewater treatment works (WwTWs)), and Moy Park Craigavon and Moypark Hatchery which both discharge into the Ballynacor WwTWs that is operated by Veolia under a public private partnership (PPP).
- Dungannon WwTW is located in mid Ulster and serves a number of food processing traders within the catchment. Dungannon WwTW has been assessed as compliant with its Water Order Discharge Consent for treated effluent discharge quality parameters in the past 3 years.
- Ballynacor WwTW has consistently met the Water Order Discharge Consent for treated effluent discharge quality parameters each year since PPP operations commenced in 2009. Thus, the PPP operator has not encountered any treated effluent discharge quality issues at Ballynacor WwTW relating directly to trade effluent influent from operations at Moy Park Craigavon.
- DAERA's Enforcement Policy is applied by NIEA where there are breaches in discharge consents and/or where NI Water has been the cause of a pollution incident. NIEA will take enforcement action against any operator where its discharges have caused a significant water pollution impact and investigation demonstrates a managerial failure on behalf of the Company.

SORPI arrangement between NIEA and NI Water

- In 2007, when Northern Ireland Water (NIW) became a GOCO, it lost crown immunity, and the then Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) put in place a Statement of Regulatory Principles and Intent (SORPI), in agreement with NIW.

- The SORPI set out the EHS (now the NIEA) regulatory and enforcement approach recognising that NIW had inherited a legacy of underfunding in wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. Whilst it is recognised that NI Water was unable to comply with relevant environmental standards from day one, and that it would take several Price Controls Periods to deliver on the necessary improvements, it is now no longer considered to be an effective regulatory approach and is under review.
- NI Water is primarily funded by DfI provided through 6-year Price Control (PC) periods. The current period known as PC21 runs for the period 2021 to 2027. A governance structure, which includes Water Stakeholder Steering Group and Output Review Group is in place to oversee the identification, prioritisation and implementation of PC21 deliverables against allocated budget. DfI and NI Water are represented on these groups along with key stakeholders including the Utility Regulator, The Consumer Council, the NIEA and the Drinking Water Inspectorate.
- Since 2007 whilst there has been substantial improvement in the wastewater infrastructure, there remains a significant need to upgrade the network to meet with current and future environmental standards. The scale of the issue is concerning for the NIEA, particularly given the current economic climate and the ability of NIW to secure the necessary funding to meet those environmental objectives.
- In September 2022, given that the SORPI had been in place for 15 years, work commenced on reviewing that agreement, with input from representatives from Department for Infrastructure, NI Water and the NIEA and a draft revised version was developed.
- A NIEA/DAERA Task & Finish Group has been tasked to complete the review of the SORPI and the Group will draw on the 2022 draft revision to develop an effective regulatory approach going forward.

Lines to Take:

- NIEA regulates trade effluent and sewage related discharges to the water environment via a consenting process under the Water Order 1999 (as amended). These Discharge Consents require NI Water to treat trade effluent and sewage to a level which can be sustained by the receiving water environment and to maintain such treatment to avoid pollution of a water course.
- The SORPI arrangement between NIEA and NI Water came into effect on 1 April 2007 and presently remains valid. However, this SORPI is currently

under review as it is no longer considered to be an effective approach to regulating NI Water's wastewater discharges.

- The SORPI provides clarity to NI Water on the NIEA regulatory and enforcement approach, in recognition of the historic and continued investment in wastewater infrastructure.
- It is recognised that NI Water's wastewater infrastructure has suffered from long term underfunding and significant infrastructure improvements are required to meet current environmental and future environmental standards.
- The NIEA is a key stakeholder within the NIW Price Control governance process providing significant input into the development of its capital works program, and prioritisation of projects against available funding.
- There is no statutory requirement within discharge consents for NI Water to monitor all sewage discharges. NIEA is working with NI Water on its programme of installing and commissioning storm-overflow monitors which will inform when spill events are occurring. It is NIEA's intention to publish annual performance reports once accurate and reliable data is provided by NI Water.
- Discharges to sewer from industrial premises such as Moy Park are controlled under trade effluent consents that are authorised by NI Water. These consents set limits on a range of parameters on what is permitted to be discharged. NI Water monitors the quality of discharges to sewer and applies its enforcement policy for breaches of trade effluent consent limits..
- There are three Moy Park trade effluent locations in the vicinity of Lough Neagh that are served by two wastewater treatment works; one works is located in Dungannon (NI Water operated) and the other is located in Craigavon (PPP operated).
- In the past 3 years, both the Dungannon and Ballynacor wastewater treatment works have been compliant with their respective Water Order Discharge Consents.
- DAERA's Enforcement Policy is applied by NIEA where there are breaches in discharge consents and/or where NI Water has been the cause of a pollution incident.

ISSUE: Pathogens in waterways

Background:

- DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division monitors some pathogens in waterways at identified and candidate bathing waters. These are the faecal indicator organisms – E. coli and intestinal enterococci; and cyanobacteria – more commonly referred to as blue-green algae – but actually a bacteria.
- Northern Ireland has 26 identified bathing waters and a further 7 candidate sites which must meet stringent water quality standards set under The Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008. There is one candidate site in Lough Neagh, at Rea's Wood, Antrim. ***Note – the first pre-season sample from this site has returned a poor result today, from a sample collected yesterday (29 May). The pre-season samples are used in overall compliance for the year.
- The regulations require regular testing of bathing waters. When bathing water quality fails to meet a certain standard, the Department carries out pollution investigations to find a possible source of the contamination.
- The results of the bathing water programme are posted weekly during the bathing season (1 June – mid-September) on NI Direct and the DAERA website. During the 2024 season, the Department will also use social media to promote the weekly updates and to alert of potential pollution incidents.
- The amount of rainfall we get in Northern Ireland can significantly impact water quality. Heavy rain can cause contamination from sewer overflows and run-off from farms being washed into the sea. Flooding, animal fouling or low levels of sunlight all increase the likelihood of contamination that can cause illness and infection when people are exposed to it.
- Faecal Indicator Organisms - these are organism that thrive in the gut of humans and animals and are useful as indicators of faecal contamination. The organisms monitored under the Bathing Water Regulation – E. coli and intestinal enterococci, do not differentiate between animal and human contamination. However, the Department is working extensively with AFBi on techniques of microbial source tracking, which do differentiate and this can be helpful in focusing management action towards either NI Water or agricultural practices.
- Blue Green Algae - blooms of blue-green algae often produce toxins (cyanotoxins), which can include neuro- (nerve) toxins, hepato-(liver) toxins, skin irritants, and inflammatory agents. These toxins are largely retained within the blue-green algae cells during their development and growth and are released when the cells die. Algal blooms can occur throughout the year, but they are most common from May through to October.

- In accordance with the World Health Organization Guidelines (2021) and the Bathing Water Regulations, all identified and candidate bathing waters that are considered at risk of cyanobacterial proliferation will be monitored at a frequency necessary to allow adequate management measures to be put in place.
- During 2023 under the Bathing Waters Programme, cyanotoxin analysis was used to provide information to Bathing Water Operators (usually Councils), with 'advice against bathing' issued where WHO guideline values were exceeded. This was used in conjunction with cyanobacteria cell counts and visual assessments of the bloom. All results of water testing, as well as the approach taken by the Department, have been released and are available via <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/blue-green-algae-sample-results-published>
- Cyanotoxin-based monitoring programmes provide the most appropriate information in terms of protecting public health. Weekly samples are currently being collected from Rea's Wood and sent to a UKAS-accredited government laboratory in England. [Note – there is currently no UKAS-accredited facility in Northern Ireland.] Under the newly agreed Interagency Blue Green Algae Monitoring Protocol, this monitoring will be extended to other bathing water sites, should the incidence of BGA increase during the season.
- The Department is also trialling rapid testing field kits for cyanotoxin monitoring, known as ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay). Field test kits are useful as they can provide an initial estimate of the level of dissolved microcystins.

Lines to Take:

- The Department undertakes monitoring of pathogens in waterways at bathing waters in Northern Ireland. Both faecal indicator organisms and blue-green algae are covered in the bathing waters monitoring programme.
- Swimming in poor-quality water increases the risk of infection caused by bacteria and viruses from faecal matter. This includes a higher risk of contracting eye, ear, skin, and throat infections, gastroenteritis, E. coli, and hepatitis.

- It should be noted that standard advice is not to bathe during prolonged or heavy rainfall and for up to 48 hours after such weather.
- **The first pre-season sample for Rea's Wood, Lough Neagh, collected on 29 May has returned a high count of E. coli. An investigation into the cause has been initiated. The public has been advised through posters.**
- Blue-green algae is an overgrowth of a type of bacteria in a water body that could affect water quality and aquatic life. BGA can produce several toxins that may be harmful to people and animals.
- My Department has led on the development of an Interagency Blue Green Algae Monitoring Protocol, introducing a tiered approach to monitoring, with the most comprehensive monitoring at our bathing waters.
- Members of the public are encouraged to take personal responsibility for themselves, their children and pets, and heed any signage at water bodies regarding risks of blue-green algae or specific signs with 'advice against bathing'. However, even if there is no signage at a location, should the appearance of a water body concern you, **when in doubt, stay out**, and do not let pets swim in, play in or drink water that looks discoloured or has scum on the surface.
- My Department works in partnership in leading a Better Beaches Forum with the Councils, National Trust, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful NI Water and others to improve water quality, beach management and information flow to the public. Following the blue green algae issues last year, the Better Beaches Forum has collectively reviewed information flow and has developed new infographics and social media alerts to accompany our website updates. These are being shared with councils etc to promote standardised signage for a variety of situations.

EMFG Briefing

IMPACT OF AGRICULTURE ON LOUGH NEAGH

- It is evident that the main contributors to high nutrient levels in Lough Neagh are agriculture and wastewater from both treatment works and septic tanks.
- As Minister with responsibility for agriculture, environment and rural affairs, I recognise that agriculture and the agri-food industry are key parts of our economy in Northern Ireland.
- However, it is clear that excess nutrients from this sector are putting pressure on the environment and that cannot continue.
- It is widely recognised that the intensification of agricultural production has had negative impacts on water quality.
- The [RePhokUs report](#) identified that high nutrient levels in Northern Ireland waterbodies have three main sources – estimating that 62 % of the phosphorus inputs are from agriculture, 24 % from wastewater treatment works and 12 % from septic tanks.
- Therefore, my department will be progressing a range of measures to reduce phosphorus inputs from agricultural sources. These will include more efficient and sustainable management of manures and chemical fertilisers and developing the processing of slurry to remove excess phosphorus.
- Knowledge transfer and advisory support to ensure implementation of best practice and regulatory compliance will also be essential.
- We need to support our farmers in the essential task of food production, while being custodians of the land and protecting the environment on which we all rely.
- This will mean new approaches to ensure that the funding we provide for agriculture is allocated via an approach that protects water quality and biodiversity and adapts for resilience as our climate changes.
- Some of the interventions that are required are going to be challenging. This is a difficult issue and it is going to require changes in terms of our behaviours and practices.
- I am determined to build and sustain a culture of environmental responsibility fostering an attitude of zero tolerance to pollution.

BACKGROUND

1. There has been an intensification and expansion of the NI agricultural sector over the last 10 years. The increased imports of concentrate feed stuffs and consequent rise in the NI agricultural Phosphorus surplus have resulted in higher losses of Phosphorus to waterways.
2. At present some 40% of agricultural land has excess soil P and therefore can be a significant source of diffuse nutrient pollution. A major reduction in the P surplus of the NI Agricultural sector is therefore fundamental to improving water quality.
3. Potential measures to reduce agricultural P surplus include:
 - consideration of a ban on chemical P fertiliser on grassland, (with specific exemptions)
 - reduce P inputs from concentrate feedstuffs.
 - processing of slurry via Anaerobic Digestors with addition nutrient separation technologies. SULS – (Sustainable Use of Livestock Slurry) SBRI – Phase 1 completed, and Phase 2 planned for launch later this year.
 - Centralised processing of poultry litter by Anaerobic Digestion has already proven to be a successful model in NI. The Stream BioEnergy AD plant near Ballymena currently processes 40k tonnes of poultry litter per year and has plans to expand.
4. More efficient and sustainable management of manures and chemical fertilisers includes:
 - Nutrient management plans are essential to manage nutrients sustainably and the SNHS helps in that regard through the provision of soil testing. Lidar run off risk maps from SNHS will help to reduce risk of nutrient losses to waterways.
 - Increased use of Low Emission Slurry Spreading Equipment (LESSE) (primarily NH3 mitigation) results in improved nutrient efficiency.
5. Agricultural sources of phosphorus (P) inputs to waterways include:
 - losses from freshly applied manures and fertilisers,
 - diffuse losses from soils with accumulated high P levels from historic over-application.,
 - point source losses from poor farmyard management practice
 - losses of particulate P from soil erosion and sedimentation

BLUE-GREEN ALGAE – LOUGH NEAGH

LINES TO TAKE:

- It is clear, we have not got the balance right between growing our economy and safeguarding our natural environment. Addressing and improving water quality in Lough Neagh has been identified as a key first year priority for the Executive.
- Lough Neagh is the manifestation of this due to a combination of factors, decades in the making, and the undeniable impact of climate change means that there are no quick fixes to the occurrence and probable re-occurrence of blue green algal blooms at Lough Neagh, however, it is important that we start to correct the problem immediately.
- A report with recommendations for action will be brought to the Executive for consideration and discussion. This will support the actions relevant to improving water quality across Northern Ireland in the Environmental Improvement Plan.
- The scope of my officials' current work is focussed on the blue green algae and water quality issues, not the Lough's ownership. In terms of future ownership of the Lough Neagh bed and soil, I welcome the National Lottery Heritage Fund award with respect to the Lough Neagh Heritage Resilience Project, led by the Lough Neagh Partnership.
- This will include a range of activities including investigation into the feasibility of acquiring and transferring ownership of the bed and soil to public and/or community ownership. I await the outcome of this work.
- My Department is leading in the production of an Inter-Agency Monitoring Protocol should we experience similar blue-green algae issues in the 2024 season. This protocol will provide guidance as to how water users should consider blue-green algae risks.
- I cannot fix this alone. It is clear that there is a need for collective action across government, private and public sector and in the community. I am determined to continue my pledge to engage with partners and stakeholders to ensure we work together to improve water quality across Northern Ireland, including in Lough Neagh.
- It will also require a significant investment, not only in the short but in the longer term and inadequate resources will have a detrimental impact on funding the interventions needed. I am pleased that the improvement of water quality at Lough Neagh is an Executive Year One priority as this is a recognition of the importance of the issue and that we collectively need to start to address it as a matter of urgency.

- **Failing to address the problems will, in the longer term, result in the significant impacts we saw in 2023 becoming the norm. This is simply not something I will contemplate.**

BACKGROUND:

1. A joint DAERA / DfI Water Quality Steering Group is leading the work to address the situation in Lough Neagh. A draft Report including set of evidenced-based actions to tackle blue-green algae in Lough Neagh and secure longer-term improvements in water quality is being refined and finalised.
2. The actions in the Lough Neagh report will support the actions relevant to supporting water quality across Northern Ireland in the draft Environmental Improvement Plan. Once the Environmental Improvement Plan has been approved the specific paper on Lough Neagh, including the action plan, will be brought to a subsequent Executive meeting for consideration and discussion.

NUTRIENTS ACTION PROGRAMME

LINES TO TAKE:

- **A review of the Nutrients Action Programme is currently underway. The review will also consider recommendations from the Lough Neagh report on measures to improve water quality.**
- **A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Nutrients Action Programme is underway. A contractor was appointed in early March through a procurement process. The contract will run for 10 months.**
- **I envisage that the outcome of the Review will be published after the summer along with a consultation on the proposed Action Programme for the next 4 years and the SEA Environmental report.**
- **My officials will engage stakeholders on the proposals for the revised Action Programme as part of the process.**
- **The problems in Lough Neagh demonstrate the challenges we face with water quality. It is essential that we work together to improve water quality and I will welcome constructive input from stakeholders.**

BACKGROUND:

1. The Nutrients Action Programme (NAP) was initiated in 2007 and is the key measure to control nutrient pollution from agricultural sources and improve water quality. The NAP includes a wide range of measures on storage, spreading and management of manures and fertilisers. The NAP Regulations apply to all farms in Northern Ireland.
2. In the five years following the introduction of NAP, there was an improvement in water quality with a continuing downward trend in both nitrate and phosphorus levels in freshwaters. However, the water quality improvements achieved up to 2012 have in general been offset by intensification of the agricultural sector over the last 10 years.
3. The increased imports of concentrate feed stuffs and consequent rise in the NI agricultural phosphorus surplus have resulted in higher losses of phosphorus to waterways. Average Soluble Reactive Phosphorus (SRP) levels in rivers have increased by 55% from 2012 to 2022. Therefore, the agricultural phosphorus surplus needs to be reduced significantly to improve water quality.
4. Despite significant advisory effort and support in relation to NAP, implementation and compliance at farm level needs to be improved along with a greater

awareness of how farming practices can impact on water quality. A review of the current NAP is being progressed in 2024 and revised NAP Regulations, could be available for introduction in early 2025.

5. The NAP review process is a statutory obligation and the OEP will be monitoring progress.

ANAEROBIC DIGESTORS AND SUSTAINABLE SLURRY MANAGEMENT LINES TO TAKE

- **Processing of increased quantities livestock slurry in Anaerobic Digester plants to produce renewable biogas offers significant potential for carbon reduction. To deliver improved and sustainable nutrient management this**

needs to be combined with additional separation technology to remove excess phosphorus.

- DAERA is therefore currently progressing a Small Business Research Initiative on the Sustainable Use of Livestock Slurry. The Phase 1 “Proof of Concept” stage has been completed. Phase 2 is due to launch later this year with the aim of developing demonstration plants at commercial scale to determine the economics and practicalities involved.**
- Centralised processing of poultry litter by Anaerobic Digestion has already proven to be a successful model in NI. The Stream BioEnergy AD plant near Ballymena currently processes 40k tonnes of poultry litter per year and has plans to expand.**
- Processing of slurry and separation of excess phosphorus for export will help to reduce nutrient loading on agricultural land and negative impacts on water quality.**

BACKGROUND

1. In November 2021, a Task and Finish Group in DAERA produced a report on Slurry Management options for NI. It identified the potential of centralised processing of slurry in Anaerobic Digestion plants as a renewable energy source for biogas production.
2. To help reduce surplus phosphorus in the NI agricultural sector, it identified the need for further processing of the digestate to separate excess phosphorus. This aspect of the holistic solution will entail the export of commercial products from NI such as organic fertilisers high in phosphorus or fibre for use in horticulture compost as a peat free alternative. Further work is required to develop the technology and determine markets.
3. Therefore, in January 2023 DAERA launched a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Phase 1 competition to undertake feasibility studies examining the potential to use separated slurry solids from cattle and pig farms as a feedstock for AD, to produce biomethane and biofertiliser. The aim is to replace natural gas and artificial fertiliser while removing excess phosphorus from the NI agricultural nutrient cycle. Six Phase 1 projects for “proof of concept stage” were completed in October 2023.
4. Phase 2 of this SBRI on the Sustainable Use of Livestock Slurry (SULS) is being developed for launch in the coming months, subject to Business Case approval. The aim is to build on the concepts in Phase 1 by developing demonstration plants at commercial scale which determine the economics, practicalities, and end markets for biofertilisers.
5. Centralised processing of poultry litter by AD has already proven to be a successful model for the poultry sector in NI. This was assisted by DARD and DETI through the

SBRI for the Sustainable Use of Poultry Litter (SUPL) initiative back in 2012/2013. The Stream BioEnergy AD plant near Ballymena currently processes 40k tonnes of poultry litter per year. The planned Phase 2 expansion would increase capacity by up to 200k tonnes per year and provide processing capacity for all poultry litter produced in NI.

AMMONIA STRATEGY

LINES TO TAKE:

- **A reworked draft Ammonia Strategy is being developed, taking into consideration stakeholder responses received during public consultation, to deliver reductions in ammonia emissions from agriculture and meet legislative requirements.**

BACKGROUND:

1. Agriculture makes a significant contribution to the Northern Ireland economy however it also produces 97% of current ammonia emissions. Action on ammonia

is required urgently to support our local farm businesses and rural communities to thrive and be sustainable, while at the same time protecting our environment and meeting our legislative requirements.

2. A draft Ammonia Strategy proposing a series of measures to reduce ammonia emissions underwent public consultation from 4 January to 3 March 2023 and attracted a high level of interest across all stakeholder groups.
3. Responses to the consultation are currently being used to inform a reworked draft Ammonia Strategy. Additional scientific modelling, statistical analysis and supply chain consideration is being undertaken to optimise design of the key proposed mandatory measure on use of Low Emission Slurry Spreading Equipment (LESSE). A High-Level Report and a Summary Report of responses to the consultation on the draft Ammonia Strategy have been published.
4. The reworked Ammonia Strategy will be finalised later this year.

Issue - Donmac farms -Spotlight programme

Background

1. The BBC Spotlight programme also referenced a large Dairy farm (Donmac Farms), near Coagh which was stated by multiple sources as being linked to water pollution in the area.
2. Since 2011 there have been 13 reports of water pollution from this farm with 9 being confirmed (5 medium and 4 low severity incidents).
3. In 2011 the farm was prosecuted and fined £1500 for silage effluent escaping to a waterway. A similar issue was identified in 2015 with a £8500 fine reduced to £2000 on appeal with a cross compliance breach also applied the same year.
4. In 2020 the farm was breached under cross compliance for closed period spreading and non-uniform slurry spreading.
5. In 2021 another medium severity incident was recorded and deemed likely to be caused by the farm, however due to the fact that new building work had taken place no exact source of the contamination was able to be confirmed and no further enforcement action was possible.
6. In 2022 and 2024 further reports of fungal growth in the waterway indicating pollution have been reported and investigated. To date in 2024 there have been 6 site visits involving Agricultural and Water Quality Inspectors (WQIs) with further visits planned to attempt to identify the cause. Investigations are hampered by the watercourse being culverted (piped) underneath the farm therefore tracing the discharge point is extremely problematic. Following the most recent visit on 15 April the waterway was observed to be running clear with no indication of pollution present, however WQIs will continue to monitor the situation.

Lines to take:

- I am aware of the allegations made around a particular farm business mentioned in the programme. My staff have been and will continue to investigate all reports of water pollution and take any enforcement action deemed necessary. I do not believe it is fair to talk about one particular farm, as we are all aware that there is a significant amount of work to be done across multiple sectors to improve water quality in Northern Ireland.



MINISTER'S PRE-BRIEF AND MEETING NOTE

It is the business area's responsibility for keeping a CM record of the final agreed note.

☐ PRE-BRIEF

☒ MEETING

MEETING NOTE: 12 June 2024

INV Number: SUB-1433-2024

TITLE/ORGANISATION:		Meeting with Officials to discuss Submission on BBC Spotlight Programme - The Lough Neagh Monster		
VENUE:	☐ Parliament Buildings	☒ Clare House	☐ OTHER:	☐ Virtual
LIST OF ATTENDEES:				
☒ Minister	☒ SpAd	☐ PS	☒ APS	
OFFICIALS:	██████████, Director of Resource Efficiency ██████████, Chief Inspector for Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate (IPRI) ██████████, Head of Regulation Unit ██████████, Head of Water Management Unit ██████████, Head of Criminal Investigations, ECU ██████████, Press Office ██████████, note taker			
OTHERS:	None			

KEY POINTS DISCUSSED:

1. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the issues highlighted by the BBC Spotlight Programme "Lough Neagh Monster".

Moy Park Regulation

2. The Minister wanted to ascertain how NIEA plan to take the issues with Moy Park forward and what protocols and actions there are in place to stop the repeated breaches.
3. █████ explained that the breaches have been treated as low risk due to the fact that the discharge from the sites is to wastewater treatment works which have not had any pollution incidents themselves, therefore there is no evidence that they have caused environmental harm. However, inspectors have been working with Moy Park and NI Water to put in place an action plan to ensure compliance at both the Dungannon and Craigavon sites where the majority of the breaches have occurred.
4. █████ agreed that IPRI need to review the existing arrangements between NIEA and NI Water and work more closely with them in terms of enforcement. Similarly, a greater focus on enforcement is required in the regulation of Moy Park due to repeated non compliances.
5. The Minister wishes to write to Moy Park to raise his concerns and ask what they are doing to address their on-going exceedances.
6. █████ explained that Moy Park is planning to install new effluent treatment plants at both its Dungannon and Craigavon sites but this is not a quick fix.
7. The Minister has met with Moy Park on 4 occasions but the issue with the sewer discharge breaches was not mentioned. These visits are normally handled by our agriculture colleagues, but it would be beneficial if NIEA was also involved in planning these type of meetings.
8. The Minister asked if resource was a problem but █████ does not believe that is the case as each site has an assigned inspector already.
9. █████ mentioned that the additional resource funding of £1.6m will fund posts which will be split across NIEA regulation and enforcement functions to provide additional inspectors on the ground to complete cross compliance inspections and undertake river inspections to identify sources of pollution.

