Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Northern Ireland

**Animal Feed Safety**

**Incident Management Plan**

**Part 1 of 2**

**Plan Owner:**

Agri-food Inspection Branch (AfIB)

**Contributors:**

DAERA Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG)

Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group (EMFG)

Food & Farming Group (FFG)

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# Glossary of Terms/Abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AFBI | Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute |
| AfIB | Agri-food Inspection Branch |
| CSRAG  CRIP  DAFM | Central Services & Rural Affairs Group  Commonly Recognised Information Picture  Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (RoI) |
| DAERA | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs |
| DEFRA  EMFG  FFG  FFIMG  FSA  HOB  HOD  IST  MERP  NIAPA  NIEA NIGTA PSNI RASFF SAFSD UFU  VMD  VSD  VSAHG | Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group  Food & Farming Group  Food & Feed Incident Management Group  Food Standards Agency  Head of Branch  Head of Division  Incident Support Team  Major Emergency Response Plan  Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association  Northern Ireland Environment Agency  Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association  Police Service of Northern Ireland  Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed  Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division  Ulster Farmers’ Union  Veterinary Medicines Directorate  Veterinary Sciences Division  Veterinary Service Animal Health Group |

1. **Strategic Purpose**
   1. DAERA vision is a thriving and sustainable rural economy, community and environment to promote social and economic equality.

* 1. The third strategic goal of DAERA is to enhance animal, fish and plant health and animal welfare on an all Ireland basis. A key action is to work with stakeholders, use risk-based surveillance to detect contamination of the livestock feed chain early and maintain robust controls and contingency plans for preventing and controlling major contamination incidents. The purpose of this action is to achieve the outcomes of wide recognition across all stakeholders of the benefits of a preventative approach to developing a sustainable agri-food industry; and risks to animals and consumers arising from the livestock feed chain are insignificant.
  2. In support of this strategic objective, the operational objective for animal feedingstuffs is to implement EU and national regulatory measures without putting an unnecessary burden on the producers and processors concerned. This will assist the development of efficient markets and reduce the risk of exposure of animals or humans to dangerous substances, diseases, or unapproved genetically modified feed, thus ensuring that markets in agricultural products are not adversely affected by animal feedingstuff problems.
  3. As an integral part of these support measures and in DAERA’s role as lead Department for animal feed safety incidents, this Incident Management Plan has been developed to provide a framework for the identification and control of problems associated with animal feedingstuffs, which would present an imminent danger to animal or human health, or a particular problem within the feed chain.

1. **Scope of the Incident Management Plan**
   1. This plan has been developed and may be used to manage incidents relating to DAERA’s responsibilities under the following legislation and related EU Regulations and Directives:
2. The Agriculture Act 1970;
3. The Animal Feed (Composition, Marketing and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016;
4. The Animal Feed (Hygiene, Sampling etc. and Enforcement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016;
5. The Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 (as amended);
6. The Official Feed and Food Controls Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.
   1. In effect, this amounts primarily to the control and elimination of feedstuffs and ingredients containing dangerous substances, unapproved GM material, or agents of disease, which if ingested by animals may result in serious animal and/or human illness or death or harm to the environment.
   2. All Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) and Animal By-Product (ABP) related incidents will be managed by CPED (Contingency Plan for Epizootic Disease). Enforcement responsibility for TSE and ABP legislation lies within Veterinary Service Animal Health Group (VSAHG) IRM & Cross Compliance, Standards & Compliance, TSE/ABP, Epizootics and CPED Programme; Agri-food Inspection Branch will provide assistance in relation to feed enforcement as required.
   3. Where the incident moves from one of managing an animal feedingstuffs incident to a food safety matter, then lead Department responsibility moves to Food Standards Agency (FSA).
   4. The seriousness of an investigation and whether it constitutes an incident will be determined using the Incident Decision tree in **Annex 1.**
   5. Triggers and escalation arrangements are set out in the [DAERA MAJOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN (MERP)](http://nics.intranet.nigov.net/daera/articles/major-emergency-response-plan-merp) where a strategic response to a feed incident is required.

Suspected incidents may be brought to the attention of DAERA, by its staff, staff from other Government Departments, bi-lateral contact with other Member States Feed/Food Safety Control Agencies, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the agri-food industry (Regulation (EC) 178/2002), feed testing laboratories (Regulation (EU) 225/2012) or the general public. In some instances these will be as a result of ‘whistle-blower’ referrals and this should be handled in accordance with DAERA guidance on public interest disclosure; Whistleblowing procedures guidance; [AEC 07-15 Final revised Whistleblowing procedures guidance](http://nics.intranet.nigov.net/daera/documents/aec-07-15-final-revised-whistleblowing-procedures-guidance) & [AEC 08-15 Whistleblowing register circular July 2015 - Procedures](http://nics.intranet.nigov.net/daera/documents/aec-08-15-whistleblowing-register-circular-july-2015-procedures)

# Objectives of the Plan

* 1. In its role as lead Department for animal feedingstuffs incidents to ensure DAERA manages all feed incidents consistently and promptly in order to eliminate or minimise the risk to animals and/or humans.
  2. To provide guidance to all relevant DAERA staff, so that in the event of an incident, DAERA, the FSA and others can take effective and immediate action.
  3. To ensure procedures for escalation are followed and DAERA’s MERP is activated when required.
  4. To ensure that where the issue becomes a matter of food safety there is a smooth transition to FSA as lead Government Department.