Water Pollution Incidents

10. The difficulty of getting a prosecution was discussed, especially when the reports of incidents come in late and evidence is lost. The Minister proposed increasing awareness to the public of the pollution hotline and the need to report incidents promptly.
11. Part of the additional funding is being allocated to Comms and Engagement, there is a lot of work that needs to be done in that area, publicising enforcement works as a deterrent.

12. The Minister recognised the need to increase engagement and accountability, particularly in cases of repeated non-compliance.
13. The Minister asked whether NIEA had been involved in the development of the Farm Sustainability Standards and Penalty Matrix. Minister was keen to see integrated involvement of NIEA in this development.
14. The Minister asked whether it is possible to apply fines to those responsible for water pollution incidents, rather than having to go through prosecution. [REDACTED] explained the breach penalty under cross compliance as one method but fixed penalties are not available at present and that it would require legislative change but that it would be very helpful. The Minister was keen that this option should be pursued.
15. The Minister was also keen that fines issued for cross compliance breaches should be publicised as a deterrent.
16. The Minister stressed that we need to build on education, communication and incentivisation but also implement regulation and enforcement. It is important to be conscious of the audience, we won't reach farmers through social media, they are a distinct demographic. Peer to peer learning could be an effective tool. It is important that a budget is allocated to get feet on the ground to help in that matter.

NI Water

17. The Minister asked for an update on the SORPI (Statement of Regulatory Principles and Intent).
18. [REDACTED] confirmed that the SORPI is under review, a NIEA/DAERA Task & Finish Group has been assigned to complete the review and the Group will draw on the 2022 draft revision to develop an effective regulatory approach going forward.
19. The Minister asked that officials expedite the review of the SORPI as a priority.

Environmental Crime

20. Discussion related to an ongoing investigation into falsified soil samples which is almost complete.
21. The courts cannot direct that those found guilty of a waste offence remediate the waste for which they have been prosecuted for, however [REDACTED] stated that the most effective tool they have is POCA.
22. ECU work closely with other agencies and sit on the OCTF (Organised Crime Task Force) and are currently leading the way in establishing a new Waste Crime subgroup initially with HMRC.
23. [REDACTED] noted that ECU also work closely with partner agencies in deterrence work and are in the middle of 3 days of action in Dungannon where ECU,

alongside PSNI, organised 2 days of VCPs. RU's TFS team and DVA were brought on board by ECU and are also taking part. Lorries are being stopped and checked by all partners in order to identify any illegal activity and build up an intel picture on movements in what is popular corridor between the Republic of Ireland, NI and Scotland and England.

ISSUES AGREED: (must be completed)

- No issues to note.

ACTION POINTS / OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE:

- **ACTION 1:** Review working protocols between NIEA and NI Water in terms of enforcement of trade discharge consent breaches. **ACTION –** [REDACTED]
- **ACTION 2:** Give consideration how to monitor and respond to cases of lower risk cumulative trade discharge consent breaches. **ACTION –** [REDACTED]
- **ACTION 3 –** Ministerial letter to be drafted and dispatched to Moy Park outlining concern at pattern of cumulative breaches and seeking details on plan to swiftly rectify. **ACTION –** [REDACTED]
- **ACTION 4 -** Explore potential for fixed penalty notices for low severity pollution incidents. **ACTION –** [REDACTED]

Notes written by –

[REDACTED]

DATE:

12 June 2024

Signed and Dated by Lead Policy Official: [REDACTED] 25/6/24_____

Signed and Dated by Minister/Private Secretary: [REDACTED] 25/06/24

Draft minutes should be returned to Private Office within 5 working days of the meeting the minutes are for.

Please note that if there is an update to be provided to the Minister following a meeting, that it should be sent to Private Office by way of a [Submission](#)

Submission

FROM: (SO or above)	██████████
BRANCH:	Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate (IPRI) NIEA
CONTACT:	██████████
DATE	16/07/2026
TO:	ANDREW MUIR MLA Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
SUB-0799-2026 – ADVICE ON THE DETAIL ARTICLE “MOY PARK FARMS SPREAD 20 TIMES MORE POULTRY MANURE ON NORTHERN IRISH FIELDS THAN AGREED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES”	
SUMMARY	
Issue:	You requested advice on the article published in The Detail on 09/07/2026 “Moy Park farms spread 20 times more poultry manure on Northern Irish fields than agreed with environmental authorities”.
Timing:	☒ Routine ☐ Urgent ☐ Desk Immediate Desk Immediate (5 working days or less) Urgent (6-10 working days) Routine (11+ working days)
Financial Implications:	None
Managing Public Money Northern Ireland Implications:	Not applicable
Chief Scientific Adviser’s consideration:	Not required
Windsor Framework Implementation consideration:	Not applicable
Climate Change Implications:	None
Legislation Implications:	None
FOI Implications:	There are no applicable exemptions to withhold the release of this information under FOI or EIR.
Equality & Rural Needs Implications:	Not applicable
Executive Referral:	Not required
Presentation Issues:	Potential for press interest, given the continued focus on environmental impacts from intensive farming. For example,

	the Friends of the Earth current campaign “Stop factory farms destroying Northern Ireland’s environment” and their recently issued report “Mapped: Pig and Poultry Farming in Northern Ireland”.
Recommendation:	That you note the contents of this submission.

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this submission is to provide advice that you requested on the recent article published by The Detail on 09/07/2026 “Moy Park farms spread 20 times more poultry manure on Northern Irish fields than agreed with environmental authorities”. This article relates to information contained in the recently issued Friends of the Earth report “Mapped: Pig and Poultry Farming in Northern Ireland”.

BACKGROUND

2. The Friends of the Earth are currently running a campaign “Stop factory farms destroying Northern Ireland’s environment” (See TOF-0262-2026).
3. The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (NI) 2013 requires larger intensive pig and poultry farms to obtain a permit to operate, i.e. farms with more than 40,000 places for poultry, 750 places for sows, or 2000 places for production pigs over 30kg. Approximately 200 of Pilgrim’s Europe Ltd’s contracted broiler farms in Northern Ireland are currently regulated by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency under a Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) permit.
4. An application for a PPC Permit is required to demonstrate that the intensive farm proposals will have an acceptable environmental impact, including (a) the impacts of emissions (ammonia, odour, dust, etc.) on sensitive local receptors, and (b) the sustainable utilisation of manures produced from the proposed installation.
5. Where land spreading of manures is proposed, each application is required to demonstrate that manures will be applied in accordance with crop nutrient needs and that the relevant nutrient management plan(s) are provided. Where other manure utilisation outlets are proposed, evidence is required to demonstrate that the outlets are environmentally sustainable; there is sufficient capacity to take the material; the receiving outlet(s) have agreed to take it, and that the appropriate authorisation(s) is in place.
6. The Pilgrim’s Europe Ltd litter utilisation strategy is normally submitted with new PPC broiler farm applications. This overarching plan details the total capacity of the potential outlets for broiler litter and covers all Pilgrim’s Europe/Moy Park contracted broiler farms, not just those holding PPC permits. The most recent strategy is dated July 2025. DAERA/ NIEA however is not required to approve or agree the company’s overarching litter utilisation strategy – and instead considers farms on an individual basis as required by the Regulations.
7. Each individual new PPC broiler farm application is required to demonstrate with supporting evidence that they have a sustainable outlet(s) for the total litter which will be produced from their proposed development.

8. PPC farm permits usually contain a number of possible manure utilisation options. If PPC farms plan to change their current manure utilisation outlet(s), they are required to submit details of their proposals to NIEA for agreement in advance of making any such changes.
9. Farms are assessed against compliance with the requirements of the conditions in their permit. PPC permits contain conditions requiring the operator to (a) keep records of the recipient, utilisation method, amount and date transported, and copies of the consignment notes retained for inspection by NIEA, (b) provide annually to NIEA a summary of all litter movements from each crop of broilers reared on the poultry farm.
10. An analysis of the 2024 annual PPC farm returns showed that approx. 7.5% of the total quantities of manures produced by the Moy Park contracted broiler farms was exported for spreading to land in Northern Ireland in 2024. This is a reduction from the quantities exported for land spreading in Northern Ireland in 2023 (when approx. 22% was exported to this outlet). An analysis of the 2025 annual PPC farm returns has still to be completed.

RECOMMENDATION

11. That you note the contents of this submission.

Name: [REDACTED]

Branch: Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate, NIEA

Contact Details: [REDACTED]

ATTACHMENTS

None

CC List:

Katrina Godfrey

Martin McKendry

Brian Dooher

Richard Crowe

Jane Corderoy

Mark O'Donnell

Julie Thompson

Fiona McCandless

Perm Sec mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk)

G_DAERA PressOffice.Group

Paul McGranaghan

Alastair Beggs

Neelia Lloyd

[REDACTED]

NIEA Coordination



Our reference: **DAERA/24-226**

[REDACTED] via

[REDACTED]

Water Management Unit
17 Antrim Road
Tonagh,
Lisburn
BT28 3AL

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

30 May 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

With regard to your request for information received by the Department on 15 April 2024 which sought the following information:

1. **How many pollution incidents have occurred in or around Lough Neagh or its major tributaries in the past 3 years?**
 - a. **Please provide information on any enforcement action taken in each case.**
2. **How many exceedance notices have been issued to Moy Park in the past 3 years at its sites in Dungannon, Ballymena and Nutt's Corner in relation to its discharges to sewers and waterways?**
 - a. **Please provide each of these exceedance notices and related correspondence?**
 - b. **What enforcement action has been considered or taken against Moy Park in the past 3 years?**

***Sustainability** at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

3. How many breaches of a discharge consent issued to Moy Park have been detected in the past 3 years?

a. Please provide any relevant information on each breach, including sampling data, related correspondence etc.

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

However, The Department has decided not to disclose some of the information you requested as it considers Regulations 12(3) and 13(1) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 to be engaged. Some of the information held constitutes 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 A and has determined that no lawful basis for disclosure under EIR 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.

In answer to **Question 1**, the Lough Neagh catchment consists of seven Local Management Areas (LMAs), Upper Bann, Moyola, Ballinderry, Sixmilewater, Braid and Main, Black water and Lough Neagh.

There have been **1,700** reports of water pollution received and investigated by NIEA in the Lough Neagh catchment in the period 2021-2023. **849** of these have been substantiated.

***Sustainability** at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

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.



Table 1 below provides a summary of the sources of substantiated water pollution incidents in each LMA in the period 2021-2023.

Table 1

	Source					
	Farm	Industry	NI Water	Domestic	Transport	Other
Upper Bann	41	17	12	35	4	11
Moyola	6	9	7	10	0	2
Ballinderry	27	27	5	14	1	4
Sixmilewater	10	22	16	10	1	24
Braid and Maine	15	9	8	10	0	18
Blackwater	94	41	22	41	5	48
Lough Neagh	49	29	20	36	3	86
Combined LMA totals	242	154	90	156	14	193

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the severity of substantiated water pollution incidents per LMA in the period 2021-2023. A significant number of high and medium severity incidents relate to the Blue Green Algae events recorded in the Lough Neagh LMA in 2023 which, by their nature do not have a point source of pollution associated with them.

Table 2

	Severity		
	High	Medium	Low
Upper Bann	2	13	105
Moyola	0	6	28
Ballinderry	5	15	58
Sixmilewater	1	7	75
Braid and Maine	0	11	49
Blackwater	2	41	208
Lough Neagh	13	54	156
Combined totals	23	147	679

***Sustainability** at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

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.



In answer to **Question 1a**, NIEA seeks to undertake enforcement action that is proportionate to the significance of the offence. This includes consideration of the level of environmental harm, the impact on communities, the level of financial benefit arising from the offence(s), or the regulatory costs avoided.

Most cases of water pollution reported to NIEA are, following investigation, found to be of low severity which would not reach the evidential threshold for formal enforcement action. In these cases, NIEA ensures that the pollution is stopped and provides advice to prevent further occurrence. Note that breaches of Cross Compliance may be applied for low severity incidents where a polluter has been identified.

Formal enforcement action is normally considered for incidents having a medium or high severity environmental impact where a polluter has been identified. During the 2021-2023 period, there were **13** such cases in the Upper Bann LMA, **6** in the Moyola, **8** in the Ballinderry, **6** in the Sixmilewater, **5** in the Braid & Maine, **37** in the Blackwater and **31** in Lough Neagh.

In such cases where it is suspected that a criminal offence has occurred; there is sufficient evidence and it is warranted in line with DAERA's Enforcement Policy, a file is submitted to the Public Prosecution Service, who review the file and decide whether to direct a prosecution.

In addition to formal prosecution under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, other enforcement actions available to the Department include the issuing of Warning Letters, Notices and breaches of Cross Compliance for agricultural incidents.

A summary of enforcement action relating to water pollution undertaken in each LMA is provided in **Annex B**.

2. How many exceedance notices have been issued to Moy Park in the past 3 years at its sites in Dungannon, Ballymena and Nutt's Corner in relation to its discharges to sewers and waterways?

There have been no exceedance notices issued to Moy Park in the Past 3 years, however under their PPC permits Moy Park notify the NIEA of exceedances by submission of a Schedule 1 notice, see table in answer to Q3 for detail.

a. Please provide each of these exceedance notices and related correspondence?

No exceedance notices were issued therefore not provided.

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

b. What enforcement action has been considered or taken against Moy Park in the past 3 years?

No enforcement action has been taken against Moy Park in the past 3 years and none was considered necessary.

3. How many breaches of a discharge consent issued to Moy Park have been detected in the past 3 years?

Table 3

Notification of Consent exceedance to Sewer and Water 2021 - 2023						
Moy Park site	Sewer 2021	Water 2021	Sewer 2022	Water 2022	Sewer 2023	Water 2023
Craigavon	35	1	54	1	73	1
Dungannon	70	0	67	1	96	0
Ballymena	12	0	8	0	6	2
Nuts Corner farms	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Randalstown - Feed Mill	n/a	0	n/a	1	n/a	1
Total	117	1	129	3	175	4

Please note where n/a is stated in the table above the associated installation does not have a discharge consent associated with this parameter.

a. Please provide any relevant information on each breach, including sampling data, related correspondence etc.

Discharges to sewer is from monitoring of the process effluent from the processing facilities, which goes for further treatment at the Northern Ireland Water (NIW) wastewater treatment works before final discharge to a watercourse.

The discharge limits for the discharges to sewer have been set by NI Water and the monitoring data for discharges to sewer is provided by NIW to Moy Park who then submit schedule 1 notifications to NIEA in event of a breach of any of the emission limits.

For the period between 2021 - 2023 in regard to Moy Park Dungannon and Craigavon sewer exceedances, there have been no confirmed pollution incidents in relation to the discharges from the associated Wastewater treatment works (WwTW) at Dungannon and Ballynacor (Craigavon). These WwTW have also been assessed as compliant by NIEA against its Water Order Discharge Consent for treated effluent discharge quality parameters in the past 3 years. Therefore the notified exceedances to sewer have not had a detrimental impact on the quality of the final effluent.

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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.



If Northern Ireland Water raise any concerns regarding the discharges from a PPC site these are forwarded to the Inspectorate and associated PPC site for review and consideration of further actions. Within the requested period 2021-2023 this has not occurred for any of the Moy Park PPC sites.

Water Exceedances listed are those discharged directly to the watercourse. Enforcement action was not taken on these exceedances because they did not meet the threshold to be treated as substantial non-compliance or because they were deemed to be due to extreme weather conditions.

Information regarding the schedule 1 notices to sewers can be found on the public register linked below:

<https://public-registers.daera-ni.gov.uk/pollution-prevention-control>

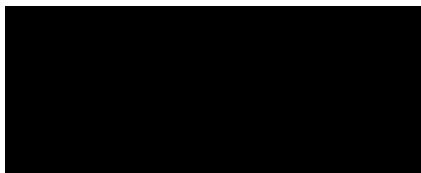
As per the request, the associated correspondence has been included.

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,



**Principal Scientific Officer South & East River Basin District
Water Management Unit**

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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.



Submission

FROM: (SO or above)	
BRANCH:	Resource Efficiency Division
CONTACT:	69690
DATE	5 June 2024
TO:	Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
SUB-1433-2024 - BBC SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME – THE LOUGH NEAGH MONSTER	
SUMMARY	
Issue:	Response to the issues raised by the BBC in their Spotlight programme “Lough Neagh Monster” and article on the BBC news website entitled “Hundreds of environmental breaches by Moy Park”
Timing:	☐ Routine ☐ Urgent ☒ Desk Immediate Desk immediate as you are likely to receive further questioning on these issues in the coming days.
Financial Implications:*	None
Chief Scientific Adviser’s consideration:	None
Windsor Framework Implementation consideration:	None
Legislation Implications:	None
FOI Implications:	None
Equality & Rural Needs Implications:	None
Executive Referral:	No
Presentation Issues:	These issues are likely to attract media attention over the coming days/weeks.
Pre-election Guidance considered if necessary	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A General Election 4 July 2024 - Guidance for NI Civil Servants NICS Intranet (nigov.net)

Date Draft Press Release cleared by Press Office:	None
Recommendation:	That you; 1. note the contents of this submission and the attached briefing; 2. agree that NIEA officials should continue to engage with Moy Park and NI Water, in line with their regulatory function, to determine the steps being taken to reduce environmental impact of their wastewater discharges; 3. note the previous enforcement and ongoing investigative work associated with Donmac Farms; 4. note the SORPI arrangement is under review and officials will consider how this review might be expedited more quickly.

INTRODUCTION

1. Following our discussion this morning, the purpose of this submission is to provide you with information about the issues raised by the BBC in their Spotlight programme “Lough Neagh Monster” and in the article on the BBC news website entitled “Hundreds of environmental breaches by Moy Park”.

BACKGROUND

2. The attached briefing (Annex A) was provided to you on Thurs 30th May in advance of the interview about Lough Neagh on the BBC Spotlight Programme.
3. The programme (entitled “Lough Neagh Monster”) has subsequently aired on BBC iPlayer and a news article appeared on the BBC news website entitled [“Hundreds of environmental breaches by Moy Park”](#).
4. In your interview with Spotlight, you referred to the reprioritisation within the Department and the setting up of an enforcement team around the issues associated with Lough Neagh. Officials have now commenced work to consider the redeployment of existing staff to support an immediate response, and with the recent confirmation of budget, will now be working at pace to identify, recruit and train an enhanced enforcement team.
5. Specific issues raised in the BBC article and the Spotlight programme include the information that Moy Park has had a large number of breaches of its trade effluent consent. This is addressed in the briefing note at Annex A. NIEA officials have been working with Moy Park and NI Water to address these breaches and you will note from the briefing that both the Dungannon and Craigavon sites have plans in place to improve compliance. This work has been ongoing and officials are carrying out all regulatory actions within our current powers and resources to bear down on this risk of pollution.
6. The BBC had requested data from DAERA on the 15 April 2024 – the response to that request is included at Annex B.
7. The illegal waste site raised by Spotlight refers to a waste site owned by Thomas Joseph Curran, of Blackwater Road, Armagh. This case was investigated and prosecuted by the Environmental Crime Unit for the unauthorised deposit, keeping, treating and disposal of

6836 tonnes of controlled waste at the site. Thomas Joseph Curran and his two sons, Gerald and Barry, pleaded guilty to a range of offences under the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 and were sentenced on 8 September 2023 to custodial sentences of 25 months suspended for 2 years. In addition, Barry Curran entered a guilty plea to an associated fraud offence for which he received a concurrent custodial sentence of 25 months suspended for 2 years. Thomas Joseph Curran and Barry Curran were also disqualified from holding Company Directorships for 10 years. Following on from the successful criminal outcome, Thomas Joseph Curran is currently subject to ongoing confiscation proceedings.

8. The programme also referenced a large Dairy farm (Donmac Farms), near Coagh, with multiple sources in the programme stating that this farm is linked to water pollution in the area.
9. Since 2011 there have been 13 reports of water pollution from this farm with 9 being confirmed (5 medium and 4 low severity incidents).
10. In 2011 the farm was prosecuted and fined £1500 for silage effluent escaping to a waterway. A similar issue was identified in 2015 with a £8500 fine reduced to £2000 on appeal with a cross compliance breach also applied the same year.
11. In 2020 the farm was breached under cross compliance for closed period spreading and non-uniform slurry spreading.
12. In 2021 another medium severity incident was recorded and deemed likely to be caused by the farm, however due to the fact that new building work had taken place no exact source of the contamination was able to be confirmed and no further enforcement action was possible.
13. In 2022 and 2024 further reports of fungal growth in the waterway indicating pollution have been reported and investigated. To date in 2024 there have been 6 site visits involving Agricultural and Water Quality Inspectors (WQIs) with further visits planned to attempt to identify the cause. Investigations are hampered by the watercourse being culverted (piped) underneath the farm therefore tracing the discharge point is extremely difficult. Following the most recent visit on 15 April the waterway was observed to be running clear with no indication of pollution present, however WQIs will continue to monitor the situation.
14. You have expressed your concerns regarding the SORPI (Statement of Regulatory Principles and Intent) arrangement between NIEA and NI Water that came into effect on 1 April 2007 and presently remains valid (Annex A).
15. The SORPI originally set out the EHS (now the NIEA) regulatory and enforcement approach recognising that NIW had inherited a legacy of underfunding in wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. This statement recognised that NIW were unable to comply with relevant environmental standards from day one, and that it would take several Price Controls Periods to deliver the necessary improvements.
16. Whilst the SORPI recognised the funding constraint that NI Water operates under, it does not free NI Water from DAERA's Enforcement Policy which is applied where there are breaches in discharge consents and/or where NI Water has been the cause of a pollution incident.

17. However, this SORPI has been under review since 2022 as it is now considered not to be an effective approach to regulation of NI Water wastewater discharges. A NIEA/DAERA Task & Finish Group has been tasked to complete the review of the SORPI and the Group will draw on the 2022 draft revision to develop an effective regulatory approach going forward.

RECOMMENDATION

18. That you;
1. note the contents of this submission and the attached briefing;
 2. agree that NIEA officials should continue to engage with Moy Park and NI Water, in line with their regulatory function, to determine the steps being taken to reduce environmental impact of their wastewater discharges;
 3. note the previous enforcement and ongoing investigative work associated with Donmac Farms
 4. note the SORPI arrangement is under review and officials will consider how this review might be expedited more quickly.

Name: Richard Crowe

Branch: Resource Efficiency Division

Contact Details: 69690

ATTACHMENTS

Annex A – Briefing – Minister Interview on Lough Neagh BBC Spotlight - AE1/24/1142708

Annex B – Response DAERA 24 226 - AE1/24/1152296

CC List:

[REDACTED]

DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary

[REDACTED]

Perm Sec mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk)

G_DAERA PressOffice.Group

**From the Office of the
Minister of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs**



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

[Redacted]
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BT4 3XX

Minister's Office
1st Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED
Telephone: 028 9052 4140
Email:
daera.assemblysupport@daera-ni.gov.uk

7 June 2024
AQW 12940/22-27

To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for his assessment of the findings of a BBC Spotlight investigation which reports on environmental breaches at Moy Park.

The BBC Spotlight investigation reported on breaches of the emission limits on the discharges to sewer from Moy Park's processing plants which are regulated by Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 (PPC). These PPC permits contain emission limits on discharges to the sewer network.

To date, NIEA has not taken enforcement action in relation to the breaches of the permitted emission limits on discharges to sewer at the Moy Park sites detailed in

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

the programme as these exceedances to the sewer network are considered low risk as the discharge is further treated at the wastewater treatment works before final discharge to the watercourse.

NIEA officials have been working with Moy Park and NI Water to address these breaches and both the Dungannon and Craigavon sites (where the majority of the breaches have occurred) have plans in place to improve compliance.



Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

1. NIEA regulates a number of Moy Park's processing sites under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013. Their permits contain emission limits on discharges to surface water and discharges to the sewer network.
2. Between 2021 and 2023, Moy Park's chicken processing sites at Seagoe Industrial Estate, Craigavon and Killyman Road, Dungannon have both exceeded their emission limits for their discharge to the sewer consents on 162 occasions at its Craigavon plant and 233 occasions at its Dungannon plant.
3. During this time period, Dungannon and Ballynacor WwTW, where the above-mentioned sites discharge, have been assessed as compliant by NIEA against its Water Order Discharge Consent for treated effluent discharge quality parameters. Therefore, the notified exceedances to sewer have not had an identified detrimental impact on water quality.

FOR ANSWER ON: 10 June 2024

Drafted by: [REDACTED] 05 June 2024

Cleared by Head of Division/Branch: [REDACTED] – 05 June 2024

Contact Number: 028 905 69406

Copy distribution List:

[REDACTED]
DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary
[REDACTED]

***Sustainability** at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard



Perm Sec mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk).

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

**From the Office of the
Minister of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs**



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

[REDACTED]
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BT4 3XX

Minister's Office
1st Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED
Telephone: [REDACTED]
Email:
daera.assemblysupport@daera-ni.gov.uk

7 June 2024
AQW 12893/22-27

To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, in light of media reports of breaches of environmental laws in relation to discharged waste, whether he will review the number of fines issued to Moy Park.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) regulates a number of Moy Park's processing sites under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 (PPC). These PPC permits contain emission limits on discharges to the sewer network and it was breaches of these limits which were mentioned in recent media reports.

The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 do not contain powers to issue fines directly to operators.

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

They do contain powers to take other types of enforcement action, up to and including prosecution.

To date, NIEA has not taken enforcement action in relation to the breaches of the permitted emission limits on discharges to sewer at the Moy Park sites detailed in the recent media reports as these exceedances to the sewer network are considered low risk as the discharge is further treated at the wastewater treatment works before final discharge to the watercourse.

NIEA officials have been working with Moy Park and NI Water to address these breaches and both the Dungannon and Craigavon sites (where the majority of the breaches have occurred) have plans in place to improve compliance.


Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

***Sustainability** at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

1.NIEA regulates a number of Moy Park's processing sites under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013. Their permits contain emission limits on discharges to surface water and discharges to the sewer network.

2.Between 2021 and 2023, Moy Park's chicken processing sites at Seagoe Industrial Estate, Craigavon and Killyman Road, Dungannon have both exceeded their emission limits for their discharge to the sewer consents on 162 occasions at its Craigavon plant and 233 occasions at its Dungannon plant.

3. During this time period, Dungannon and Ballynacor WwTW, where the above-mentioned sites discharge, have been assessed as compliant by NIEA against its Water Order Discharge Consent for treated effluent discharge quality parameters. Therefore the notified exceedances to sewer have not had an identified detrimental impact on water quality.

FOR ANSWER ON: 19 June 2024

Drafted by: [REDACTED] 05 June 2024

Cleared by Head of Division/Branch: [REDACTED] 05 June 2024

Contact Number: 028 905 69406

Copy distribution List:

[REDACTED]

DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary

[REDACTED]

***Sustainability** at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

Perm Sec mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk).

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard



INVITATION BRIEFING TEMPLATE

DAERA PRIVATE OFFICE

INV Ref:	INV-2141-2022
To:	Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
CC:	Katrina Godfrey, G_DAERA Pressoffice.Group, Sharon McFlynn, Martin McKendry, [REDACTED], Rosemary Agnew, Paul McHenry, [REDACTED], Neal Gartland, [REDACTED] VSAHG Coordination and Tracey Teague
From (SO or above):	[REDACTED]
Branch:	Dairy, Pigs, Poultry and Crops Branch, CAFRE
Contact number (incl. mobile)	Internal/Jabber 64845 Mobile: 07876 394 673
Name & mobile number of official(s) attending the meeting/event in support of Minister:	[REDACTED]
Press Officer attending meeting/event:	☒ Yes – Name of Press Officer attending TBC ☐ No
Minute taker (Business area to provide)	[REDACTED]
Venue:	Performance house (1st stop) is located at 133 Banbridge Rd WARRINGSTOWN BT66 7RX Followed by a farm nearby – details to follow
Date and time:	18 August 2022 14.15 – 17.15
Invitation from:	[REDACTED]

INV Ref:	INV-2141-2022	
Invitation type (click box to check):	☒ Event ☐ Meeting ☐ Other (please specify):	
Summary of event/meeting (further detail to be provided in the background section)	The visit will be to the Moy Park broiler performance house and a nearby broiler farm. Moy Park indicate that the performance house has the most advanced ventilation control systems available, which constantly monitors both internal and ambient conditions and controls the environment in an energy efficient way. The Moy Park business model also adopts farm to fork credentials and these will be highlighted.	
External meeting attendees (click box to check):	☒ None ☐ Not Known ☐ Yes (please specify):	
Annexes:	Annex A:	Programme
	Annex B:	Key issues – Background and Lines to Take
	Annex C:	Guest List
	Annex D:	Pen Pictures

PROGRAMME

Draft

14.15	Arrive at Moy Park Broiler Performance House.
14.30	Introduction by [REDACTED] and change into overalls
14.45	Enter house and environmental features highlighted
15.15	Exit house and remove overalls
15.30	Transfer to adjacent privately owned broiler site
15.45	Introduction by [REDACTED]/farmer and change into overalls
16.00	Enter house and environmental features highlighted
16.30	Exit house and remove overalls
16.45	Concluding remarks
17.15	Depart site

KEY ISSUES, BACKGROUND AND LINES TO TAKE

KEY ISSUE: Moy Park Broiler Production - showcasing commercial broiler production demonstrating farm to fork principles and environmental sustainability.

Background:

- 1 Moy Park and its parent company, Pilgrim's Pride Corporation, supply 25% of the European chicken market. They own/contact 800 farms in the UK and Ireland and have 35 million birds on the ground at any one time. Within Northern Ireland in 2021 there were 2 million breeding birds and 16 million table chickens (Statistical Review of NI Agriculture), largely owned by Moy Park with the company also being one of the largest private employers in NI.
- 2 Moy Park is the only European poultry company with a totally integrated livestock system encompassing 3 generations of livestock - grandparents and parents (used for breeding) and broilers. Additionally the company have several dedicated UFAS (Universal Feed Assurance Scheme) feed mills, including Moy Park Feedmill, Randalstown. Both these factors help the company quality assure its products and ensure the traceability required for a farm to fork business.
- 3 Moy Park is committed to a net zero target that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions across their supply chains by 2040. The company has been awarded the CORE Standard - The Standard for Responsible Business – by Business in the Community Northern Ireland (BITC).
- 4 The broiler performance house in Warington operates one of the most advanced ventilation control systems available. The system monitors both internal and ambient conditions and controls the environment in an energy efficient manner. Exhaust air from the shed is passed through heat exchangers which reuse waste heat to pre-warm incoming air, reducing the need for fossil fuel. Electricity is generated on site through a large solar PV array. Depending on house requirement and crop stage the electricity is converted to heat via an electronic boiler or stored through an onsite battery bank. All of the inputs on this farm are recorded and quantified, allowing the farm's carbon footprint to be determined.

Lines to Take:

- **Recognise Moy Park's contribution to the Northern Ireland Agri-food sector**
- **Welcome Moy Park's focus on economic and environmental sustainability.**

KEY ISSUE: FUTURE AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Background:

1. The Future Agricultural Policy Framework Portfolio for Northern Ireland was published on 24 August 2021.
2. The Portfolio document set out a framework for future policy around four key outcomes developed following engagement with stakeholders. These outcomes are increased productivity, environmental sustainability, improved resilience and an effective, functioning supply chain.
3. At that time it was announced that a public consultation on the policy proposals necessary to fulfil these outcomes would follow. The public consultation exercise closed on 15 February 2022.
4. On 24 March 2022 you made an Oral Statement in the Assembly announcing 54 policy decisions on future agricultural support.
5. Decisions that are central to this future policy include a Farm Sustainability Payment, a Beef Sustainability package, A Farming with Nature package and Farming for Carbon measures.
6. The policy decisions embrace other areas of work including investment measures, knowledge transfer and innovation programmes, and the development of the Supply Chain measures. A Generational Renewal programme will encourage longer term planning for farm businesses; and DAERA will invest in the initiation of an industry led Ruminant Genetics Programme.
7. For those more extreme events which require government to step in to stabilise the industry, a pre-defined crisis framework is required to help the Department assess potential risks and determine the most suitable intervention for a specific crisis. A Framework is currently being developed which will define a set of parameters against which each crisis facing the industry is consistently assessed.
8. There is still significant work to be progressed, which DAERA officials are continuing to take forward.
9. DAERA is working towards the introduction of new policy over the next number of years, probably for calendar year 2024 at the earliest.

Lines to Take:

- **Farm support administered by DAERA has a very significant influence on the economic viability of the industry and its competitive position relative to that in other regions.**
- **Schemes and support are needed to help farmers develop their businesses, no matter where they farm, to become more productive, profitable and resilient, and to maximise the sustainable returns from the assets at their disposal.**

- **In March I announced 54 decisions which define future agricultural policy and allow schemes to be developed that will provide opportunities for all Northern Ireland's farmers.**
- **My decisions on future agricultural policy include a broad range of measures, for example, Farm Sustainability Payment, Beef Sustainability Package, Farming with Nature Package, Farming for Carbon, Investment, Knowledge & Innovation, Generational Renewal, Supply Chain, Ruminants Genetics Programme and Soil Nutrient Health Scheme.**
- **It is my view that my policy decisions are vital to support sustainable farming and rural communities and provide a clear direction of travel for future agricultural policy in Northern Ireland, however there is still significant work to be done.**
- **I am working towards the introduction of new policy over the next number of years, probably for calendar year 2024 at the earliest.**
- **Not all of the measures will move forward in unison, but the decisions map out a direction of travel that will guide funding decisions and priorities over the coming years and ensure a coherent package of measures, actions and schemes is developed to deliver against our four key outcomes.**

KEY ISSUE: AVIAN INFLUENZA

Background:

1. The UK is currently experiencing the largest outbreak of Avian Influenza it has ever had.
2. To date there have been 129 cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 across the UK, since the first case confirmed in England on 26 October 2021. The breakdown is as follows: 107 cases in England, 11 in Scotland, 5 in Wales and 6 in NI. In addition there have been six confirmed cases in the Republic of Ireland. The 10km Surveillance Zones (SZ) established around four of these cases extended into NI. All local movement restrictions have now been lifted following extensive surveillance across the disease control zones around affected premises in NI and RoI.
3. An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) was introduced in NI on 17 November 2021. This was extended to include housing measures across the UK on 29 November 2021. Due to the reducing risk level of an AI incursion, the mandatory housing measure was lifted on 2 May 2022 (SUB/0423/2022).
4. Following a Veterinary Risk Assessment indicating that the risk level in NI has decreased and the risk of a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) incursion into the NI poultry flock is now assessed as low, you gave approval to lift the AIPZ on 1 June 2022 (SUB/2031/2022). This included lifting the ban on poultry gatherings, shows and sales which are now permitted under general licence. This was welcomed with widespread support across industry. The AIPZ remains in place across GB.
5. There have been no further cases of AI in poultry in NI since the confirmation at the small holding in Enniskillen early February 2022. Since wild bird collections were reinstated in the beginning of April after being suspended since December, there have been a small number of wild bird submissions with four positive to HPAI H5N1.
6. HPAI H5N1 has now been confirmed in seabirds at various locations in NI - Bangor, Lough Erne, Rathlin Island, Portrush, Portballintrae, Portaferry. DAERA is in ongoing contact with key stakeholders including environmental eNGOs. Intrusive licenced research activities at seabird colonies has been suspended to reduce biosecurity risks. A formal stakeholder group is being set up to help co-ordinate conservation response. Necessary long-term conservation measures will be a key issue to be considered at a forthcoming Northern Ireland Seabird Conservation Strategy workshop.
7. DAERA collects dead wild birds for Avian Influenza (AI) surveillance purposes to help us understand if and when the virus is present in NI and how it is distributed geographically. Once AI has been detected in a specific area, in wild birds, further testing is no longer required.
8. DAERA, therefore, will not be collecting any dead birds for testing from coastal areas or Lough Erne and associated lakes area until further notice. Further collections for testing from the coast would not add anything further to our understanding of the spread of the disease in that area.

9. DAERA has reiterated that it is the landowner's responsibility to collect and dispose of any dead wild birds found on their land. This has been communicated on the Departmental website and officials have met with local councils and public landowners to highlight this requirement working with the Belfast Emergency Preparedness Group (BEPG) to communicate key messages.
10. Given that there is still an ongoing low level of risk to an avian influenza incursion into poultry flocks, and in considering the risk still posed by wild birds, the biosecurity requirements set out in the AIPZ are still considered good practice and should be adhered to as much as practically possible by flock keepers.
11. The confirmation of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in NI has a notable impact on our poultry industry, international trade and the wider economy. Poultry meat from disease control zones is not authorized for third country trade and trade from the 3km restriction zone around an infected premises is excluded from EU trade. This poultry meat must be used in the domestic market only.
12. As a result of the confirmation of HPAI H5N1 the UK is no longer free from AI under the World Organisation for Animal Health rules. There are, therefore, a number of continued restrictions on exports of relevant commodities to third countries. These restrictions can continue for a prolonged period of time. DAERA trade colleagues are working closely with Defra market access to assess and minimise the impact on the UK and NI.
13. A detailed breakdown of costs associated with this current on-going outbreak is not available at this stage. However compensation has now been agreed for all six infected premises totalling **£792,787**. Additionally, to date, **£190,000** has been spent on hiring of equipment, culling, disposal, and preliminary cleansing and disinfection. It should be noted that this figure does not include staff costs, including overtime. Furthermore secondary / final cleansing and disinfection costs totalling **£196,660** has been agreed for four of the six sites, and two sites remain to be agreed.
14. The requirement for marketing eggs is set out in law. The Eggs and Chicks Regulations (NI) 2010 follows EU Commission Regulation (EC) No 589/2008 which lays down detailed rules regarding marketing standards for eggs. The regulation allows eggs to continue to be marketed as 'Free Range' during a housing order which lasts for a period of up to but not more than 16 weeks on a flock by flock basis. If birds are housed beyond the 16 week grace period set in legislation, the 'Free Range' status can be impacted. Once the 16 week grace period has ended, eggs from flocks which continue to be housed may not be marketed as 'Free Range'. The 16 week grace period ended in NI on 21st March 2022 and it had been necessary for the industry to market (formerly) 'Free Range' eggs as 'Barn Eggs'. The lifting of the housing order has enabled industry to legally market their eggs as 'Free Range' once again.

Lines to Take:

- **To date this is the largest outbreak of Avian Influenza across the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland has had a total of 6 confirmed cases, however all movement restriction and disease control zones around these infected premises have been lifted. There has been no further**

cases of AI in poultry in NI since the confirmation at a small holding in Enniskillen in early February.

- There is evidence that the risk of AI incursion is lower in summer than winter. As we enter the summer period wild bird migratory patterns are now much more favourable with numbers being considerably lower than in the winter months. Furthermore, increasing temperatures and longer days are a factor in reducing the length of survival of avian influenza virus in the environment.**
- Following advice from my officials and the decreasing risk of incursion of AI, I took the decision to lift the mandatory housing order on 2 May, and the AIPZ on 1 June 2022.**
- I would like to remind all flock keepers that while the measures of the AIPZ are no longer a legal requirement, the need for stringent, mandatory biosecurity measures are still of paramount importance to help prevent the spread of the disease from wild birds or another source to poultry.**
- With the recent findings of HPAI H5N1 in wild birds, it is clear that although the risk is now considered to be low, AI has certainly not gone away and it is vital that we do not get complacent.**
- I am also aware of the recent confirmations of HPAI H5N1 in seabirds on Rathlin and other coastal locations in NI. My officials have been and continue to work closely with local councils and the eNGOs on the issue of collecting birds. DAERA remains available to provide advice and guidance as required.**
- I continue to urge all keepers of birds to critically review their biosecurity measures.**
- The handling of this bird flu outbreak has been a complex and resource intensive exercise.**
- There have been a range of actions including extensive field activities, surveillance work, laboratory investigations and the issuing of over 600 licences for the movement of live birds, eggs and poultry litter. There is also regular contact with GB and ROI colleagues to keep up to date with the evolving situation.**
- The risk of an AI incursion in poultry in NI is reducing. However, individual site biosecurity remains a crucial mitigation factor.**
- My officials continue to monitor the situation across GB and the ROI to determine the risk level to NI poultry flocks.**

KEY ISSUE: DEVELOPMENT OF NI'S FIRST CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Background:

1. On 6 June 2022, the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 received Royal Assent. The Act requires the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to lay before the Assembly and publish a plan, known as the Climate Action Plan (CAP), before 31 December 2023.
2. A Climate Action Plan position paper has been prepared which is the result of work that has already taken place within DAERA in terms of the plan's level of ambition, scope, structure and approach, resulting in a series of proposed design principles.
3. On 24th May a workshop was held with members of the Green Growth Strategic Oversight Group (SOG) and other nominated Departmental representatives to share and test DAERA's initial thinking, to consider options and to co-ordinate Departments' views on the design principles. A follow-up was planned for 29th July 2022 however this was postponed in view of a number of significant issues that arose in the lead-up, impacted on the agenda and required further consideration by the Climate Action Plan team.
4. We have been engaging with DSO to assist us with interpretation of the requirements of the Act regarding the publication date for the CAP, how many sectoral plans are required and the sectors they should cover and the requirement for policies and proposals covering the areas of responsibility of each NI Department for inclusion in the CAP. These are all significant issues with implications for publication of the first CAP. The DSO advice we received points to a number of potential different approaches. We are currently working our way through the advice, to establish a clearer position and we will then seek SOG's input on the best way forward.
5. DSO has acknowledged that the Climate Change Bill, as drafted by OLC, was subject to many amendments and additions during passage through the Assembly and the Act now contains a number of inconsistencies. It is likely therefore that risk-based assessments will need to be made on potential interpretations of the Act and these may be subject to challenge in the courts. In agreeing our approach to developing the CAP and sectoral plans, we will need to demonstrate our clear rationale and demonstrate good decision making in our processes.
6. Some further time is also needed to consider the implications of the recent [judgment](#) (published on 18th July 2022) by the High Court regarding Judicial Review claims brought against the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in respect of the UK Net Zero Strategy which was published last year.
7. In summary, the court found that the UK Government had not complied with the Climate Change Act 2008 in relation to the level of analysis published as part of the Net Zero Strategy because the strategy lacked specific explanation or quantification of how the government's plans would achieve the emission levels set under the sixth carbon budget (which covers the period 2033-2037). In particular a lack of quantitative

assessment of the contributions expected to be made by individual policies to reductions in Greenhouse Gas emissions was highlighted as unsatisfactory.

8. Further analysis of the full implications of the judgment is being undertaken but clearly there are implications in terms of the development of the first CAP. There will be a need to try and ensure that the CAP provides adequate quantitative and qualitative detail on the specific contributions that individual policies will make in terms of emission reductions. This presents challenges particularly in terms of the availability of modelling and data to enable this level of detail to be produced and in terms of the tools/expertise that will be required to carry out a quantitative assessment of Departments' policies and proposals and the impact of the CAP as a whole.
9. Fundamental to development of the CAP is the role of the UK Climate Change Committee (CCC), both in terms of target-setting and in refinement of their sectoral analyses and emissions reductions pathways and recommendations for NI. DAERA is currently engaging with CCC to expedite the shorter-term targets (the first carbon budget 2023-27 and the 2030 target) given how vital these are for the CAP and in a series of proposed updates/revisions to the CCC's analyses to most accurately reflect the NI position.

Lines to Take:

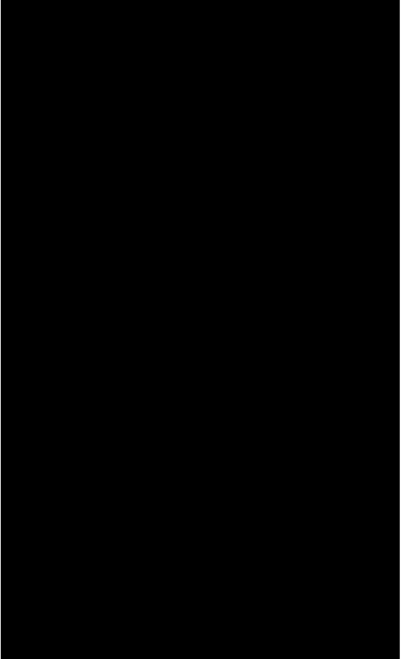
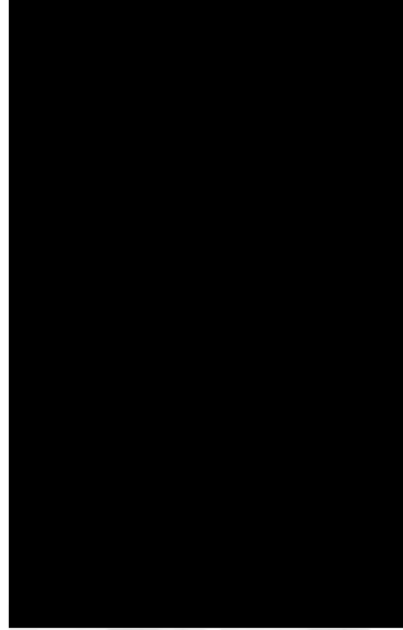
- **Work is underway within DAERA, with members of the Green Growth Strategic Oversight Group and with other Departmental representatives to scope and set the strategic direction for NI's first Climate Action Plan.**
- **In line with the requirements of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and the Executive's commitments in the draft Green Growth Strategy, the target date for publishing the Climate Action Plan is the end of December 2023.**
- **A truly collaborative and cross-departmental effort will be needed to not just have a plan in place by the target date but to ensure that the plan is credible, well received by internal and external stakeholders and that it makes a real impact in terms of reducing emissions in Northern Ireland.**
- **A Climate Action Plan position paper has been produced by DAERA which outlines the plan's potential level of ambition, scope, structure and methodology, resulting in a series of proposed design principles.**
- **My Department is currently engaging with the Climate Change Committee and in parallel is working through a number of strategic issues, with a view to clarifying the overall approach and modelling methodology to producing the CAP in the coming weeks.**
- **The current aim is to have a draft CAP approved for public consultation by April 2023. Following the 16 week consultation which the Act requires, the CAP will be updated and approvals sought, in advance of the December 2023 publication date.**

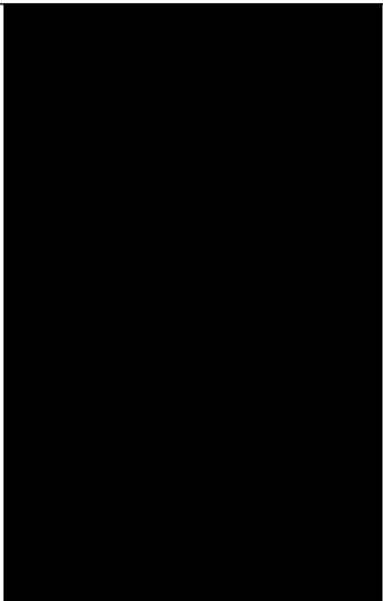
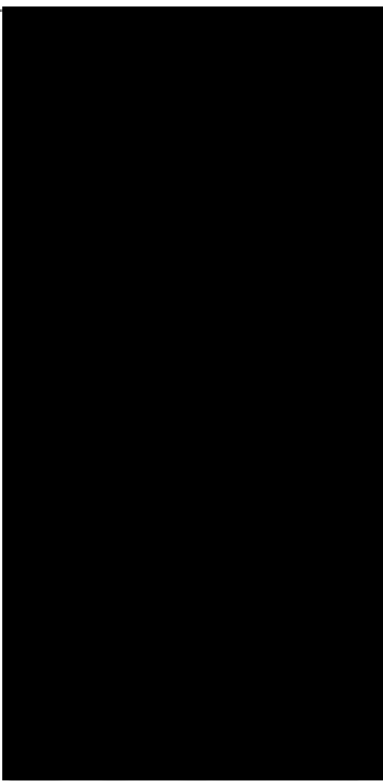
- **While the Climate Action Plan is being developed, work is also progressing across the Green Growth and climate action agenda including:**
 - **Scoping work in respect of the development of a Just Transition Commission**
 - **The commissioning of advice and recommendations from the UK Climate Change Committee in respect of the setting of Northern Ireland's first three carbon budgets and potential updated 2030 and 2040 emissions targets**
 - **Consulting on proposals to develop the UK Emissions Trading Scheme, along with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and other Devolved Administrations (DAs). This consultation, which ran from 25 March to 17 June, included proposals to align the design of the current Scheme with UK Government and DA net zero objectives.**
 - **Completing a mid-programme assessment of the second NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP2), due to be published in October 2022.**
 - **DAERA is providing funding support to Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to take forward the development and delivery of carbon literacy materials aimed at post primary school pupils and community groups.**
 - **DAERA is also providing part funding to Business in the Community for its Business Climate Action campaign, which provides support and guidance to organisations of all sizes and from all sectors to sign the Climate Action Pledge and commit to taking action on the climate emergency. To date 28 business organisations have signed the Pledge.**
 - **Following the UK's successful hosting of COP26 in Glasgow, where a number of Northern Ireland businesses and organisations showed they are leading the way on green technology and innovation, preparations are now underway for COP27. As Northern Ireland is not a UN Signatory Party, actions arising from the Glasgow Climate Pact and other commitments made at COP26 are being worked through with the UK Government through a range of working groups.**

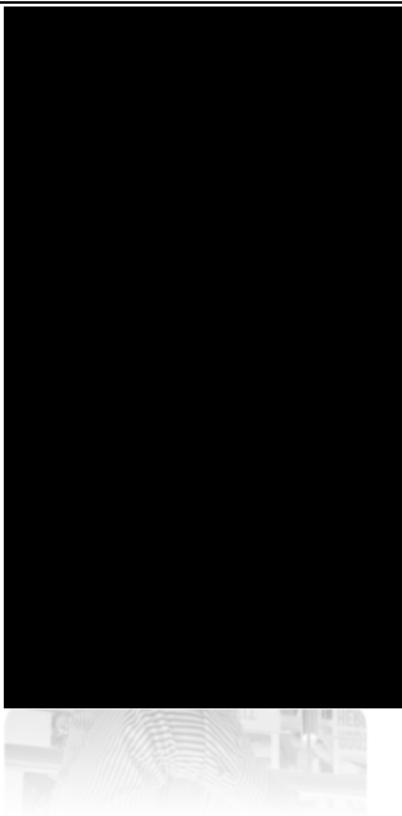
GUEST LIST

[REDACTED] Agriculture Business and Live Services Director
[REDACTED], (Performance farm), Annaghanoon Farm, Waringstown
[REDACTED], Head of Customer Support
[REDACTED], Head of Research and Development
[REDACTED], Head of Agri Estates
[REDACTED], Nutrition and Innovation Manager
[REDACTED], Head of Agri Improvement Projects NI

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] is responsible for the Agri Business operations including laying and rearing of grand parent, parent and broilers, hatcheries and our feedmills. Since joining the business in 2014 as Agriculture Development / Improvement Manager, [REDACTED] has led the innovation and continuous improvement work programmes. [REDACTED] has lead Moy Park's agriculture supply base by working with our Agri team, our customers and our farming community to deliver a sustainable, secure and best in class poultry production. In 2015, [REDACTED] became General Manager Agriculture Development, then in 2016 Director of Business Ballymena with leadership of the Ballymena Business Unit Improvement Team consisting of Commercial, Agriculture, Operations, Supply Chain and Finance. [REDACTED] has extensive international experience working with farmers supplying retail customers prior to joining Moy Park, as General Manager-Produce, East Africa with Finlay's Horticulture Kenya Ltd.

	 comes from a small family farm in Ballygawley Co. Tyrone. He studied Zoology at Queens University Belfast as an undergraduate and joined the Moy Park graduate scheme in 2013. His roles within Moy Park have been varied but have largely revolved around agriculture. In particular he led the Moy Park <i>Campylobacter</i> work on farm through the mid 2010's before using this as a foundation to step into the world of academia. He currently holds the role of '<i>Head of Customer Support – Agriculture</i>' working closely with key customer accounts on their agricultural strategy. He also chairs a number of working groups namely a cross-industry BBSRC funded project aimed at reducing monogastric reliance on imported soy as well as the Waitrose Farming Partnership's 'Responsible Sourcing Group'.  has also recently taken on Chairmanship of new working group within Moy Park focused on delivery of Scope 3 GHG reductions within its supply chain.
	 has worked in Moy Park for 8 years with over 30 years' experience working with poultry due to growing up on a poultry farm outside Ballymoney. She has a BSc (Hons) in Biology from the University of Dundee and PhD in Sustainable Agriculture She has worked as a Scientific Officer at AFBI in both the non-ruminant and beef research teams before joining Moy Park.  has led the R&D team since its formal creation in 2016 and has been involved in many projects including <i>Campylobacter</i> and antibiotic reduction, bird performance improvement, welfare, sustainability and meat quality. She currently supervises 6 PhD students. She also sits on the Committee for the NI branch of the Institute of Food Science and Technology, is on the Advisory Board of the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) for the Animal Sector and member of the Royal Society of Biology.

	██████ has worked for Moy Park for 9 years, with experience in agriculture coming from a small family farm in Co. Fermanagh. He graduated from Queen's University Belfast with a MSc in Construction Project Management and worked with a construction firm in London before joining Moy Park. ██████ has worked in several different roles within the Estates Department in Moy Park. In 2022 he was appointed Head of Agri Estates. He has had a particular interest in improving energy efficiency on farms and has travelled extensively throughout Europe assessing different technologies and selecting some for trial within our estate. The development of the net zero site has been managed by ██████, from conception through installation stages and now into the monitoring phase. ██████ brings a mix of technical expertise, agricultural knowledge and drive for sustainability to the Moy Park team.
	██████ grew up on a mixed dry stock and arable farm in County Meath. He gained an Honours Degree in Agricultural Science (2001), and a Master's Degree in Animal Science from UCD (2003). His early career was in Animal Feed and Agri Pharmaceuticals working with Andrews Milling, Belfast and Elanco Animal Health before joining DSM Animal Products Ltd where he fulfilled a variety of roles including Nutritionist, Technical and Commercial Manager for all significant farmed animal species, with a particular focus on poultry. In 2017, ██████ joined Moy Park as Nutrition and Innovation Manager. Under his leadership the Nutrition Team has grown and become both independent and an effective contributor to the wider Moy Park and global Pilgrims/JBS business. Working closely with R&D, Feed Milling and Live Operations teams they are central to delivering healthy, safe and sustainable chicken in world where supply chain and consumer demands are rapidly evolving.

	 graduated from Loughry Agricultural College in June 1979 and joined Ross Breeders in August of that year as Assistant Manager of their Pedigree and Grandparent hatchery and farms based in Co Tyrone. In 1981 Moy Park acquired the franchise from Ross Breeders to distribute Ross Broiler parent chicks throughout Ireland and at this point  became Manager of these Grandparent farms and hatchery. In 1990 he moved to manage the NI broiler group which covered the organic, free range and indoor production systems. During this time Tom oversaw the significant expansion of the business across Northern Ireland, working with hundreds of local farming families, to make the best of their investment into poultry.  has always been a strong advocate for broiler health, welfare and performance; spear heading the introduction and scientific validation regarding the benefits of natural light and windowed housing for indoor broilers. Since 2015  has applied his wealth of knowledge and experience by leading on specialist Agri projects with a view to improving overall efficiencies, sustainability, health and performance.  was recognised by the British Poultry Council in 2019 and awarded the Poultry Industry Distinguished Service Award.
--	---

Part Input Advice Template

TO BE RETURNED TO: private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk

1. Department requesting part input:	DfE	2. Date request received by DAERA:	28/05/26
3. DAERA Ref no:	COR-0372-2026	4. Referred to:	Martin McKendry
5. Date advice due back with Private Office:	COP 29/05/2026		
6. Details of part input requested (if stipulated):	Please provide part input/LTT and background from on actions to support a Just Transition for workers in agri-food sector, in particular at Moy Park.		
7. Presentational Issues	TBC		
8. FOI Implications	Disclosure will be considered on receipt of any FOI request.		
9. Recommendation	To approve the part input attached at Annex A		
10. Cleared by GD 7 or above	☐ Yes ☐ No	Name: Martin McKendry	
11. CC List:	Katrina Godfrey, Perm Sec Mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk), Martin McKendry, Richard Crowe, Juile Thompson, [REDACTED], Mark McLean, Alison Chambers, Richard Johnston, Paul McHenry, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], FFRAG Coordination, NIEA Coordination, EMFG Coordination, Trade Policy Coordination, SAFD coordination, Agricultural Policy Coordination, CAFRE coordination,		

ATTACHMENT:

Annex A: DAERA Part Input

DAERA PART INPUT

1. Pilgrim's Europe – Moy Park work closely with CAFRE providing upskilling opportunities for staff through Level 3 and Level 4 food training programmes and the provision of work placement opportunities for students studying on food programmes.
2. Pilgrims also provide one scholarship for a CAFRE Student as part of the CAFRE Industry Support Programme and are participating in the Food and Drink Academy commencing September 2026.
3. DAERA is a statutory consultee in the planning process and provides advice about impacts on the natural and marine environments and fisheries interests.
4. The DAERA Minister has agreed to facilitate a meeting (INV-0104-2026) between Pilgrims, the planning authorities and Shared Environmental Services, to discuss delays in the planning system. This meeting has not taken place yet.

**From the Office of the
Minister of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs**



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

[REDACTED]
Moy Park Limited
The Food Park
39 Seagoe Industrial Estate
Craigavon
Co. Armagh
BT63 5QE
[REDACTED]

DAERA Private Office
First Floor, Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast, BT3 9ED
Telephone: 028 9052 4140
Email: private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: COR-0531-2026
Date: 12 August 2026

Dear [REDACTED],

**CONCERNS REGARDING INACCURATE FRIENDS OF THE EARTH NORTHERN
IRELAND REPORTING ON BROILER LITTER MANAGEMENT**

Thank you for your letter of 23 July 2026. I note your concerns regarding the Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland reporting on broiler litter management.

In response to media queries on this issue, NIEA has clarified that it does not approve, nor is it required to approve, Moy Park's overarching Litter Utilisation Strategy.

NIEA has also highlighted that each individual new broiler farm application for a Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) permit is required to demonstrate with supporting evidence that they have a sustainable outlet(s) for the total litter which will be produced from their proposed development.

My department and officials will continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the Northern Ireland environment is adequately protected for the benefit of current and future generations.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

ANDREW MUIR MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

Public Interest Test – FOI

Reference Number – DAERA/26-746

Requested Information

Copies of any correspondence:

- 1. between the current Minister and Moy Park, since February 2024.***
- 2. between the Perm Sec and Moy Park, between February 2022 and February 2024***
- 3. between the then-Minister and Moy Park, between January 2020 and February 2022***

AND

- 4. any Internal Memos/Submissions for the Minister (or Perm Sec) relating to Moy Park, since Jan 2020***

Exemption / Exception under consideration

Regulation 12 (5) (e) confidentiality of commercial or industrial information.

Reasons for Disclosure:

- There is a general public interest in the openness and transparency of government e.g. in the regulation of permitted sites;
- To show compliance with the EIR by disclosing information held by the Department as a Public Authority;
- Provide assurance that the Department is operating within the appropriate legislative framework and justice is being seen to be done;
- Access to official information can improve public confidence and trust and Departments have a duty to operate transparently;
- Regulation 12(2) requires the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to apply a presumption in favour of disclosure.

Reasons for Non-Disclosure:

- The information was provided in confidence and is commercial or industrial in nature as it relates to the business plans / interests of a third party organisation(s).
- Disclosure would affect the process of any future information being provided and undermining the Department's continued working relationship with the third parties, which better informs DAERA officials in delivering effective regulation and services.
- Commercially sensitive information has been shared within the meetings and in correspondence with the Department. The commercial interests of the

business would be damaged by allowing the public or competitors to gain access to information not in the public domain.

- The confidentiality would be adversely affected by disclosure. Disclosure would create economic harm to the company by giving competitors access to commercially valuable information which would increase the risk of loss of revenue.

Conclusion

It has been determined that under Regulation 12 (5) (e) of EIR, the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information at this stage. The business provided information in confidence, and the expectation would be that it remains in the Department's confidence and not processed any further. The commercial interests and reputation of the business and its competitiveness would be undermined by allowing the world at large, especially competitor's access to this information.

Robert Hull

Head of Agri-food & Corporate Support Branch

From: [DAERA Private Office](#)
To: [2024 DAERA Minister](#)
Cc: [DAERA Private Office](#); [2024 DAERA Spad](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: FOR ROUTINE CLEARANCE - SUB-0536-2025 – UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES
Date: 14 May 2025 11:29:54
Attachments: [Submission.DOCX](#)

Minister

Please see attached submission for you to note.

You are recommended to note the current position in relation to the outcome of the investigation into the incident at Moy Park Ballymena.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: **FOR ACTION - PART INPUT REQUEST** 2pm Tuesday 8 August - INV 2141 Invitation to attend a Moy Park Farm to Fork Visit
Date: 10 August 2022 11:04:31
Attachments: [Briefing submission - INV 2141 Invitation to attend a Moy Park Farm to Fork Visit.tr5](#)

[REDACTED]
Good to go

Thanks [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I Animal Disease Control & Trade Policy Branch I Veterinary Service Animal Health Group I
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs I Ballykelly House I 111 Ballykelly Road I
Ballykelly I Limavady I BT49 9HP

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 August 2022 10:57
To: [REDACTED] >
Subject: FW: **FOR ACTION - PART INPUT REQUEST** 2pm Tuesday 8 August - INV 2141 Invitation to attend a Moy Park Farm to Fork Visit

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 August 2022 11:30
To: [REDACTED] >
Cc: Gartland, Neal
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: FW: **FOR ACTION - PART INPUT REQUEST** 2pm Tuesday 8 August - INV 2141 Invitation to attend a Moy Park Farm to Fork Visit

[REDACTED]
See attached for AI. Starts page 8.

Also attached is a rolling document I created which may be useful when I'm off on leave.

Thanks, [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: DAERA VSAHG Co-Ordination
Sent: 08 August 2022 16:40
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: DAERA VSAHG Co-Ordination [REDACTED] Gartland, Neal
Subject: **FOR ACTION - PART INPUT REQUEST** 2pm Tuesday 8 August - INV 2141 Invitation to attend a Moy Park Farm to Fork Visit

Hi folks,

CAFRE have requested part input on the attached invitation briefing, are you content to provide?

They have advised that there is a short turnaround and must be completed on their end by COP tomorrow, if you're content to provide input could you confirm with us by 2pm tomorrow please.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 August 2022 16:26
To: DAERA VSAHG Co-Ordination [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Content Manager DAERA Document : AE1/22/876542 : Briefing submission - INV 2141
Invitation to attend a Moy Park Farm to Fork Visit

Colleagues

See attached - it has been suggested you might wish to add some background and lines relating to avian influenza to this brief - sorry for short turnaround - to be complete for approval by COP tomorrow

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 August 2022 10:48
To: 'Ammonia@daera-ni.gov.uk' <Ammonia@daera-ni.gov.uk>; 'agriculturalpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk' <agriculturalpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk>; DAERA Green Growth Co-ordination <GreenGrowthCo-ordination@daera-ni.gov.uk>; EPD & RNRPD Correspondence <epdmrpd.correspondence@daera-ni.gov.uk>
[REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Content Manager DAERA Document : AE1/22/876542 : Briefing submission - INV 2141
Invitation to attend a Moy Park Farm to Fork Visit

Colleagues

Please see attached submission - Minister is visiting a Moy Park broiler farm and development facility

Appreciate it if you could add any appropriate background, LLT etc for your work area

Appreciate it if it could be added by COP 10th August please

Regards



INVITATION QUICK ADVICE

INV Ref:	INV-0380-2026
To:	ANDREW MUIR MLA Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
CC:	Katrina Godfrey, DG_DAERA PressOffice.Group, Perm Sec mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk), [REDACTED], Martin McKendry, Richard Crowe, Alison Chambers, Richard Johnston, Mark McLean, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], DAERA FFRAG Coordination, DAERA NIEA Coordination
Lead Official:	Martin McKendry
Branch:	Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Group
Contact number (incl. mobile)	[REDACTED]
Date advice returned:	21 May 2026
Invitation from:	[REDACTED], Unite the Union, [REDACTED].
Invitation type (click box to check):	☐ Event ☒ Meeting ☐ Farm Visit ☐ Site Visit ☐ Other (please specify):
Details of event/meeting (including necessary background)	[REDACTED] has requested a meeting with you to discuss mounting job uncertainties facing Unite the Union's members at Moy Park to discuss the impact of a sharp reduction in the number of Northern Ireland farms producing chickens for Moy Park. Unite the Union are concerned that planning restrictions have been applied ahead of the necessary investment, for example in aerobic digestors, to ensure alternative, sustainable pathways for the continued success of the agri-food sector.
Presentational issues:	No presentational issues are anticipated at this time.
Venue/Location (provide address inc postcode):	TBC
Date and time:	TBC
Recommendation (click box to check): (if selecting 'offer official', confirmation of official availability is required)	☒ Decline (specify reason): A key issue relates to workforce planning decisions made by a large, commercial corporation. You are recommended to decline this invitation as it may not be appropriate for you or the Department to engage on commercial decision making issues made by Moy Park.

INV Ref:	INV-0380-2026
Priority (click box to check):	☐ Urgent ☐ 1-2 months ☐ 2-4 months ☐ 4 months + ☒ Not applicable
PRIVATE OFFICE USE	
Other events scheduled for the above date (Completed by Private Office)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A



INVITATION BRIEFING TEMPLATE

DAERA PRIVATE OFFICE

INV Ref:	INV-1194-2020
To:	Mr Edwin Poots, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
CC:	Denis McMahon, Brian Doherty, Norman Fulton, Robert Huey, David Small, Fiona McCandless, Tracey Teague, Rosemary Agnew, Colette McMaster, [REDACTED], Dave Foster, [REDACTED] Press Office, FFG Coordination.
From:	[REDACTED]
Branch:	Agri-Food Support Branch
Contact number (incl. mobile)	Ext: [REDACTED], Mobile: [REDACTED]
Name of officials attending the meeting in support of Minister:	Rosemary Agnew – Director Brexit Division [REDACTED] – EMFG [REDACTED] – Ammonia Policy [REDACTED] – Natural Environment Division
Minute taker (Business area to provide)	[REDACTED] – Agri-Food Support Branch
Date briefing returned:	02/06/2020
Invitation from:	[REDACTED] Moy Park
Invitation type (click box to check):	☐ Event ☒ Meeting ☐ Other (please specify):
Summary of event/meeting (further detail to be provided in the background section)	[REDACTED] of Moy Park requests a meeting to discuss mutual challenges such as EU exit, the Environment and sustainable agricultural business.

INV Ref:	INV-1194-2020	
	Moy Park is one of the UK's top 15 food companies, NI's largest private sector business and one of Europe's leading poultry producers. They work with c. 800 farmers and hundreds of suppliers to process over 280 million birds per year, in addition to producing c. 200,000 tons of prepared foods. They have 4 primary production sites in NI and two further processing plants. In 2017 they were acquired by US-based conglomerate, Pilgrim Foods.	
Venue:	Via Zoom	
Date and time:	4 June 2020; 3pm.	
External meeting attendees (click box to check):	☐ None ☐ Not Known ☒ Yes (please specify): 	
Pre-Brief:	Date & Time	
	Venue	
	Officials	
Annexes (amend as appropriate):	Annex 1:	Agenda
	Annex 2:	Key issues – Background and Lines to Take
	Annex 3:	Response to [REDACTED] email in advance of 4 th June meeting
	Annex 4:	Pen Pics

AGENDA

1. Introduction – 10 minutes:

- Short presentation by Moy Park

2. Environment and Planning – 15 minutes:

- When are we likely to be consulted on possible new ammonia emission standards?
- How can we ensure that emission standards agreed by DAERA, NIEA, SES, Planning bodies etc. will be adhered to by all?
- N.I. obligations to emission levels post Brexit. Do we remain aligned with the UK on standards, policing and cost?
- Will all Agri emissions continue to be viewed as a mass balance, from an N.I. environmental perspective or could each industry be viewed separately? So allowing for greater growth within that sector which has shown greater emission reductions.

3. Brexit – 20 minutes:

- What clarity can you provide on the scale and type of checks required for checks between NI and GB in both directions?
- What mechanics such as trusted trader schemes will companies be able to utilise to reduce the administration and cash flow burdens due to the potential tariffs and additional checks associated with so called “goods at risk”?

4. Covid-19 – 15 minutes:

- Will there be support for NI poultry farmers who are affected by Covid?

KEY ISSUE: Reducing Ammonia Emissions from Agriculture

BACKGROUND

1. Ammonia emissions in Northern Ireland are too high and this has negative consequences for biodiversity and human health. Ammonia emissions increased notably in recent years; by around 22% from 2010 to 2017. Recent statistics on NI ammonia emissions from agriculture in 2018 show a small decrease in emissions of 1%, reflecting statistics on livestock numbers in those years.
2. Critical levels of ammonia emissions and nitrogen loading, beyond which biodiversity damage occurs, are far exceeded across most of our designated sites in NI which are among our areas of greatest environmental value. Ammonia emissions are also a contributory factor in the formation of particulate matter. Elevated levels of particulate matter in the air have been shown to lead to increased incidence of childhood asthma and coronary heart disease, as well as increased mortality.
3. Under the National Emissions Ceiling Directive (NECD), the UK is obliged to reduce its ammonia emissions by 8% by 2020 and by 16% by 2030, based on 2005 levels. Whilst the NECD is EU legislation, the targets represent the UK's contribution to fulfilling the international commitments made under the UN's Gothenburg Protocol. In the DEFRA Clean Air Strategy of 2019, the UK remained committed to the reduction of ammonia emissions by 16% by 2030.
4. The poultry sector was responsible for 15.4% of Northern Ireland's ammonia emissions in 2017 with the broiler sector which is integral to Moy Park's supply chain responsible for between 7.1% and 11.2%¹ of total Northern Ireland ammonia. [REDACTED] and Moy Park have attended and contributed to ammonia stakeholder events since 2018 and in advance of this meeting, [REDACTED] asked officials a series of questions on the NI approach to ammonia. A copy of this exchange is available for your consideration at Annex 3.
5. Previous engagement with Moy Park suggests that the following points on ammonia are likely to be emphasised;
 - The NI broiler sector produces a relatively small proportion of total NI ammonia
 - Much of the poultry litter produced in Northern Ireland is not landspread in NI and the ammonia inventory does not yet take account of this
 - A review of poultry emission factors is outstanding and many of the technologies currently being deployed on Moy Park supplier farms are likely to reduce emissions, including in particular new indirect heating systems

¹ Further information is required on the contributing factors to the "other poultry" category in the NI agricultural ammonia inventory.

6. Work is ongoing within DAERA to optimise the ammonia inventory, including on transfers of poultry litter to the ROI. Early engagement with those responsible for inventories in the UK and the ROI has taken place.
7. Moy Park have also previously discussed with DAERA the potential for ammonia reduction measures in the broiler sector, such as;
 - Moving the 5% of older broiler houses with a gas fired direct heating system move to an indirect heating system
 - Planting tree belts around broiler house to reduce the impact of ammonia emissions, using the best available guidance
 - Utilising heat exchangers within broiler houses, subject to regulatory acceptance of the validity of the emission reductions
 - Installation of air scrubbers in broiler housing however Moy Park see this as a very expensive option of last resort which could impact farm viability

LINES TO TAKE

- **Ammonia is a difficult challenge for Northern Ireland and all sectors will have a part to play in achieving the emissions reduction required. I am grateful for your constructive engagement with my Department thus far and hope to see that continue**
- **I want to work with the industry and the environment sector to develop a comprehensive and proportionate package of measures on ammonia and hope to consult on a strategy later this year. This package needs to be ambitious and proportionate and will take into account the cost-effectiveness of ammonia reduction measures, as well as the need to make tangible and sustained reductions in ammonia emissions**
- **I agree that it is important that the reporting of ammonia emissions in Northern Ireland is as accurate as possible and properly takes into account the reality of farm practice in all sectors. I am pleased that my officials are working on how to optimise emissions reporting.**

KEY ISSUE: Planning and Permitting

BACKGROUND

1. DAERA's statutory commitments include:
 - Responsibility for compliance with environmental legislation and ensuring that steps are taken to avoid deterioration of protected habitats and species;
 - The role of the Statutory Nature Conservation Body, including advising competent authorities on the appropriate assessment of projects;
 - Statutory consultee under the Planning legislation; and
 - competent authority in the decision making process in granting permits, licences, consents, awarding grants, drawing up plans or programmes.
2. In undertaking these duties the Department applies the same standards to all sectors agri -food, transport, combustion and energy generation.
3. NI agricultural ammonia emissions by livestock type are approximately;
 - 70% Cattle
 - 14% Poultry
 - 8% Pigs
4. With regard to the agricultural sector the department applies the same processes and standards regardless of livestock type. However given the greater likelihood of planning authorities to apply the rigour of the planning and EIA regulations to pig and poultry developments and the requirement for permits for larger farms there is the perception that pig and poultry producers are bearing the brunt of restrictions caused largely by the cattle sector.
5. While it is more likely that other competent authorities, such as the planning authorities, will accept the Departments statutory advice if it can be shown to be scientifically robust and defensible, it is for the competent authority to determine the acceptability of any particular project by undertaking the required environmental assessments.
6. There are no ammonia emission standards set out in legislation, The UK however has international obligations to reduce emissions of a number of air pollutants including ammonia.
7. It is understood that Moy Parks query relating to ammonia emission standards relates to the thresholds used in the Departments operational protocol for for the assessment of air pollution impacts including ammonia.

8. You have recently received a submission on the Departments extant operational protocol and will be aware of the vulnerability of the thresholds used within it and that the protocol has been under review.
9. The Department has previously indicated that a public consultation on any updated guidance resulting from the review would be undertaken.
10. This is consistent with other UK regions, National Resources Wales (NRW) for example have just issued a public consultation on their updated guidance for agricultural developments. Like DAERA, NRW use thresholds which are considered vulnerable. However, while they have removed the existing thresholds they have not defined new thresholds, instead requiring all applicants to demonstrate their development does not cause environmental harm. This approach is now being considered by officials.
11. The continued use by the Department of thresholds known to be vulnerable has led to stagnation in the planning and permitting regimes.
12. No new ammonia emission standards have yet been agreed.
13. The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 apply to intensive farms with the capacity for more than;
 - 40,000 places for poultry,
 - 2,000 places for production pigs (over 30kgs);
 - or 750 places for sows.
14. Permit applications and variations are required to provide a demonstration that proposals will have an acceptable environmental impact, including (a) impacts of emissions (odour, ammonia, noise, dust) on sensitive local receptors (dwellings/habitats); (b) the sustainable utilisation of manures produced from the proposed installation. As part of the determination process NIEA consider the cumulative impact of other relevant plans or projects and complete Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) when required
15. There are 242 existing permits (14 pig and 228 poultry) – 207 of the PPC poultry farm permits are for broiler farms which are contract producers to Moy Park. PPC farms currently represent approximately 31% of the NI sow breeding herd; 22% of the NI weaning-finishing (pork production) herd; 30% of the Layer and Pullet flock; and 80% of the Broiler flock.
16. In February 2017 the EU published its BRef document for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry and Pigs (IRPP) detailing its BAT (Best Available Techniques) conclusions. There is a 4 year period to review and issue all permits with the relevant conclusions – to be completed by Feb 2021.
17. Given the ammonia issue within the NI context it is prudent that while undertaking these permit reviews that a habitats risk assessment is also completed. Other UK regulatory authorities are not completing habitats risk assessments as part of their regulatory review. However, habitats risk assessments have been completed

previously for existing PPC farms by some of the other UK regulatory authorities as part of their requirements under the Habitats Regulations

18. Of the 242 existing permits 224 will be subjected to a habitats risk assessment (74 within 7.5 km of N sensitive site e.g. ASSI and 150 within 7.5 km of N2K site). The Department is actively engaging with Moy Park on the permit review and any associated issues including the ammonia impact assessments, etc. for broiler farms.

LINES TO TAKE

- **The Department is aware of the challenges faced by poultry producers and other agricultural developments in the planning system and is working to ensure sustainable developments can be progressed.**
- **I recognise the importance of the poultry sector and Moy Park to NI economy and can assure you that the same standards and processes are applied to all developments and sectors.**
- **The review of the Department's operational protocol for the assessment of air pollution effects, including those from agricultural sources, is ongoing. I am actively engaging with officials on this important issue.**
- **No new ammonia emission standards have been agreed, however if new standards are adopted they will be scientifically justified, defensible and applied consistently to all sectors.**
- **I recognise the importance of transparency in the Department's decision making processes and will be considering the effectiveness of a public consultation in the near future.**
- **My Department is continuing its review of existing PPC farm permits with the target to complete all these reviews within the required 4 year time period i.e. by 20th February 2021. However, due to a number of reasons (e.g. review of DAERA operational protocol; Covid-19 situation) this review has progressed more slowly than planned and we may be required to review our timescales for completion of it.**

KEY ISSUE: EU EXIT

BACKGROUND

Moy Park is a member of the Department's key stakeholder group for EU exit issues, the Trade and Agriculture Committee (TAC).

On the agenda, they have raised two issues in relation to Brexit as follows

- i. Can we have further clarity around the requirement and scale of checks on agri-food products/livestock coming into N.I. from mainland G.B. and then secondly the same question for Agri products coming in from other international markets given the nature and short turnaround expectations that we have within our business?
- ii. Subject to any final outcomes, do you believe that agri-food businesses in N.I. including Moy Park could fall under the category of 'trusted trader' and in so doing, avoid the considerable administration burden associated with so called 'goods at risk' coupled with the inevitable stress on cash flow that could well follow should tariffs be applied to inbound shipments?

The Cabinet Office has published a Command Paper on "the UK's approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol" (20 May). The paper sets out proposals on how UKG will operationalise the Protocol and a four point plan on it will be delivered. The paper is the first indication from UKG on its thinking and it makes it clear that there will be no extension to the transition period.

DAERA is examining the proposals and will need to reflect on their implications. The challenge will be to have a fully operational regime agreed and in place by the end of this year.

There are many issues and challenges that the industry and the Department are facing with the implementation of the Protocol. The implementation of the Protocol is cross cutting and the Northern Ireland Executive will need to be closely involved in all the discussions around the Protocol. The Executive has agreed DAERA as the lead Department for the implementation of the SPS-related elements of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

There will also be processes of engagement with the EU through the Joint and Specialised Committees that need to be followed through to reach agreement.

UKG has committed to protect NI's place in the UK internal market and the Department will be pressing UKG to ensure that NI's existing supply chains can continue to operate as they do at present and that there are no unnecessary barriers to trade between NI and GB at the end of the transition period.

The greater the deviation of the UK and the EU in terms of trading arrangements, tariffs and SPS rules, the more difficult and intrusive the Protocol becomes. Therefore, the key priority is for the UK and the EU to agree a zero tariff, zero quota limit deal, and to have maximum alignment in terms of SPS arrangements.

Engagement with industry to understand their concerns will be important in the coming months.

LINES TO TAKE

NI Protocol – Command Paper

- The UKG published last week a set of proposals on the implementation of the Protocol which go some way to addressing my concerns.
- This is the first indication from UKG on its thinking. We are examining the proposals and need to reflect on their implications
- I welcome the commitments made in the paper, for example, that there will be unfettered access, as set out in the Protocol and this will be legislated for by 1 January 2021.
- Important to ensure that we hold the UKG to its commitments
- The Executive has agreed that DAERA will be the lead Department for the implementation of the SPS-related elements of the Northern Ireland Protocol.
- The NI Executive will be involved in the implementation of the Protocol, additionally there will be processes of engagement with the EU through the Joint and Specialised Committees.
- The clear position of UKG that there will be no extension of the Transition Period.
- The challenge of having a fully operational regime agreed and in place by the end of this year remains a very significant concern and I will be pressing to see rapid progress towards tangible solutions.
- The earlier we start to see movement and clarification, the more time we and businesses will have to juggle priorities.
- I am aware that this allows little preparation time for businesses, and I know that many agri-food businesses are pressing for an extension to the Transition Period beyond 31 December 2020 [Note – Moy Park position on this is not known].

- However this is a matter for the UK Government, and the UKG could not be making its position on this any clearer – no extension. Therefore, we need to engage and get the best outcome we can in the time available.
- I am keen to hear your input into the decisions in relation to the Protocol, I know that ideally you need the time and space to do so and until you come through the current crisis, that is going to be difficult, but there is no other choice.
- I recognise that there are complex supply chains from primary producers through to finished product and this movement will be of concern in respect of maintaining the supply chain.
- I want to see trade continuing to be as frictionless as possible with minimal checks in place. A zero tariff, zero quota FTA between UK and the EU would significantly help minimise any frictions inherent in the Protocol.
- What other mitigation measures would you want to see in place to ensure your business model which is important to the NI economy can continue?
- The levels of checks to be carried out will have to be agreed as part of the negotiations.
- The EU already allows reduced frequency of checks for other countries.
- UK/EU to remain closely aligned on SPS standards to minimise and preferably eliminate checks on movements from GB to NI.
- Ideally I want to see any new UK SPS Strategy to create the conditions that minimise the potential for friction on agri-food trade from GB to NI (i.e. avoiding the need for Export Health Certification and the associated border controls). For example, dynamic alignment with relevant parts of the EU acquis and the UK joining the Common Veterinary Area (as in the Swiss/EU arrangement).
- If this is not possible, I will be pressing for UKG to ensure minimising the level of physical border inspections is be a priority on the basis that movements from GB are low risk.

EU Negotiations

- The Department continues to engage with Defra and the other Devolved Administrations on the future EU/UK agreement. As you will be aware the fourth round of talks is ongoing this week

- Our primary ask remains a zero quota, zero tariff FTA with the EU, otherwise there will be damaging effects on the agri-food industry in Northern Ireland.
- The points of most contention in the negotiations relate to open and fair competition (level playing field) and fishing access for the EU to UK waters.
- We await with interest the outcome of this week's round of negotiations particularly on trade on goods and level playing field.

RoW Negotiations

- I understand that UK launched trade negotiations with US at the start of May. Approaches are being agreed for negotiations with Japan with preparations being made for negotiations with Australia and New Zealand.
- Seeking more meaningful engagement with DAs moving forward to provide an opportunity to influence the process rather than a simple briefing of UKG intent.

UK Global Tariff

- Disappointed that there has been no detailed dialogue with us on the setting of the agricultural tariffs.
- While the maintaining of agricultural tariffs in general is to be welcomed there are still some specific issues of concern.
- [If needed....
- Asking for the analysis of the impact on NI be done by the UKG and shared with us. With every tariff changed (apart from those already at zero).

Trade

- It is vital that we identify and recommend the means by which we can achieve a level playing field for these sectors compared with GB and EU competitors.
- UKG has committed to providing NI access to UK FTAs on an equal footing with GB.
- I will also seek to ensure that UKG works with the EU Commission to construct a State Aid compliant tariff waiver reimbursement regime, if needed.
- GB to NI trade – My aim is to secure no tariffs on internal UK trade as set out by the UKG to ensure a level playing field for NI and to protect the NI consumer.

- I am happy to look any mitigations that will help the agri-food sector. You have asked about “trusted trader” status and while it is a matter for HMRC, it could help ease some of the administrative processes.
- NI to GB trade - ensuring that unfettered access remains and there is no additional cost in selling goods to GB.
- On level playing field issues ensuring that support is retained for Northern Ireland agriculture at a level which tracks that provided in CAP Pillar 1 and Pillar 2.

Migration

- Aware that the Migration Advisory Committee has published its Call for Evidence for its review of the Shortage Occupation List.
- The UK Government has frequently highlighted its desire that the new immigration system should work for all parts of the UK. It is therefore vital that the MAC fully consider the views of our stakeholders and recognise our unique position and labour market in their forthcoming review.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the necessity of a robust agri-food supply chain. Migrant workers have an important part to play in this and it is important that our agri-food employers are able to maintain the flexibility needed to fill essential key worker jobs in the future.
- Aware access to labour moving forward is an important issue for your business. What are your particular concerns?

KEY ISSUE: The effect of COVID 19 on the NI Broiler breeder sector

BACKGROUND

Value of the NI poultry meat industry

- Gross turnover of the NI poultry meat industry in 2018 was valued at £733 million¹ while the industry value added figure increased by 14.1% in 2017 to £201.2 million¹.
- Direct full time employee equivalents in 2017 was 5639.

Market changes due to COVID 19

- There are currently 15.5 million broilers in NI.¹ This is down from 17.5 million broilers recorded in the 2018 Census. [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

Effects on the industry and options

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- There is currently a glut of hatching eggs available across Europe which will put pressure on sales in the short term.
- It is difficult to say what the long term effects of the lockdown will have on consumption of poultry meat or how quick the recovery may be, but one thing is clear, decisions taken now in regard to available house numbers will affect the NI industries readiness to respond to an upturn in the market.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sources

1 - NI Agricultural Census June 2019

LINES TO TAKE

- **I and my officials have met with industry stakeholders and are aware of the impact COVID-19 has had on the poultry industry and in particular the Broiler Breeder Sector.**
- **My officials will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the farmers involved in the broiler breeder sector and assess the need for support as circumstances evolve.**

Response to [REDACTED] queries

On 18th May 2020, [REDACTED], contacted DAERA requesting an update on a number of issues relating to ammonia emissions and planning (in red). The following was provided:

1. The overlapping issues of PPC and planning.

The review of the Department's operational protocol for the assessment of air pollution effects, including those from agricultural sources, is ongoing. The Minister is actively engaging with officials on this issue.

2. The overall Agri, but in particular the poultry meat compliance with the 2005 actual ammonia levels produced v the 2030 ammonia requirement of 16% below the 2005 figure.

The first thing to note is that the National Emissions Ceiling Directive target you reference is a UK-side target, rather than an NI-specific target. Defra's approach to achieving the ammonia reductions required in England is mainly through their Clean Air Strategy published in 2019

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770715/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf). Key measures are:

- a requirement to take action to reduce emissions from urea-based fertilisers
- a requirement for all solid manure and solid digestate spread to bare land (other than that managed in a no-till system) to be incorporated rapidly (within 12 hours)
- a requirement to spread slurries and digestate using low-emission spreading equipment (trailing shoe or trailing hose or injection) by 2025. Defra will also consider options for phasing in this requirement so that those spreading digestate or large volumes of slurry may be required to adopt the practice at an earlier date
- a requirement for slurry and digestate stores to be covered by 2027. Defra will consider options for phasing in this requirement so that those producing or storing digestate or large volumes of slurry may be required to adopt the practice at an earlier date.
- mandatory design standards for new intensive poultry, pig and beef livestock housing and for dairy housing. The standards will be designed in collaboration with industry experts and will include design features to improve animal health and welfare and minimise environmental pollution to air (including greenhouse gas emissions), water and land as far as practicable
- Regulate to minimise pollution from organic and inorganic fertiliser use
- Extension of environmental permitting to dairy and intensive beef farms by 2025

Clearly in Northern Ireland we will have to contribute to the UK target. Achieving a 16% reduction in NI ammonia, based on 2005 levels, would require a reduction of 25.4% from 2017 levels (the latest information we have). The modelling we've done looking at the impact of implementing in the medium term a series of measures that are stretching but feasible suggests that a 25% reduction is possible. The set of measures we have looked at most recently are:

- Increasing the average grazing season for NI cattle by 14 days
- Replacing urea fertiliser with a stabilised urea product
- Moving to 100% uptake of low emissions slurry spreading with 50% as trailing shoe and 50% as trailing hose / dribble bar
- Acidifying cattle and pig slurry- 5% in store and a further 10% at spreading
- Installing a slatted system or a cover with a scraping system connected to a tank for 15% of dairy collectings
- Reducing Crude Protein for 75% of animals for each livestock type (The Crude Protein reduction modelled for Broilers and Layers was a 1% reduction)
- Genetic improvement in livestock: Achieving a 5% decrease in nitrogen excretions for 75% of Pigs and Poultry and achieving a 2.5% decrease in nitrogen excretion for 50% of beef and dairy cattle
- Covering 30% of all above ground slurry stores
- Installing slat mats with scrapers in housing for 25% of the beef sector and 35% of the dairy sector
- Low emission housing in the pig and poultry sectors. For Broilers, we modelled 15% uptake of alum acidification systems which would reduce housing emissions by 70% but this may not be considered the most appropriate approach- for example, if there was an alternative method of reducing housing emissions which could reduce ammonia by 15% and be implemented in 70% of houses, that would be just as effective

So applying the above suite of measures is one potential means by which NI could contribute to achieving a 16% reduction on 2005 ammonia levels by 2030, however there are some very important caveats to note:

- This was only one suite of potential measures modelled to provide evidence for policy. The eventual set of measures included in the ammonia action plan for implementation across NI may not include all of these measures whilst other measures may be added. The final nature of the action plan will be subject to consultation and Ministerial decision
- The overall reduction of 25% on 2017 emission levels is based on livestock numbers remaining static. Clearly if livestock numbers increase, then the measures would reduce ammonia emissions by a smaller proportion (or perhaps not at all)
- Given the scale of the exceedances of ammonia concentrations and nitrogen deposition at designated sites, it may be appropriate to take additional measure close to those sites. Again these policy decisions are expected to be subject to consultation and Ministerial decision

You also mentioned specifics on emissions from the poultry meat sector. I've had a look at the various categories which make up the inventory and whilst I am awaiting confirmation of what exactly is included in the "other poultry" category and how this relates to the broiler sector, my initial analysis suggests that Broiler emissions have increased by 1% from 2005 to 2017. So on that basis, a 17% reduction on 2017 levels would represent a 16% reduction from 2005 levels.

I hope the above is helpful in giving you a sense of our current thinking on the imperative to reduce ammonia emissions. Our view at this stage is that it is a challenge which should be shared by all sectors.

3. Have you had any confirmation from [REDACTED] regarding ammonia emission changes due to non-land spreading of litter in N.I.

We are working with [REDACTED] on this issue and I met with both [REDACTED] and his counterpart from the Environmental Protection Agency in the ROI recently. We agreed that we would continue to examine the data available and progress this issue to ensure that the information informing the inventory meets the requisite standards and is as accurate as possible. I made clear to all parties that you have been very forthcoming in making data available and we were all agreed that the inventory should be optimised using verifiable data to capture movements of livestock manure across international boundaries.

4. The much awaited AC0123 paper from DEFRA. Have you had sight of it yet and will it prove to be a benefit for NI?

The DEFRA Research Report "AC0123 Phase 2 - Developing New Ammonia Emissions Factors for Modern Livestock Housing and Manure Management Systems" is not publicly available yet. When we do get access to the report and have considered its content we will arrange to discuss it with you.

5. The Public consultation document on Ammonia.

We are currently working on the consultation document and intend to publish for consultation later this year, hopefully before September.

6. The NIEA have given us until Feb 2021 on which to complete the environmental modelling of selected farms, but as yet there has been no confirmation of the

emission or background levels. Are these likely soon or will this date be pushed back?

As stated above in the response to your first query the review of the Department's operational protocol for the assessment of air pollution effects, including those from agricultural sources, is ongoing. The Minister is actively engaging with officials on this issue. Following the publication of the new BAT Conclusions for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs in February 2017, the Department is continuing its review of existing PPC farm permits with the target to complete all these reviews within the required 4 year time period i.e. by 20th February 2021. However, due to a number of reasons (e.g. review of DAERA operational protocol; Covid-19 situation) this review has progressed more slowly than planned and we may be required to review our timescales for completion of it.

In response, [REDACTED] stated:

'I see that the positive from Moy Park's point of view is the fact that a sizeable quantity of litter is transported outside NI and also another significant quantity goes to bio digestion and mushroom composting. A significant quantity does not go for land spreading. I agree that some of this composting and bio digestion is within NI but do they release less ammonia than land spreading?

Another point relevant to NI and perhaps you have already considered it, is that if you strip the fibre out of the digestate, you are also removing the bulk of the Phosphorus. The digestor which we are contracted to in Ballymena did this prior to Covid destroying it's outlet for the fibre, which was Westland Horticulture. This digestor received 38,800t of broiler litter from us in 2019.

Pen Pictures

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From the Office of the
Minister of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs**



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

[REDACTED]
Moy Park
39 Seagoe Ind Estate
Portadown
BT39 5QE
[REDACTED]

DAERA Private Office
First Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED
Telephone: 028 9052 4140
Email: private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: INV-1236-2024
Date: 13 March 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

INVITATION TO A MEETING WITH MOY PARK TO DISCUSS THEIR VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL WORKSTREAMS.

Thank you for your letter of 26 February inviting me to meet to discuss the range of environmental related workstreams that Moy Park have in place for Phosphorus, Ammonia, Greenhouse Gas reduction and Carbon.

I would be pleased to meet with you and the members of the Moy Park team to discuss these issues. You will understand that my diary is heavily committed at present. However, I will endeavour to meet you when practicable.

My Diary Manager, [REDACTED], will contact you in due course to make the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

ANDREW MUIR MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

Invitation for the Minister to visit Moy Park

Subject	Invitation for the Minister to visit Moy Park
From	[REDACTED]
To	DAERA Private Office
Sent	26 February 2024 15:50

Caution – This email has been received from outside the NICS network. Please ensure you can verify the sender’s name and email address. Treat all attachments and links with caution.
FOR INTERNAL NICS STAFF ONLY - If you have any concerns regarding the email please forward to spam@finance-ni.gov.uk.

Dear Minister,

Congratulations on your appointment to the role of DAERA minister and as such I am extending an invitation to you, to meet with the Moy Park team at your earliest convenience.

As a minister with strong environmental credentials, we would appreciate meeting with you so that we can appraise you of, where we currently sit and the workstreams in place for

- 1. Manure removal and so Phosphorus removal from land spreading
- 2. Ammonia reduction
- 3. GHG reduction
- 4. Farm carbon measuring
- 5. Carbon mitigation

This meeting, I hope, will provide you with a clear view of where both Regulation and Farming practice sit within Moy Park and will also, with your agreement, help provide Northern Ireland with a healthy and environmentally sustainable poultry meat industry.

If you could suggest at least two possible dates for our meeting that would be appreciated.

Best Regards

[REDACTED]

		[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Moy Park 39 Seagoe Ind Estate Portadown BT63 5QE [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	
--	--	--	--

		 https://moypark.com/	
--	--	--	--

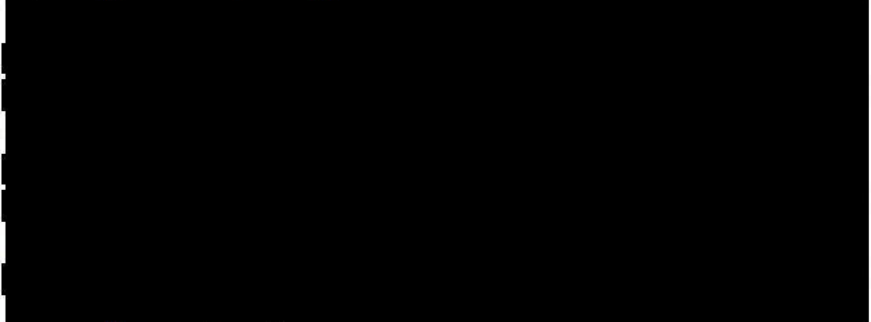
Moy Park Limited process your data in accordance with our privacy statement available on our website <https://moypark.com/footer/privacy-policy>. The information contained in this message and any attached files is intended for the exclusive use of the individual to whom it is addressed and may contain information that is confidential, proprietary, privileged and/or exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient, or an employee or agent responsible for delivering this message to an intended recipient, please send a reply to this e-mail and then delete the message and all attachments from your computer without retaining any copies.

Unauthorised use, disclosure, forwarding, redistribution and/or reproduction of this communication, its attachments or any part thereof, in any way whatsoever, is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful.

© Moy Park Limited. Registered in Northern Ireland. No. 4842, 39 Seagoe Ind Estate, Portadown, Craigavon, Co. Armagh, BT63 5QE.

(Please refer to Invitation Guidance on the [Private Office Intranet](#) prior to completing)
If appropriate, please provide Press Release (cleared by Press Office) as an Annex

(Version 3/12/19)
AE1/20/897660

INV Ref:	INV/1642/2020		
Invitation from:			
Invitation type (click box to check):	☐ Event ☒ Meeting ☐ Other (please specify):		
Summary of event/meeting (further detail to be provided in the background section)	Strategic importance of Moy Park, the largest poultry processor in Europe to the NI agri-food sector and challenges associated with COVID-19 and EU transition.		
Venue:	Via Zoom		
Date and time:	Monday 28 September 2020 1pm – 13:45pm		
External meeting attendees (click box to check):	☐ None ☐ Not Known ☒ Yes (please specify): 		
Pre-Brief:	Date & Time	N/A.	
	Venue	N/A.	
	Officials	N/A.	
Annexes (amend as appropriate):	Annex 1:	Key issues – Background and Lines to Take	
	Annex 2:	Speaking notes	
	Annex 3:	Programme	
	Annex 4:	Guest List	
	Annex 5:	Pen Pictures	
	etc		

KEY ISSUES, BACKGROUND AND LINES TO TAKE

BACKGROUND

Moy Park is one of the UK's top 15 food companies and largest private sector employer in NI employing approximately 6,000 staff across its three sites at Dungannon, Craigavon and Ballymena.

Moy Park process ■ million birds weekly across the Dungannon ■ and Ballymena ■ sites, accounting for well in excess in ■ of all poultry processed in Northern Ireland. At any point in time Moy Park have between ■ and ■ million birds spread across Northern Ireland farms.

In 2018, the NI poultry meat processing sector generated approximately £750 million in sales, making up 14% of total sales from the NI food and drink processing sector. This subsector made up 21% of value added by the entire sector providing 22% of total employment in the sector, highlighting the strategic importance of Moy Park to the NI poultry industry, agri-food sector and wider economy.

KEY ISSUES

COVID-19

Given the recent upsurge in COVID-19 cases within the community, there is the very real possibility of an incident similar to that experienced at Cranswick Country Foods developing within other meat processing establishments and, in particular, Moy Park given the magnitude of their workforce.

Any extended COVID-19 related closure of Moy Park slaughter sites, (particularly Dungannon), would have significant and far reaching consequences for the highly integrated and intensive NI poultry sector/supply chain with accompanying knock-on effects on the health and welfare of slaughter-ready birds.

To mitigate this risk, DAERA officials have commenced engagement with Moy Park management, Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Health and Safety Executive, Northern Ireland (HSENI) with a view to developing acceptable contingency plans that deliver all essential public health protective measures whilst taking into consideration where possible, animal health and welfare concerns.

The ultimate decision on those actions required to manage any COVID-19 incident within meat processing establishments lies within the remit of the Chief Medical Officer and Minister for Health and delivered via the PHA led multi-agency and disciplinary Incident Management Team (IMT).

From the outset of this, DAERA officials have facilitated regular meetings with Moy Park, HSENI and the PHA with the objective of ensuring industry are familiar with and implementing the latest PHA guidance which is primarily aimed at ensuring a safe

working environment for all personnel through minimising the risk of COVID-19 entry, and transmission within the workplace.

Moy Park have received significant negative publicity around Coronavirus, with media reports of a staff walkout in the Craigavon site early in the crisis, one reported death from a COVID-19 related illness in Moy Park Dungannon and a Coronavirus incident in Moy Park Ballymena which was widely reported as an outbreak in the media.

HSENI have conducted a number of site inspections at Moy Park establishments, making recommendations which Moy Park management have implemented. DAERA officials continue to work with all parties to ensure compliance with HSENI and PHA guidance.

UK INTERNAL MARKET BILL

UK Internal Market Bill was introduced on 9 September and passed its first hurdle in the House of Commons on 14 September.

It is of significant interest for DAERA and the NI agri-food sector. Officials are currently undertaking a comprehensive analysis and have already identified the following key points.

Mutual Recognition and Prohibition on Direct and Indirect Discrimination

- There are some welcome concepts such as around mutual recognition and prohibition on direct and indirect discrimination within the UK Internal Market.
- We need to be able to sell our goods on the GB market which will have to be produced to EU regulations even if there are different regulatory requirements in GB.
- However, there is further work to be done on the issue of minimum standards to avoid situations of standards being unacceptably lowered to gain a competitive advantage. It should be emphasised that standards in GB should not be any lower than the standards that must be applied in NI under the NI Protocol.

Unfettered access

- Welcome the provisions on unfettered access for NI goods to the GB market in the UK Internal Market Bill and the prohibition on new checks in this respect.
- However, the definition of what constitutes a qualifying NI goods will be critical in ensuring unfettered access. It is important that a definition is arrived at that doesn't result in significant new controls to check if NI goods meet the requirements, otherwise unfettered access would be diminished.

Changes to the NI Protocol

- The intention behind the proposed powers to make changes to the Protocol in relation to state aid (Article 10) is not clear. It may be to make sure that EU State Aid rules have no application in GB in terms of reach back or to alter the State Aid rules applying in NI. Clarification is being sought on this.
- A situation whereby more generous state aid could be provided in GB compared to NI would be a major concern as it would place NI businesses at a competitive disadvantage. Having different subsidy control regimes within the same country is extremely problematic.

- Currently we are seeking clarification as to what the consequences will be if the UK Government makes changes to the Protocol which are objected to by the EU.

UK Subsidy Control Regime

- It is important that there is a level playing field throughout the UK in relation to subsidy control and state aid. Welcome the concept of a UK subsidy control regime but would want input from devolved administrations into its design and hopefully deliver an arrangement acceptable to all.
- Specifically on agricultural support, we cannot accept a situation whereby agricultural support is more generous or trade distorting in GB compared to what is permitted in NI under the Protocol. WTO rules on subsidy would not be sufficient to prevent this.

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

- The eighth round of negotiations with the EU concluded on 11 September 2020.
- Significant differences remain, particularly around level playing field.
- Continue to stress to the UK Government that we want to see:
 - A zero tariff, zero quota FTA between the UK and EU should be the overarching objective. (Such an arrangement would also alleviate the GB to NI trade flow frictions inherent in the NI Protocol arrangement.)
 - An SPS arrangement that minimises NI/GB friction should be pursued and keeps divergence in regulations between NI and GB to a minimum.
 - The future UK/EU trading relationship must not directly or indirectly constrain the ability of the UKG to grant NI goods unfettered access to the GB market.
 - Services that support trade in goods between the UK and EU (such as transport, haulage, data adequacy, IT systems, etc.) must not face restrictions or impediments that undermine physical trade flows.
- Want to see future trading arrangements that will continue to uphold our high values in animal welfare, environmental protection and food quality and safety. In relation to trade negotiations with the Rest of the World, the Department and Minister continue to stress to UKG that:

- There must be no reduction in standards as regards imports.
- Imports into the UK must continue to meet all existing standards as indeed will continue to be the case for Northern Ireland under the Protocol where we remain aligned to EU regulations.
- There must also be no reduction in agricultural tariffs for sensitive products where we have a significant production interest.
- We have written to the Defra SoS to highlight a number of concerns about the approach to UK Government approach on standards, tariffs and rules of origin in FTAs and will continue to press them on these matters.
- The EU is intensifying its work to get ready for all scenarios on 1 January 2021.

UNFETTERED MARKET ACCESS

- Want to achieve the best possible outcome on market access to GB, that is completely unfettered, which will allow not only status quo trade to continue but enable our businesses to build market share in GB in the future.
- We have highlighted to UKG that any attempt to distinguish between NI qualifying goods and other goods moving through GB ports, the access of a NI qualifying good becomes fettered as we will be unable to continue the just-in-time supply chains from NI to GB we have. This is totally unacceptable.
- We need clarity on the systems being developed to enable NI qualifying goods of a NI route or of a Dublin route to gain unfettered access to GB whilst at the same time applying checks to RoI goods coming off the same ferry or indeed off the same consignment.
- It is not clear how UKG can find systems that will allow unfettered access for NI qualifying goods whilst at the same time checking RoI goods.
- Recognise the concerns with a relatively open definition of unfettered access that was solely based on a simple business location test.
- Want to ensure that there is no risk of any reputational damage for Northern Ireland as a supplier of food with proven provenance.
- Agree that that goods processed in Northern Ireland using raw materials or animals sourced from outside of Northern Ireland should be treated as qualifying goods.

- Qualifying goods should be goods from businesses undertaking significant value adding activity in Northern Ireland and contributing to the Northern Ireland economy through employment and wealth creation.
- If this approach to qualifying goods facilitates an expansion of such activity in Northern Ireland, then that would be a benefit from EU Exit. DAERA also wants to ensure that any definition of a qualifying good ensures that it does not involve the introduction of significant new paperwork and checks to identify such goods.
- Understand that UKG may consider the need for different policies to cater for differences in approach for different sectors.

RULES OF ORIGIN

- Concerned that the EU is only offering bilateral culmination in rules of origin requirements.
- The outcome that we need to see is agreement on diagonal culmination between the UK, EU and every country that has an FTA with the UK and EU. Based on the continuity trade agreements secured by the UK, it would appear that 3rd countries are open to this so it is essential that the UK and the EU can also agree diagonal culmination in a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in order to achieve the desired outcome.
- Comprehensive diagonal culmination would be the most beneficial for dairy sector given the quantity of milk going to ROI for processing and would avoid major complications with this trade due to goods with NI content not qualifying for preferential tariffs under EU FTAs.
- Have already written to the Defra SOS, Rt Hon George Eustice, MP highlighting this issue from an agri-food perspective. Also has been raised informally with DAFM Minister in the margins of a recent North South Ministerial Council meeting.

TARIFF RATE QUOTAS (TRQs)

- The recent Commission draft proposal for an EU Regulation on the application of EU tariff rate quotas (TRQs) and other import quotas is disappointing.
- The impact of the proposal will depend on the out working of the Protocol.
- If a good imported into Northern Ireland is regarded at risk of being imported into the EU, then the EU tariff will apply.

- The impact of this proposal will mean that the full EU tariff will have to be paid even if a TRQ is available which would result in a zero or reduced tariff for imports within the quota. The latter will only be available for imports directly into the EU.
- This has the potential to disadvantage NI businesses compared with those in the EU, particularly Ireland in terms of the costs of imports.
- There is a possibility that NI businesses will attempt to avail of EU TRQs by importing goods via Irish ports.
- More clarification is required on how this would work and whether NI businesses could do so directly or would have to route their imports via an EU business or establish a presence in the EU.
- This could route some trade away from Northern Ireland ports.
- Officials are currently undertaking some analysis to better understand the impact of this proposal and will also involve stakeholders and DfE.
- Concerned that there could be an impact on imports of cereals into Northern Ireland from Canada and Ukraine.
- We will raise the issue with UKG but there is little prospect of the EU altering its position.
- Unlikely that the EU will be prepared to negotiate changes to TRQ arrangements with 3rd countries and will explain that this is a consequence of Northern Ireland not being part of the EU customs territory.
- For UK import TRQ to apply for imports into Northern Ireland will require the good to be classified as not at risk of entering the EU.
- The Protocol rules this out for goods subject to further commercial processing in Northern Ireland which would rule out a UK Tariff Rate Quota applying to the import of raw cereals.

SPS CHECKS AND POINTS OF ENTRY

- Focus has been on delivering the infrastructure requirements at each of the PoEs (Belfast Port, Larne Port, Warrenpoint Port, Foyle Port, Belfast International Airport, and Belfast City Airport). This involves collaboration across NICS Departments, most notably between DAERA and DoF (Construction and Procurement Delivery and Land and Property Services), in addition to close and frequent engagement between DAERA, the PoEs, DfI and Local Councils for each of the proposed sites.

- You will be aware of my reservations on this matter.
- DAERA continues to progress with the infrastructure to meet its obligations under the NI Protocol
- Officials continue to work with Defra and the other Devolved Administrations to ensure that every effort is made to minimise checks and processes on goods moving from GB to NI where it is possible to do so under the legislation.
- We have written to Defra setting out a series of asks relating to the programme of work needed to deliver these SPS elements. Discussions between UKG and the EU are ongoing
- Officials have had technical discussions with the Cabinet Office and the EU Commission on the implementation of the Protocol. Areas where officials have been involved in technical discussions include agricultural support, fisheries and minimisation the level of agri-food checks being conducted.

FOOD LABELLING AND EU EXIT

(*Please note: * text below in blue is for Minister's information only and should not be shared with Moy Park in advance of any published guidance due to potential FOI implications).

BACKGROUND

FSA NI has recently provided an update to the Health Minister and the DAERA Private Office on food labelling. The key proposal is a statutory 21 month period of adjustment for health identification marks and for other food labelling changes at the end of the transition period for GB goods placed on the GB market. FSA is working to ensure any flexibilities are fully explored, for the Northern Ireland Market and Northern Ireland business.

Legislative proposals are subject to ministerial agreement in Scotland and Wales and subsequent Parliamentary process.

The 4 UK nations are working towards the publication of guidance in respect to labelling, including future updates on gov.uk.

LINES TO TAKE

- Within NI the responsibility for food labelling is split across a number of Departments and public bodies and the current regime is largely derived from directly applicable EU legislation.
- Subject to the outcome of the ongoing UK/EU negotiations, the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol will apply from the end of the transition

period (1 January 2021). Under the Withdrawal Agreement and the Protocol, Northern Ireland will remain aligned with a range of EU regulations on goods as set in Annex II of the Protocol, including the majority of food and feed law, while the rest of the UK may not.

- DAERA and FSA are currently examining the consequences for food labelling of the UK leaving the EU and the impact associated with the implementation of the Protocol. There are implications of the NI Protocol to consider with respect to the requirements for example, of country of origin indications and Food Business Operators (FBO) name and address requirements contained in Regulation (EC) 1169/2011.
- My officials are currently working on the requirements with colleagues across the four nations, including FSA and Defra, and what this may mean for industry and stakeholders post Transition Period.
- At the moment we are unable to confirm a UK position in relation to future labelling of NI produce, including country of origin indications, however the EU has provided a stakeholder notice that refers to some of these issues under consideration.
- I am aware of the challenges facing industry, for example with regard to lead in times for pre-printed packaging etc. and are trying to work towards a solution with urgency. Any requirements and associated consequences are largely in relation to goods being placed on the NI market and are also a consideration for GB businesses placing goods on NI market, therefore before we provide any advice, it is necessary to ensure that we are aligned in our thinking across the four nations of the UK.
- Once a more concrete position on the requirements is established, we will publish guidance for stakeholders.
- In the meantime both DAERA and FSA officials are keen to gather evidence on the practical challenges and opportunities for Food Business Operators.

TRADER SUPPORT SERVICE

LTT

- The UK Government has announced that it will establish a new and unprecedented Trader Support Service to be backed by funding of up to £200 million.
- The Trader Support Service will be free to use and will provide an end-to-end service which will guide traders through any changes to the way goods move between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and into Northern Ireland from outside the UK.

- Essentially the Trader Support Service will act as customs agent and complete declarations on behalf of traders.

Background & Key Issues

- DAERA has no role in relation to the Trader Support Service. This is a HMRC led service.
- The focus is on customs matters and will not cover SPS issues.

SPEAKING NOTES

None required.

PROGRAMME

None required.

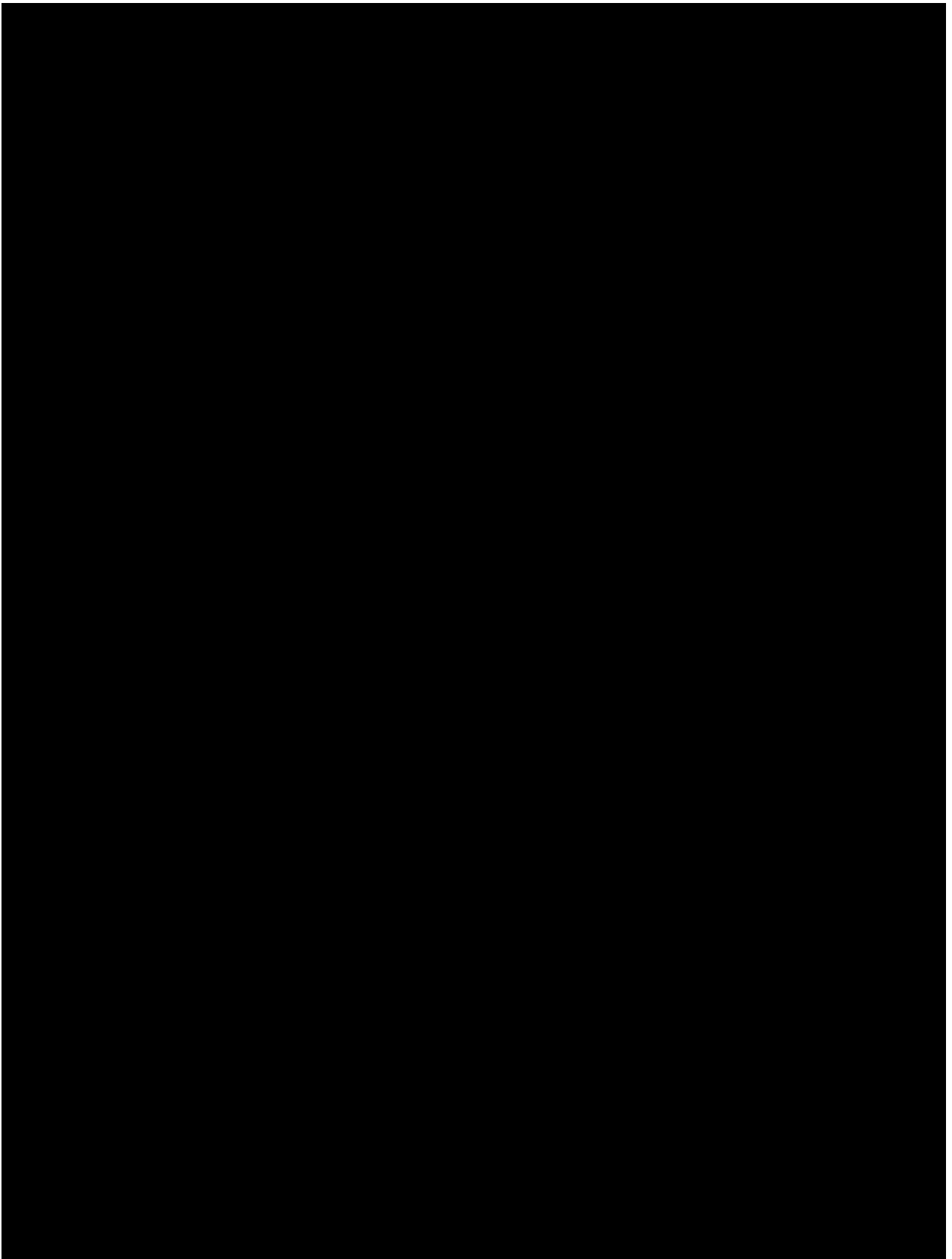
Guest list

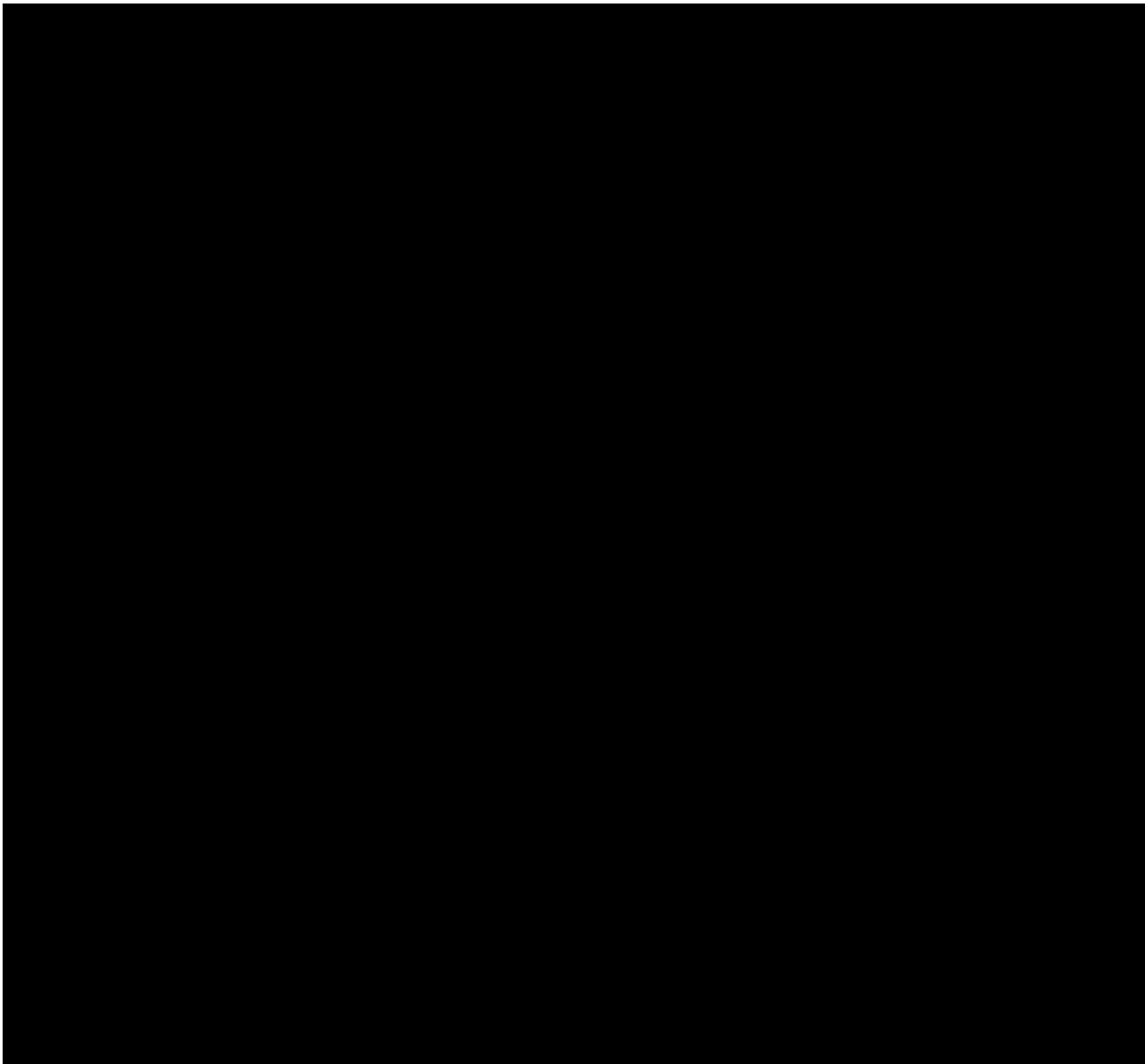
None Required.

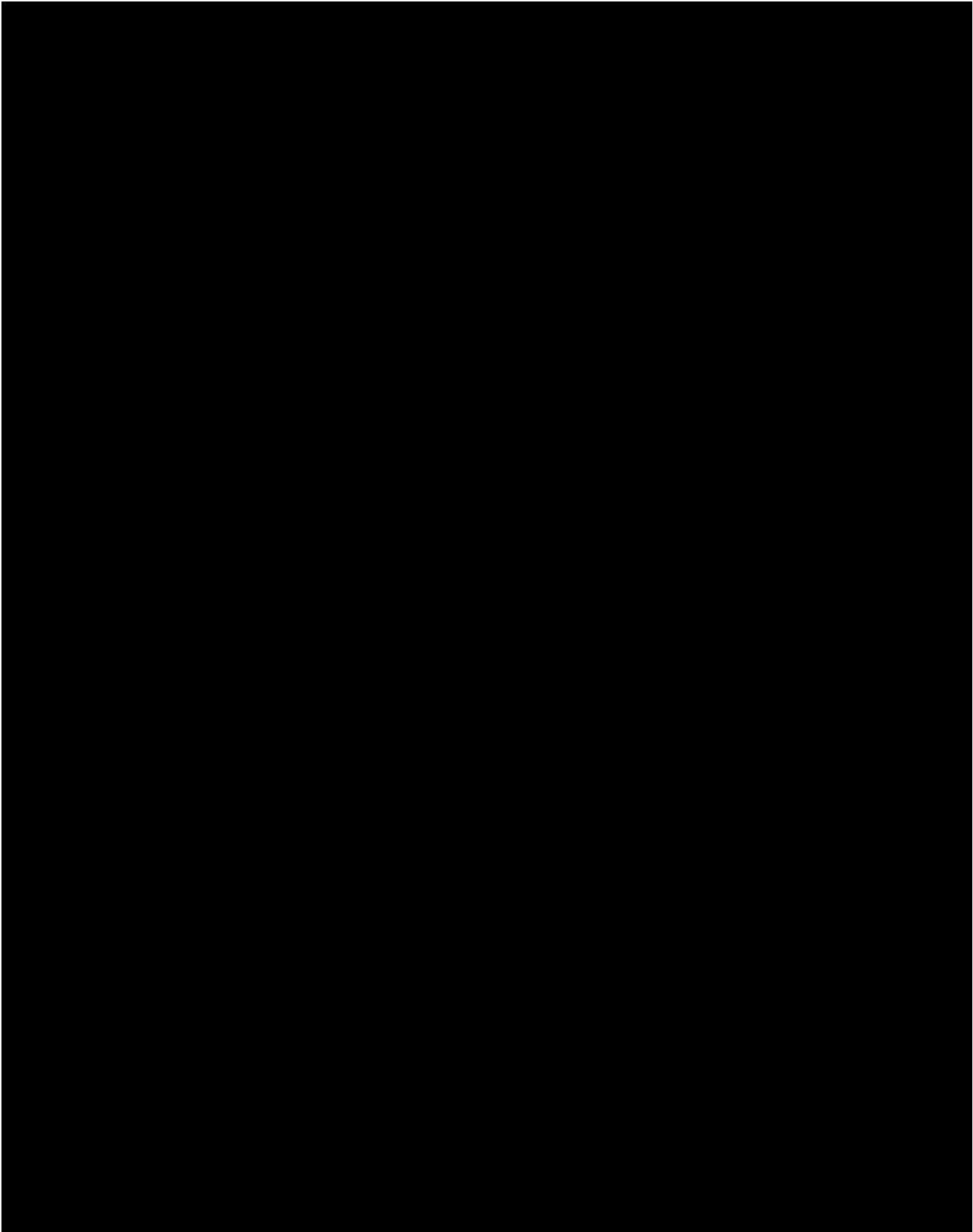
Pen Pictures

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]







Ministerial Lines to take regarding Moy Park Limited :

- I did not write to Moy Park Limited last year in order to avoid prejudicing an investigation my officials were carrying out into a number of breaches of the Pollution Prevention and Control Permit issued to their Ballymena site which occurred in July 2024. This investigation recently resulted in a successful prosecution against Moy Park.
- All the Moy Park Limited production facilities are currently in compliance with the emissions limits in their Pollution Prevention and Control Permits across all 3 sites: Ballymena, Dungannon, and Craigavon.
- This is due to a programme of continuous improvements in the Dungannon and Craigavon production facilities which has been driven by my inspectors within the NIEA, working together with Northern Ireland Water, to address the effluent emission limit breaches which had been occurring at these sites.
- As such, I am not intending to write to the company at this time but my officers will continue to regularly inspect compliance at these sites and take appropriate enforcement action where necessary.
- I am committed to strengthening my Department's enforcement powers and DAERA is currently conducting focused stakeholder engagement in relation to water quality to support the development of policy for integration into the forthcoming Fisheries and Water Environment Bill.
- DAERA is seeking to ensure that enforcement mechanisms for polluters are both proportionate and effective, supporting the Departmental priorities of protecting and restoring our water environment and also driving improvements to water quality.
- A public consultation on this work is due to commence in Autumn of this year.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Media Query - Moy Park Litter Utilisation Strategy
Date: 10 August 2026 11:47:05
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[REDACTED]

Many thanks – these lines are very clear – I am content.

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 August 2026 11:42
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Media Query - Moy Park Litter Utilisation Strategy

Hi [REDACTED],

Attached is a 'lines to take' document which I drafted back in November 2018 which gives some background/ origin details on the Moy Park LUS. I have drafted below suggested responses to the queries for your review/ approval. Happy to discuss.

What is the origin and purpose of the Moy Park Litter Utilisation Strategy?

The Agri-Food Strategy Board's report 'Going for Growth' was published in May 2013. Moy Park subsequently produced their Litter Utilisation Strategy as evidence to demonstrate that the potential litter outlets for their proposed broiler farm expansion were environmentally sustainable.

When and in what context was it introduced?

The first Moy Park Litter Utilisation Strategy was produced around 2015. This strategy was used at that time to support Moy Park broiler farm applications for planning permission/ PPC permits and included the relevant evidence to support the specific litter outlet(s) proposed for each individual broiler farm application.

What status does NIEA afford the Strategy?

The Moy Park Litter Utilisation Strategy is normally submitted with new PPC broiler farm applications and is an overarching plan which details the total capacity of the potential

outlets for broiler litter and covers all Moy Park/ Pilgrim's Europe contracted broiler farms in Northern Ireland, not just those holding PPC permits. DAERA/ NIEA however is not required to approve or agree the company's overarching litter utilisation strategy – and instead, considers farms on an individual basis as required by the Regulations.

Each individual new PPC broiler farm application is required to demonstrate with supporting evidence that they have a sustainable outlet(s) for the total litter which will be produced from their proposed development.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 August 2026 10:11
To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Cc: NIEA Communications <NIEACommunications@daera-ni.gov.uk>; NIEA Waste Regulation Unit – Queries <WRU.Queries@daera-ni.gov.uk>; DG_DAERAPressOffice.Group <PressOffice.Group@daera-ni.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]
Subject: Media Query - Moy Park Litter Utilisation Strategy

[REDACTED]

Please see query below - one for WIPRED.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 August 2026 09:52
To: NIEA Communications <NIEACommunications@daera-ni.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] NIEA Waste Regulation Unit – Queries <WRU.Queries@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: DG_DAERAPressOffice.Group <PressOffice.Group@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: Fw: Moy Park Litter Utilisation Strategy

Hi all,

See below media enquiry on Moy Park please could someone prepare a line in response on this.

[REDACTED]

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 10 August 2026 09:39:25
To: DG_DAERAPressOffice.Group <PressOffice.Group@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: Moy Park Litter Utilisation Strategy

CAUTION – This email has been received from outside the NICS network. If you have any

concerns, please report for investigation.

Hello,

Please respond by 4pm tomorrow:

What is the origin and purpose of the Moy Park Litter Utilisation Strategy?

When and in what context was it introduced?

What status does NIEA afford the Strategy?

In planning applications for poultry units, applicants rely on the Strategy as the means of satisfying NIEA and planners that there will be safe disposal of poultry litter generated by the proposal.

In NIEA planning consultation responses, it states that the Strategy has been "agreed" with the NIEA.

Thanks,



From: [2024 DAERA Minister](#)
To: [DAERA Private Office](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: FOR DESK IMMEDIATE CLEARANCE - SUB-1610-2024 - LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES
Date: 31 July 2024 07:58:24

No letter to be dispatched in light of SUB-1638-2024.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | **Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**
Jubilee House | 111 Ballykelly Road | Ballykelly | Limavady | BT49 9HP
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED
www.daera-ni.gov.uk Mobile Telephone [REDACTED]

I sometimes send emails out of hours; I do not expect others to do so, do not feel obligated to respond outside of your normal working hours.

From: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2024 11:09 AM
To: 2024 DAERA Minister <Daeraminister@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: FOR DESK IMMEDIATE CLEARANCE - SUB-1610-2024 - LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES

Minister

Please see attached submission for your consideration.

It is recommended that you note and consider NIEA's advice, which has been informed by the legal advice received, and agree not to write to Moy Park at this time.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [2024 DAERA Minister](#)
To: [DAERA Private Office](#)
Cc: [2024 DAERA Spad](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: FOR ROUTINE CLEARANCE - SUB-0536-2025 – UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES
Date: 20 May 2025 08:07:15

Content to approve recommendation(s)

Would appreciate update once case concluded.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | **Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**
Jubilee House | 111 Ballykelly Road | Ballykelly | Limavady | BT49 9HP
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED
www.daera-ni.gov.uk Mobile Telephone [REDACTED]

I sometimes send emails out of hours; I do not expect others to do so, do not feel obligated to respond outside of your normal working hours.

From: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Sent: 14 May 2025 11:30
To: 2024 DAERA Minister <Daeraminister@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>; 2024 DAERA Spad <Daeraspad@daera-ni.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]
Subject: FOR ROUTINE CLEARANCE - SUB-0536-2025 – UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES

Minister

Please see attached submission for you to note.

You are recommended to note the current position in relation to the outcome of the investigation into the incident at Moy Park Ballymena.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [2024 DAERA Minister](#)
To: [DAERA Private Office](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: FOR ROUTINE CLEARANCE - SUB-1638-2024 – UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES
Date: 31 July 2024 07:58:26

Content to approve recommendation(s)

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | **Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**
Jubilee House | 111 Ballykelly Road | Ballykelly | Limavady | BT49 9HP
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED
www.daera-ni.gov.uk Mobile Telephone [REDACTED]

I sometimes send emails out of hours; I do not expect others to do so, do not feel obligated to respond outside of your normal working hours.

From: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Sent: Monday, July 29, 2024 2:54 PM
To: 2024 DAERA Minister <Daeraminister@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: FOR ROUTINE CLEARANCE - SUB-1638-2024 – UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES

Minister

Please see attached submission for you to note.

You are recommended to note the current position in relation to on-going investigations and compliance at Moy Park sites.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [2024 DAERA Minister](#)
To: [DAERA Private Office](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]; [2024 DAERA Spad](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: FOR ROUTINE CLEARANCE BY 12 JUNE - SUB-1455-2024 - PRE-MEETING BRIEFING ON LOUGH NEAGH SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME
Date: 12 June 2024 23:07:39

Many thanks for meeting today.

I am content to note but also note there was a number of actions arising from meeting.

From re-recollection these included:

- Review working protocols between NIEA and NI Water in terms of enforcement of trade discharge consent breaches
- Give consideration how to monitor and respond to cases of lower risk cumulative trade discharge consent breaches
- Ministerial letter to be drafted and dispatched to Moy Park outlining concern at pattern of cumulative breaches and seeking details on plan to swiftly rectify
- Explore potential for fixed penalty notices for low severity pollution incidents

Let me know as I wish to update AQW 12940/22-27 and AQW 12893/22-27 accordingly, bar the last point.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | **Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**
Jubilee House | 111 Ballykelly Road | Ballykelly | Limavady | BT49 9HP
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED
www.daera-ni.gov.uk Mobile Telephone [REDACTED]

I sometimes send emails out of hours; I do not expect others to do so, do not feel obligated to respond outside of your normal working hours.

From: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, June 11, 2024 11:28 AM
To: 2024 DAERA Minister <Daeraminister@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED] 2024 DAERA Spad
<Daeraspad@daera-ni.gov.uk>; DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: FOR ROUTINE CLEARANCE BY 12 JUNE - SUB-1455-2024 - PRE-MEETING BRIEFING ON LOUGH NEAGH SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME

Minister

Further to your comments below, please find attached additional submission from officials for you to note that provides more detail on breaches of discharge consents issued to Moy Park.

You are due to meet with officials tomorrow morning on this issue.

I have also included a copy of the DAERA Enforcement Policy as requested.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: 2024 DAERA Minister <Daeraminister@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 5:38 PM
To: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]; 2024 DAERA Spad <Daeraspad@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: FOR DESK IMMEDIATE CLEARANCE - SUB-1433-2024 - BBC SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME – THE LOUGH NEAGH MONSTER

Thank you for the submission.

I would like to request a meeting next week if possible and in person (where possible) with relevant officials to discuss further. We should set aside 60 mins.

If travelling to relevant DAERA sites e.g. Lisburn or Ballykelly helps in terms of officials I am happy to do this.

I can be free next Friday after CAFRE event or at 9.30am next Wednesday, I need to be in Holywood for 11am.

Would appreciate more detail, verbally, or in writing, on breaches of a discharge consents issued to Moy Park in terms of trends and cited reasons, if at all possible.

Lastly, I would also appreciate a copy of DAERA Enforcement Policy.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | **Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**
Jubilee House | 111 Ballykelly Road | Ballykelly | Limavady | BT49 9HP
Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED
www.daera-ni.gov.uk Mobile Telephone 07780 465740

I sometimes send emails out of hours; I do not expect others to do so, do not feel obligated to respond outside of your normal working hours.

From: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 11:09 AM
To: 2024 DAERA Minister <Daeraminister@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]; 2024 DAERA Spad <Daeraspad@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: FOR DESK IMMEDIATE CLEARANCE - SUB-1433-2024 - BBC SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME – THE LOUGH NEAGH MONSTER

Minister

Please see attached submission for your clearance.

Thanks



From: [REDACTED]
To: [DAERA Private Office](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: SUB-1433-2024 : BBC SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME – THE LOUGH NEAGH MONSTER
Date: 11 June 2024 09:40:00
Attachments: [Submission XXXX-2024 for Minister s meeting with officials on the Lough Neagh BBC Spotlight Programme.tr5](#)
[Submission XXXX-2024 for Minister s meeting with officials on the Lough Neagh BBC Spotlight Programme.DOCX](#)
[Annex A - BRIEFING REQUEST - MINISTER INTERVIEW ON LOUGH NEAGH - BBC SPOTLIGHT - LTT Template.tr5](#)
[Annex A - BRIEFING REQUEST - MINISTER INTERVIEW ON LOUGH NEAGH - BBC SPOTLIGHT - LTT Template.DOC](#)
[Annex B - Response DAERA 24 226.tr5](#)
[Annex B - Response DAERA 24 226.DOCX](#)
[Annex C - Submission 1433-2024 Issues raised by BBC re Lough Neagh.tr5](#)
[Annex C - Submission 1433-2024 Issues raised by BBC re Lough Neagh.DOCX](#)

Please see attached submission for the Minister in advance of tomorrow's meeting.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 7, 2024 12:23 PM
To: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: SUB-1433-2024 : BBC SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME – THE LOUGH NEAGH MONSTER

Hi [REDACTED]

Please see attached the DAERA Enforcement Policy which is also available online here: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/daera-enforcement-policy>.

I can confirm that the attendees at the meeting next week will be:

[REDACTED]
(note-taker)

We would like to provide some information to the Minister in advance of the meeting and we are currently compiling that. When would you need that information?

Regards,

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: DAERA Private Office <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Sent: Thursday, June 6, 2024 3:37 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]; DAERA PermSec
<perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk>; DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary <csdeputysecretary@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: SUB-1433-2024 : BBC SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME – THE LOUGH NEAGH MONSTER
Importance: High

Reference: SUB-1433-2024

Subject: SUB-1433-2024 : BBC SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME – THE LOUGH NEAGH MONSTER

Referred To: [REDACTED]
Date Referred: 06/06/2024

The Minister has seen and read your submission and has commented:

'I would like to request a meeting next week if possible and in person (where possible) with relevant officials to discuss further. We should set aside 60 mins.

Would appreciate more detail, verbally, or in writing, on breaches of a discharge consents issued to Moy Park in terms of trends and cited reasons, if at all possible.

Lastly, I would also appreciate a copy of DAERA Enforcement Policy.'

A meeting has been arranged for Wednesday 12 June, 9.30am - 10.30am, in Clare House. Officials are required to attend in-person and there will be no option to dial in. I would be grateful if you would confirm names of attendees (to include a note taker) to Private Office by 2pm tomorrow.

With regards to Ministers request for more detail, verbally, or in writing, on breaches of a discharge consents issued to Moy Park, can officials please confirm if they will provide a further submission to the Minister or if they plan to cover verbally at the meeting.

Ministers request for a copy of the DAERA Enforcement Policy, can this be provided to private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk by 2pm tomorrow.

Regards,
[REDACTED]
Private Office
[REDACTED]

Copied To For Information:
[REDACTED]; DAERA Press Office; DAERA TLT

Our reference TOF-1272-2024

For the attention of: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Chief Executives Office

NIEA Lisburn

17 Antrim Road

Tonagh

Lisburn

BT28 3AL

Telephone: 028 7744 2053

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

RE: Spotlight Programme – Lough Neagh

You have requested an update from the Minister on issues raised in the recent BBC Spotlight programme on Lough Neagh. As the questions raised relate to matters for which Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has responsibility, I have been asked to respond to you directly.

To answer each of your questions in turn:

1. How did the Department/you not know about the Moy Park documents if they were filed with your Department?

Notifications from Moy Park about the breaches to their sewer discharge emissions limits have been submitted to the NIEA inspectors responsible for regulating their sites and are made publicly available on our website.

2. What are you doing about the hundreds of breaches from Moy Park?

The breaches mentioned in the Spotlight programme were breaches of the site's emission limits to sewer. These emission limits are set by Northern Ireland Water and are included in the environmental permits issued to Moy Park by NIEA under the

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations 2013. The exceedances of these limits at the Moy Park sites were considered low risk due to the fact that the discharge is further treated at Northern Ireland Water's Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) before final discharge to the environment. There were no exceedances of the final effluent emissions limits from the WwTW.

However, NIEA officials have been engaging with Moy Park to improve their compliance against the NI Water discharge limits and the company has action plans in place at both sites. NIEA are currently reviewing how they deal with these type of breaches and going forward, NIEA plan to work more closely with NI Water to ensure Moy Park take action to meet their emissions limits.

3. Is the enforcement team established and is this within DAERA or NIEA?

My officials in NIEA are currently progressing setting up a Lough Neagh Task Force following confirmation of the budget availability. The additional resource funding of £1.6m will fund in the region of 28 posts which will be split across NIEA regulation and enforcement functions. This will see additional inspectors on the ground to complete cross compliance inspections and undertake river inspections to identify sources of pollution. The funding will also strengthen investigative capacity and enhance the NIEA's capacity to accept and process information in order to inform wider decision making around enforcement in response to a range of water quality issues.

4. Why haven't enforcement powers been used effectively regarding the illegal dump?

The first site identified in the BBC Spotlight programme broadcast on 4 June 2024 is situated on land at Blackwater Road, Armagh. The site was investigated and prosecuted by the Environmental Crime Unit for the unauthorised deposit, keeping, treating and disposal of 6836 tonnes of controlled waste on lands.

The defendants pleaded guilty to a range of offences under the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 and were sentenced on 8 September 2023 to custodial sentences of 25 months suspended for 2 years.

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



An Agency within the Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Gníomhaireacht de chuid na Roinne
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

An Agency w/in the Department o
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

My officials are pursuing the associated Proceeds of Crime through confiscation proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

The second site which was referred to as a 'super dump' in the BBC Spotlight programme has been before the courts since 2015 and is currently at the sentencing stage. The case concerns the unauthorised disposal of an estimated 627,000 tonnes of controlled waste on lands at Mobuoy Road.

The defendants pleaded guilty to a range of offences under the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997. My officials are pursuing the associated proceeds of crime through confiscation proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

As there are ongoing criminal proceedings, NIEA is unable to provide any further commentary on these cases.

5. Is the SORPI still in force that doesn't prosecute and if it is, why is it still in place?

The SORPI (Statement of Regulatory Principles and Intent) arrangement between NIEA and NI Water came into effect on 1 April 2007 and presently remains valid. The SORPI originally set out the then Environment and Heritage Service (now the NIEA) regulatory and enforcement approach, recognising that NIW had inherited a legacy of underfunding in wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. This statement recognised that NIW were unable to comply with relevant environmental standards from day one, and that it would take several Price Controls Periods to deliver the necessary improvements.

Whilst the SORPI recognised the funding constraint that NI Water operates under, it does not free NI Water from DAERA's Enforcement Policy which is applied where there are breaches in discharge consents and/or where NI Water has been the cause of a pollution incident. However, this arrangement is under review and is likely to change significantly in the future.

6. What are you doing about the mental health aspect this is causing ?

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



An Agency within the Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Gníomhaireacht de chuid na Roinne
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

An Agency wí'n the Depairtment o
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

The Minister takes very seriously the impact of the issues at Lough Neagh on the health and wellbeing of those who use the Lough for sport, recreation and employment. To this end, he has prioritized action and allocated funding in his Department to tackle the pollution contributing to the blue-green algal blooms on Lough Neagh.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Chief Executive

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



An Agency within the Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Gníomhaireacht de chuid na Roinne
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

An Agency wí'n the Depairtment o
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

From: [DAERA PermSec](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; [DAERA](#)
[NIEA Coordination](#)
Subject: SSUB-0107-2024 : LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES
Date: 19 July 2024 15:47:08
Attachments: [Submission.msg](#)

Classification: Official
Timing:

Date: 19/07/2024
Reference: SSUB-0107-2024

Subject: SSUB-0107-2024 : LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES

To: [REDACTED]

The following submission has been received.

Regards,
[REDACTED]
Permanent Secretary
[REDACTED]

CC List: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED];
DAERA NIEA Coordination

From: [DAERA PermSec](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [NIEA Coordination](#)
Date: SSUB-0107-2024 : LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES
22 July 2024 08:43:52
Attachments: [Perm Sec clearance.msg](#)

Classification: Official
Timing:
Reference: SSUB-0107-2024

Subject: SSUB-0107-2024 : LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES

To: [REDACTED]
Date: 22/07/2024

The following comment has been made to your submission of 19/07/2024

Hi [REDACTED]

Many thanks for this. I've reviewed in [REDACTED] absence and am content and have marked the sub accordingly. Please note that, when reading through it, I ALSO spotted and fixed a few very minor issues (eg making sure it was addressed to the Minister in the first person and adding an OFF-SEN marking given the commercial sensitivities). Do make sure you're content before you send.

[REDACTED]

For further information etc. contact:

[REDACTED]
Permanent Secretary

[REDACTED]

Copied To For Information:

[REDACTED]; DAERA
NIEA Coordination

From: [DAERA Private Office](#)

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Submission Decision SUB-0536-2025 : UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES

Date: 20 May 2025 10:36:05

Attachments: [Ministers clearance.msg](#)
[Sent for clearance.msg](#)
[Submission.msg](#)

Classification: Official

Timing: Routine

Reference: SUB-0536-2025

Subject: SUB-0536-2025 : UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES

To: [REDACTED]

Date: 20/05/2025

The Minister has seen and read your submission of 13/05/2025 and has noted the current position in relation to the outcome of the investigation into the incident at Moy Park Ballymena.

The Minister has also commented that he would appreciate update once case concluded.

Reminder: It is the Business Area's responsibility to save all correspondence appropriately on Content Manager.

For further information etc. contact:

[REDACTED]

Private Office

[REDACTED]

Copied To For Information:

[REDACTED]; DAERA Press Office; DAERA Submission cc list

From: [DAERA Private Office](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] [DAERA PermSec](#);
[DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary](#)
Subject: Submission Decision SUB-1455-2024 : PRE-MEETING BRIEFING ON LOUGH NEAGH SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME
Date: 13 June 2024 10:49:13
Attachments: [Ministers comments.msg](#)

Classification: Official
Timing: Routine
Reference: SUB-1455-2024

Subject: SUB-1455-2024 : PRE-MEETING BRIEFING ON LOUGH NEAGH SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME

To: [REDACTED]
Date: 13/06/2024

The Minister has seen and read your submission of 10/06/2024 and has noted the information contained in this submission.

The Minister has also commented that there was a number of actions arising from meeting, which he has listed in the attached. Grateful if you could please confirm to private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk by 2pm today that these are correct as Minister wishes to update two AQ responses.

For further information etc. contact:

[REDACTED]
Private Office
[REDACTED]

Copied To For Information:
[REDACTED]; DAERA Press Office; DAERA TLT

From: [DAERA Private Office](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
[DG DAERA Press Office Group](#); [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [DAERA PermSec](#); [DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary](#)
Subject: Submission Decision SUB-1610-2024 : LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES
Date: 31 July 2024 11:41:57
Attachments: [Ministers comments.msg](#)

Classification: Official
Timing: Desk Immediate
Reference: SUB-1610-2024

Subject: SUB-1610-2024 : LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES

To: [REDACTED]
Date: 31/07/2024

The Minister has seen and read your submission of 19/07/2024 and has commented 'No letter to be dispatched in light of SUB-1638-2024'.

For further information etc. contact:

[REDACTED]
Private Office
[REDACTED]

Copied To For Information:

[REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; DAERA Press Office; DAERA TLT

From: [DAERA Private Office](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
[DG DAERA Press Office Group](#)
[REDACTED] [DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary](#)
Subject: Submission Decision SUB-1638-2024 : UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES
Date: 31 July 2024 11:46:30
Attachments: [Ministers clearance.msg](#)

Classification: Official
Timing: Routine
Reference: SUB-1638-2024

Subject: SUB-1638-2024 : UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES

To: [REDACTED]
Date: 31/07/2024

The Minister has seen and read your submission of 29/07/2024 and has noted the current position in relation to on-going investigations and compliance at Moy Park sites.

For further information etc. contact:

[REDACTED]
Private Office
[REDACTED]

Copied To For Information:

[REDACTED] ; [REDACTED] ; [REDACTED] ; [REDACTED] ; DAERA Press Office; DAERA TLT

From: [REDACTED]
To: [DAERA Private Office](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission re update on investigations and compliance at Moy Park
Date: 29 July 2024 13:03:00
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[SUB-XXXX-2024 - UPDATE ON INVESTIGATIONS AT MOY PARK.tr5](#)
[SUB-XXXX-2024 - UPDATE ON INVESTIGATIONS AT MOY PARK.DOCX](#)

Hi,

Please see attached submission giving the Minister an update on the investigations and compliance at Moy Park's permitted processing sites.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Tel: [REDACTED]



From: [DAERA Private Office](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
[DG DAERA Press Office Group](#)
[REDACTED] [DAERA PermSec](#); [DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary](#)
Subject: Submission Received SUB-1610-2024 : LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES
Date: 22 July 2024 11:05:37
Attachments: [Submission.msg](#)

Classification: Official
Timing: Desk Immediate

Date: 22/07/2024
Reference: SUB-1610-2024

Subject: SUB-1610-2024 : LETTER TO MOY PARK RE SEWER DISCHARGE BREACHES

To: [REDACTED]

The attached submission has been received.

It is the Business Area's responsibility to save all correspondence appropriately on Content Manager.

Regards,
[REDACTED]
Private Office
20860

CC List: [REDACTED]; DAERA Press Office; DAERA
TLT

From: [REDACTED]
To: [DAERA Private Office](#)
Cc: [REDACTED] [DAERA PermSec](#); [DG DAERApressoffice.Group](#); [Rodgers_Shauna \(DAERA\)](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission to update the Minister on the investigation into an incident at Moy Park Ballymena
Date: 13 May 2025 16:44:00
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[SUB-XXXX-2024 - UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION INTO INCIDENT AT MOY PARK BALLYMENA tr5](#)
[SUB-XXXX-2024 - UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION INTO INCIDENT AT MOY PARK BALLYMENA DOCX](#)

Hi,
Please see attached a submission to update the Minister on the investigation into a pollution incident at Moy Park Ballymena in July 2024 which he was previously made aware of in SUB-1638-2024.

Regards,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate
Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Tel: [REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
To: [DAERA Private Office](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]; [Rodgers, Shauna \(DAERA\)](#); [Crowe, Richard](#); [Clarke, Una](#)
Subject: Submission to update the Minister on the investigation into an incident at Moy Park Ballymena
Date: 13 May 2025 16:44:29
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[SUB-XXXX-2024 - UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION INTO INCIDENT AT MOY PARK BALLYMENA.tr5](#)
[SUB-XXXX-2024 - UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION INTO INCIDENT AT MOY PARK BALLYMENA.DOCX](#)

Hi,
Please see attached a submission to update the Minister on the investigation into a pollution incident at Moy Park Ballymena in July 2024 which he was previously made aware of in SUB-1638-2024.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate
Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Tel: [REDACTED]



Submission

FROM: (SO or above)	
BRANCH:	Resource Efficiency Division
CONTACT:	69690
DATE	4 June 2024
TO:	Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
SUB-XXXX-2024 - TITLE OF SUBMISSION:	
SUMMARY	
Issue:	Response to the issues raised by the BBC in their Spotlight programme "Lough Neagh Monster" and article on the BBC news website entitled "Hundreds of environmental breaches by Moy Park"
Timing:	☐ Routine ☐ Urgent ☒ Desk Immediate Desk immediate as you are likely to receive further questioning on these issues in the coming days. Desk Immediate (5 working days or less) Urgent (6-10 working days) Routine (11+ working days)
Financial Implications:*	None
Chief Scientific Adviser's consideration:	None
Windsor Framework Implementation consideration:	None
Legislation Implications:	None
FOI Implications:	None
Equality & Rural Needs Implications:	None
Executive Referral:	No
Presentation Issues:	These issues are likely to attract media attention over the coming days/weeks.
Pre-election Guidance considered if necessary	☐ Yes ☐ No

	☒ N/A General Election 4 July 2024 - Guidance for NI Civil Servants NICS Intranet (nigov.net)
Date Draft Press Release cleared by Press Office:	None
Recommendation:	That you; 1. note the contents of this submission and the attached briefing; 2. agree that NIEA officials should continue to engage with Moy Park and NI Water, in line with their regulatory function, to determine the steps they are taking to reduce environmental impact of their wastewater discharges; 3. note the previous enforcement and ongoing investigative work associated with Donmac Farms 4. note the SORPI arrangement is under review and officials will consider how this review might be expedited more quickly

INTRODUCTION

1. Following our discussion this morning, the purpose of this submission is to provide you with information about the issues raised by the BBC in their Spotlight programme “Lough Neagh Monster” and in the article on the BBC news website entitled “Hundreds of environmental breaches by Moy Park”.

BACKGROUND

2. The attached briefing (Annex A) was provided to you on Thurs 30th May in advance of the interview about Lough Neagh on the BBC Spotlight Programme.
3. The programme (entitled “Lough Neagh Monster”) has subsequently aired on BBC iPlayer and a news article appeared on the BBC news website entitled [“Hundreds of environmental breaches by Moy Park”](#).
4. In your interview with Spotlight, you referred to the reprioritisation within the Department and the setting up of an enforcement team around the issues associated with Lough Neagh. Officials have now commenced work to consider the redeployment of existing staff to support an immediate response, whilst the outcome of budgetary bids to support an enhanced enforcement team is decided.
5. Specific issues raised in the BBC article and the Spotlight programme include the information that Moy Park has had a large number of breaches of its trade effluent consent. This is addressed in the briefing note at Annex A. NIEA officials have been working with Moy Park and NI Water to address these breaches and you will note from the briefing that both the Dungannon and Craigavon sites have plans in place to improve compliance.
6. The BBC had requested data from DAERA on the 15 April 2024 – the response to that request is included at Annex B.

7. The illegal waste site raised by Spotlight refers to a waste site owned by [REDACTED], of Blackwater Road, Armagh. This case was investigated and prosecuted by the Environmental Crime Unit for the unauthorised deposit, keeping, treating and disposal of 6836 tonnes of controlled waste at the site. [REDACTED] and his two sons, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] pleaded guilty to a range of offences under the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 and were sentenced on 8 September 2023 to custodial sentences of 25 months suspended for 2 years. In addition, [REDACTED] entered a guilty plea to an associated fraud offence for which he received a concurrent custodial sentence of 25 months suspended for 2 years. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were also disqualified from holding Company Directorships for 10 years. Following on from the successful criminal outcome, [REDACTED] is currently subject to ongoing confiscation proceedings.
8. The programme also referenced a large Dairy farm (Donmac Farms), near Coagh, with multiple sources in the programme stating that this farm is linked to water pollution in the area.
9. Since 2011 there have been 13 reports of water pollution from this farm with 9 being confirmed (5 medium and 4 low severity incidents).
10. In 2011 the farm was prosecuted and fined £1500 for silage effluent escaping to a waterway. A similar issue was identified in 2015 with a £8500 fine reduced to £2000 on appeal with a cross compliance breach also applied the same year.
11. In 2020 the farm was breached under cross compliance for closed period spreading and non-uniform slurry spreading.
12. In 2021 another medium severity incident was recorded and deemed likely to be caused by the farm, however due the fact that new building work had taken place no exact source of the contamination was able to be confirmed and no further enforcement action was possible.
13. In 2022 and 2024 further reports of fungal growth in the waterway indicating pollution have been reported and investigated. To date in 2024 there have been 6 site visits involving Agricultural and Water Quality Inspectors (WQIs) with further visits planned to attempt to identify the cause. Investigations are hampered by the watercourse being culverted (piped) underneath the farm therefore tracing the discharge point is extremely difficult. Following the most recent visit on 15 April the waterway was observed to be running clear with no indication of pollution present, however WQIs will continue to monitor the situation.
14. You have expressed your concerns regarding the SORPI (Statement of Regulatory Principles and Intent) arrangement between NIEA and NI Water that came into effect on 1 April 2007 and presently remains valid (Annex A).
15. The SORPI set out the EHS (now the NIEA) regulatory and enforcement approach recognising that NIW had inherited a legacy of underfunding in wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. This statement recognised that NIW were unable to comply with relevant environmental standards from day one, and that it would take several Price Controls Periods to deliver the necessary improvements.

16. Whilst the SORPI recognises the funding constraint that NI Water operates under, it does not free NI Water from DAERA's Enforcement Policy which is applied where there are breaches in discharge consents and/or where NI Water has been the cause of a pollution incident.
17. However, this SORPI has been under review since 2022 as it is not now considered to be an effective approach to regulation of NI Water wastewater discharges. A NIEA/DAERA Task & Finish Group has been tasked to complete the review of the SORPI and the Group will draw on the 2022 draft revision to develop an effective regulatory approach going forward.

RECOMMENDATION

That you;

1. note the contents of this submission and the attached briefing;
2. agree that NIEA officials should continue to engage with Moy Park and NI Water, in line with their regulatory function, to determine the steps they are taking to reduce environmental impact of their wastewater discharges;
3. note the previous enforcement and ongoing investigative work associated with Donmac Farms
4. note the SORPI arrangement is under review and officials will consider how this review might be expedited more quickly

Name: [REDACTED]
Branch: Resource Efficiency Division
Contact Details: [REDACTED]

ATTACHMENTS

Annex A – Briefing – Minister Interview on Lough Neagh BBC Spotlight - AE1/24/1142708
Annex B – Response DAERA 24 226 - AE1/24/1152296

All attachments should be clearly labelled Annex A, Annex B etc and should be included as CM links and word documents to the main submission.

CC List:

Katrina Godfrey

[REDACTED]

DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary

[REDACTED]

Perm Sec mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk)
G_DAERA PressOffice.Group

Submission

FROM: (SO or above)	[REDACTED]
BRANCH:	Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate
CONTACT:	69767
DATE	10/6/24
TO:	[REDACTED] Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
SUB-XXXX-2024 - TITLE OF SUBMISSION: PRE-MEETING BRIEFING ON LOUGH NEAGH SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME	
SUMMARY	
Issue:	Pre-meeting briefing providing additional information in advance of your meeting with officials from NIEA to discuss the BBC NI Spotlight Lough Neagh Monster.
Timing:	☒ Routine ☐ Urgent ☐ Desk Immediate Desk Immediate (5 working days or less) Urgent (6-10 working days) Routine (11+ working days)
Financial Implications:*	None
Chief Scientific Adviser's consideration:	None
Windsor Framework Implementation consideration:	None
Legislation Implications:	None
FOI Implications:	Fully disclosable
Equality & Rural Needs Implications:	None
Executive Referral:	None
Presentation Issues:	Issue has already been featured in the media and there may be further interest
Pre-election Guidance considered if necessary	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A General Election 4 July 2024 - Guidance for NI Civil Servants NICS Intranet (nigov.net)
Date Draft Press Release cleared by Press Office:	None

Recommendation:	That you note the information contained in this submission.
------------------------	---

INTRODUCTION

1. You have requested a meeting with officials from NIEA to discuss the BBC NI Spotlight Lough Neagh Monster.
2. A briefing was prepared for you in advance of the programme (Annex A) and a submission was prepared by officials after the programme was aired (Annex C). The BBC requested data on the 15 April 2024 (DAERA/24/195) via the Environmental Information Regulations regarding water pollution statistics for the Lough Neagh catchment area and enforcement notices issued to Moy Park by NIEA. This response to this request is also attached (Annex B).
3. This submission provides some additional detailed information that you requested for discussion as a follow up to SUB-1433-2024: Meeting with Officials to discuss Submission on BBC Spotlight Programme - The Lough Neagh Monster.

BACKGROUND

Moy Park sewer discharges

4. Moy Park's chicken processing sites at Dungannon and Craigavon are regulated by NIEA under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013. Their permits contain limits on their discharges to both surface water and sewer. For their sewer discharge, NI Water issue Moy Park a trade discharge consent and impose emission limits on the sites based on the capacity of the Wastewater Treatment (WwTW) plant that they discharge to and the WwTW discharge limits. NIEA then includes these emission limits in their PPC permits.
5. **Breaches of emission limits**
Please see below information on the number of breaches of their sewer emission limits there have been at the Moy Park PPC regulated sites in the period 2021 to present:

Moy Park site	2021	2022	2023	2024 to 3/6/24
Craigavon	47	59	73	19
Dungannon	77	67	73	41
Ballymena	19	14	1	0
Total	143	140	147	60

6. **Breaches at Craigavon**
At Moy Park, Craigavon the main breaches have been of their Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD). This worsened during 2023 and the company have

carried out a number of actions to bring themselves back into compliance (see below). Values have fallen in 2024 (to below 3000mg/l O₂ versus a limit of 1750) but are still consistently above the limit.

7. Craigavon also had a number of breaches of its suspended solids emissions limit in 2023 but since the end of Nov 2023 they have been back in compliance. Likewise, they have previously had a number of breaches of their Hexane Extractable Material (HEM) limit but that has been back in compliance since the end of Feb 2023 and they have been meeting their pH limit since the beginning of 2024. Craigavon have consistently met their ammonia limits.
8. **Breaches at Dungannon**
At Moy Park, Dungannon the main problem has been with their COD and Ammonia emissions.
9. They were able to get their Ammonia back into compliance from end Nov 2022 until June 2023 but since then it has gone back up again. The average ammonia result has been 110mg/l as N in 2024 (versus a limit of 100), with a maximum of 178.
10. Their average COD for 2023 was 1453mg/l O₂ (versus a limit of 1100) in 2023, with a maximum of 2780. In 2024 to date, they have managed to bring their average down to 1391, with a maximum of 2212 but they continue to breach their limit.
11. For suspended solids, they had a large number of breaches in 2023 but they have been back in compliance since the end of March 2024. For HEM, they had 5 breaches in 2023 and 2 so far in 2024 but they have both been close to the limit (570 and 525 versus a limit of 500mg/l). There have been no breaches of their pH limit.

12. Regulation of Moy Park

NI Water

NI Water carry out monitoring of the sewer emissions from all sites which have a trade discharge consent. In the case of the two Moy Park sites, this monitoring is carried out approximately weekly. If there are breaches to the discharge limits, NI Water have a number of actions which they can take. If they deem the site to be non-compliant, they require them to submit an action plan to bring them back into compliance. If they continue to be non-compliant, NI Water can issue them a warning letter, begin an investigation, take a statutory sample and they can proceed to prosecution. Breaches to discharge limits will also lead to an increase in the fees they charge the sites to treat their discharges.

13. Both Moy Park's sites at Craigavon and Dungannon have been rated "seriously non-compliant" by NI Water and in a recent meeting NI Water have informed us that they intend to proceed to a warning letter and investigation at Dungannon. NIEA officials are planning to carry out joint visits with NI Water to both sites in the next few weeks.

14. **NIEA**

NIEA require operators to notify them of all breaches to emission limits. They are also required to submit a summary of all monitoring results annually. Breaches of the emission limits are recorded as non-compliances and decisions on whether to proceed to enforcement action are based on the DAERA Enforcement Policy.

15. Breaches of sewer discharge limits are generally considered as having a low risk of having an environmental impact as the discharge is subject to further treatment at the WwTW. In the case of the two WwTW which Moy Park's sites at Dungannon and Craigavon discharge to, they have not had any breaches of their final effluent discharge limits in the last 3 years. On this basis, NIEA have not taken any enforcement action against Moy Park for these breaches to date. However, the inspectors at both sites have been working with the operators on improvements to their effluent treatment in an effort to bring them back into compliance and this work remains on-going.

16. **Moy Park Craigavon** are aware that the plant requires a major upgrade and have applied for previous planning permission to include an Anaerobic Digester but due to planning difficulties the site retracted this application. The site are now in the process of preparing a further planning submission for an alternative model of Effluent Treatment Plant.

17. Work that has been carried out on site within the past 12 months includes:

- Ferric testing and trial
- Change of polymer to trial effects on plant
- Detailed system analysis completed by Nijhuis (external consultant) on 06/09/23
- Marinade project within the factory to capture marinades before entering the drainage system
- Monthly deep clean and inspections of DAF cell
- Support from third party expert to assist with Effluent Treatment Plant.

18. **Moy Park Dungannon** has completed the following trial and corrective actions over the past 12 months:

- Increase monitoring (equipment and personnel) and increased sampling of discharge.
- In house testing of both ammonia and COD that was not possible previously.
- Support from third party expert to assist with Effluent Treatment Plant.
- Industrial cleans of interceptors, sumps, tanks etc. to reduce loading to the Effluent Plant.
- Replaced pumps within the DAF unit to ensure optimum performance.
- Upgrades on Effluent Treatment Plant control program.
- EcoCat chemical 1 month trial with the aim of reducing ammonia within the Effluent Treatment Plant.
- Both increasing and decreasing dwell time within the system to try and determine optimum time.

- Isolation of streams from factory and removal by third party to try and reduce loading on the Effluent Treatment Plant.
- Expert help from within the business visiting Dungannon to support and offer advice.
- Reduction of water usage on site to bring flow limits to the NI Water plant into compliance and a larger on-site sustainability programme; however this has resulted in a more concentrated effluent leaving site and increased the non-conformances for 2023.

NI Water discharge at Ballyronan

19. The Spotlight programme covered the waste-water pumping station at Ballyronan and the discharges from it causing pollution to the lough.
20. On 14 May 2024, NIEA received a report of sewage entering the lough at Ballyronan from a stream. This was the small stream that was featured in the spotlight programme as having E.coli more than twice the acceptable limit for bathing water.
21. A NIEA Senior Water Quality Inspector (SWQI) attended the scene on the morning of May 15th 2024 and inspected the emergency overflow of the nearby wastewater pumping station. There was no evidence of any discharge from the overflow. The SWQI did not observe any evidence of sewage or other pollution in the waterway at the time of their visit.
22. Staff from Mid-Ulster Council has requested the findings of the investigation from the 15 May 2024 on the behalf of a local councillor. The information was subsequently provided on 6 June 2024.
23. As this area of the Lough is neither an identified or candidate bathing water there is no monitoring undertaken under the bathing water regulations and therefore levels of E. coli are not routinely monitored

RECOMMENDATION

1. That you note the information contained in this briefing

Name: [REDACTED]

Branch: Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate

Contact Details

ATTACHMENTS

Annex A – Briefing – Minister Interview on Lough Neagh BBC Spotlight - AE1/24/1142708

Annex B – Response DAERA 24 226 - AE1/24/1152296

Annex C – Submission SUB-1433-2024 on Issues raised by BBC re Lough Neagh - AE1/24/1186404

CC List:



DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary



Perm Sec mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk)

G_DAERA PressOffice.Group

Submission

FROM: (SO or above)	
BRANCH:	Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate
CONTACT:	69767
DATE	13/05/2025
TO:	Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
SUB-XXXX-2024 – UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES	
SUMMARY	
Issue:	Update on investigation into the incident at Moy Park Ballymena
Timing:	☒ Routine ☐ Urgent ☐ Desk Immediate Desk Immediate (5 working days or less) Urgent (6-10 working days) Routine (11+ working days)
Financial Implications:*	None
Managing Public Money Northern Ireland Implications:	None
Chief Scientific Adviser's consideration:	None
Windsor Framework Implementation consideration:	None
Legislation Implications:	None
FOI Implications:	Contains reference to an on-going investigation which may not be disclosable.
Equality & Rural Needs Implications:	None
Executive Referral:	None
Presentation Issues:	There has been on-going media interest in Moy Park since the BBC Spotlight programme
Recommendation:	That you note the current position in relation to the outcome of the investigation into the incident at Moy Park Ballymena

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this submission is to update you on the latest position with regards to the investigation into a pollution incident at Moy Park's site at Ballymena in July 2024.

BACKGROUND

2. Moy Park's chicken processing site at Ballymena is regulated by NIEA under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.
3. On Wednesday 10th July 2024, NIEA received a notification from colleagues in VSAHG that veterinarians from DAERA had noted pollution incidents at Moy Park Ballymena during visits to the site on 2nd, 9th July and 10th July 2024. These incidents involved process effluent from the site being allowed to discharge into surface water drains due to blocked drains and damaged containers being used.
4. You were informed of this incident previously in SUB-1638-2024.
5. NIEA officials visited the site on the 10th July 2024. At that point the problems noted by the vets appeared to have been resolved but they lifted statutory samples from the two surface water emissions points. The results of these samples showed no breaches of the surface water emissions limits at that time.
6. The vets involved have provided witness statements and photographic and video evidence was collected by them.
7. The directors of Moy Park were invited to provide a statement under caution in relation to this matter.
8. A case review was carried out and the decision made was to proceed with formal investigation with a view to issuing a case file to PPS.
9. A case file was submitted to PPS on 8th April 2025 with the request to instigate proceedings against Moy Park Ballymena.
10. An initial conversation with PPS suggests that they believe a case is there to be answered within the magistrates' courts for the incidents on the 2nd, 9th and 10th July 2024. However further case file review is required and file review is at the preliminary stages with PPS.

RECOMMENDATION

10. That you note the current position in relation to the outcome of the investigation into the incident at Moy Park Ballymena.

Name: [REDACTED]

Branch: Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate

Contact Details: [REDACTED]

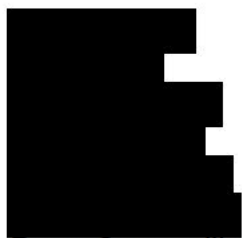
ATTACHMENTS

None

CC List:

Katrina Godfrey

Martin McKendry



Perm Sec mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk)

G_DAERA PressOffice.Group



Submission

FROM: (SO or above)	
BRANCH:	Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate
CONTACT:	69767
DATE	29/7/2024
TO:	Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
SUB-1610-2024 – UPDATE ON PERMIT BREACHES AT MOY PARK SITES	
SUMMARY	
Issue:	Update on the latest investigations and compliance at Moy Park's processing sites
Timing:	☒ Routine ☐ Urgent ☐ Desk Immediate Desk Immediate (5 working days or less) Urgent (6-10 working days) Routine (11+ working days)
Financial Implications:*	None
Chief Scientific Adviser's consideration:	None
Windsor Framework Implementation consideration:	None
Legislation Implications:	None
FOI Implications:	Contains reference to on-going investigations which may not be disclosable.
Equality & Rural Needs Implications:	None
Executive Referral:	None
Presentation Issues:	Issue has already been featured in the media and there may be further interest.
Date Draft Press Release cleared by Press Office:	None
Recommendation:	That you note the current position in relation to on-going investigations and compliance at Moy Park sites.

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this submission is to update you on the latest position with regards sewer emissions at Moy Park's sites at Dungannon and Craigavon and also on the investigation into a pollution incident at Moy Park's site at Ballymena.

BACKGROUND

2. Moy Park's chicken processing sites at Dungannon, Craigavon and Ballymena are regulated by NIEA under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.
3. The BBC Spotlight programme titled "Lough Neagh Monster" highlighted a significant number of breaches of the sewer emission limits at Moy Park's sites at Dungannon and Craigavon. Information on these breaches has previously been provided to the Minister in SUB-1455-2024.
4. NIEA officials carried out a joint visit with NI Water to the Dungannon site on 13 June. NIEA officials also visited the Craigavon site on 21 June and a further joint visit with NI Water to the Craigavon site took place on 26th July.
5. Recent monitoring results have shown that Dungannon have been in compliance with all their emission limits for the last 6 weeks. The company have made a number of improvements but have also begun tankering some of their effluent off site to an anaerobic digestion (AD) plant for treatment. This is an interim measure until they are able to construct a new effluent treatment plant on the site.
6. The Craigavon site introduced a number of measures in an effort to get back into compliance but they are still having issues with their Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) results so they have also now begun tankering some of their effluent to the same AD plant as Dungannon. Again, this is an interim measure until they are able to construct a new effluent treatment plant on the site.
7. NI Water is content with the actions being taken by the company on both sites.
8. NIEA is also currently investigating an incident at Moy Park's site in Ballymena.
9. On Wednesday 10th July NIEA received a notification from colleagues in VSAHG that veterinarians from DAERA had noted pollution incidents at Moy Park Ballymena during visits to the site on 2nd, 9th July and 10th July. These incidents involved process effluent from the site being allowed to discharge into surface water drains due to blocked drains and damaged containers being used.
10. NIEA officials visited the site on the 10th July. At that point the problems noted by the vets appeared to have been resolved but they lifted statutory samples from the two surface water emissions points. The results of these samples showed no breaches of the surface water emissions limits at that time.
11. The vets involved have agreed to give witness statements and photographic and video evidence was collected by them.
12. A letter has been issued to the directors of Moy Park inviting them to an interview under caution in relation to this matter.

13. A case review has been carried out and the decision made was to proceed with formal investigation with a view to issuing a case file to PPS.

RECOMMENDATION

10. That you note the current position in relation to on-going investigations and compliance at Moy Park sites.

Name: [REDACTED]

Branch: Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate

Contact Details: [REDACTED]

ATTACHMENTS

None

CC List:

[REDACTED]

DAERA Corporate Services Deputy Secretary

[REDACTED]

Perm Sec mailbox (perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk)

G DAERA PressOffice.Group

[REDACTED]

Moy Park/Pilgrim's Litter Utilisation Strategy

LINES TO TAKE:

- **NIEA does not approve, nor is it required to approve, Moy Park's overarching Litter Utilisation Strategy.**
- **This overarching strategy details the total capacity of the potential outlets for broiler litter and covers all Pilgrim's Europe/Moy Park contracted broiler farms, not just those holding Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) permits.**
- **Each individual application for a new PPC farm permit is required to demonstrate, with supporting evidence, that they have a sustainable outlet for the total litter which will be produced from their proposed development.**

BACKGROUND:

1. A number of media queries and EIR/FOI requests have been received asking about the Moy Park/Pilgrim's Europe Ltd litter utilisation strategy.
2. Many of those were in response to an article published by The Detail on 09/07/2026 "Moy Park farms spread 20 times more poultry manure on Northern Irish fields than agreed with environmental authorities". This article related to information contained in the recently issued Friends of the Earth report "Mapped: Pig and Poultry Farming in Northern Ireland".
3. The Pilgrim's Europe Ltd litter utilisation strategy is normally submitted with new PPC broiler farm applications but is not required by NIEA and is not approved by NIEA.
4. An application for a PPC Permit is required to demonstrate that the intensive farm proposals will have an acceptable environmental impact, including (a) the impacts of emissions (ammonia, odour, dust, etc.) on sensitive local receptors, and (b) the sustainable utilisation of manures produced from the proposed installation.
5. Where land spreading of manures is proposed, each application is required to demonstrate that manures will be applied in accordance with crop nutrient needs and that the relevant nutrient management plan(s) are provided. Where other manure utilisation outlets are proposed, evidence is required to demonstrate that the outlets are environmentally sustainable; there is sufficient capacity to take the material; the receiving outlet(s) have agreed to take it, and that the appropriate authorisation(s) is in place.