1. **Relationship to DAERA MERP** 
   1. The DAERA MERP enables DAERA to provide a co-ordinated response to major emergency situations in relation to its functions and in the wider community.It clarifies roles, responsibilities and actions and enables a structured approach to a major emergency under the broader remit of civil contingencies. Civil contingencies are a broad term covering the activities which are undertaken by organisations to protect the population from risk and to prepare an effective co-ordinated response to any emergency.
   2. An ‘emergency’ is defined in the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework as “*Any event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare or the security of Northern Ireland or the UK as a whole.*”
   3. The definition of emergency is concerned with consequences, rather than with cause or source. The term does not refer to day-to-day incidents that organisations deal with within their normal operational procedures and resources.
   4. Damage would be serious if the emergency would be likely to seriously obstruct an organisation in the performance of its functions; or if it is likely that the organisation would consider it necessary or desirable to act to prevent, reduce, control or mitigate an emergency’s effects, or otherwise take action; and would be unable to act without changing the deployment of its resources or acquiring additional resources.
   5. Emergencies cover a broad spectrum with varying impacts and consequences ranging from a purely local incident to one having an impact across Northern Ireland. These require different co-ordination arrangements capable of being applied flexibly as an emergency develops or changes in character. There are four broad types of emergency requiring crisis management:
      1. Local level – emergencies where the outcomes are confined to a relatively small area or number of people, where local or sub-regional organisations or the sub-regional offices of regional organisations deliver the response.
      2. Level 1: Significant – an emergency is relatively localised in one geographical area or sector, but is sufficient to require strategic co-ordination. The lead Department provides and/or manages the response, including co-ordination of all organisations within the sector and other departments, agencies and local responders involved.
      3. Level 2: Serious – the extent or severity of an emergency is such that a large number of local, sub-regional and regional organisations are involved in delivering the response and strategic level co-ordination which is required.
      4. Level 3: Catastrophic – an emergency has, or threatens, either a catastrophic impact on a particular area of NI or a serious or catastrophic impact across the whole of NI and/or the rest of the UK.
   6. A strategic response requiring implementation of the DAERA MERP may be necessary at level 1 and above, often requiring a multiagency response.
   7. The DAERA MERP sets out arrangements around the lead Department and allows for the transfer to FSA if the Animal Feed Incident becomes a food safety issue.

# Emergency Command Structure

* 1. Figure 1 summarises the Command Structure adopted by DAERA in dealing with major emergencies, where the DAERA MERP is implemented. The Command Structure for Animal Feed Safety Incidents is highlighted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: DAERA Emergency Command Structures

**Command Structure in Animal Feed Safety Incident Management Plan**



* 1. The Animal Feed Safety Incident Management Plan fulfils the Tactical and Operational Response where the DAERA MERP is implemented.
  2. For incidents where this plan is triggered, but there is no necessity to implement the DAERA MERP, a Command Structure involving both Tactical and Operational levels will be implemented as appropriate, absorbing the Communications and Resource functions.

# Preliminary Action and Classification of an Incident

* 1. Once information is received by DAERA that indicates potential for a feed incident the following steps are carried out:
     1. The Head of Agri-food Inspection Branch or deputy is notified immediately if not already informed.
     2. A preliminary investigation, if required, is carried out in line with internal procedures to initially assess the categorisation of the incident and level of risk to animal and human health.
  2. Incident Classification System

For the purposes of this plan, incidents in general will fall into one of three categories. The definitions covering the classification levels applicable to incidents concerning animal feedingstuffs dealt with by DAERA’s Agri-food Inspection Branch are shown in Table 1.

* 1. AMBER classifications will generally require implementation of this plan. Subject to considerations at Section 8 of this plan by Tactical Command, RED classifications may require consideration to recommend implementation of DAERA MERP as they are likely to be a Level 1 (significant) emergency or above.

1. **Triggers for Escalation to DAERA MERP**
   1. Consideration should be given to the implementation of DAERA’s Major Emergency Response Plan (MERP) for all RED incidents.
   2. All incidents classified as RED and AMBER will be notified to Tactical Command Response (Silver) and the Chairperson of Food & Feed Incident Management Group (FFIMG)[[1]](#footnote-1).
   3. A recommendation will be made to the Permanent Secretary by the Chair of Tactical Command following discussion with the Chair of FFIMG. In instances where FFIMG is led by another Department this plan will be used to structure our support.

**Table 1: Feed Incident Classifications**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DAERA Agri-food Inspection Branch**  **Feed Incident Classifications** | | |
| **Classification** | **Description** | **Action** |
| **BLUE**  **Low risk to animals, feed businesses or the agri-food industry** | Investigations with localised effects and few if any animal welfare and food safety implications. | Dealt with at branch level. The Animal Feed Safety Incident Management Plan would not be initiated in this instance. |
| **AMBER**  Moderate risk to animals, feed businesses or the agri-food industry | Incidents involving risk to animal health due to breaches of statutory limits e.g. mycotoxins, heavy metals. In some cases the public or the media are likely to express some concerns. | Generally be handled by the Animal Feed Safety Incident Management Plan. Drivers to ‘RED’ would include the scale or subsequent elevated levels of contamination. |
| **RED**  **High risk to humans, animals, feed businesses or the agri-food industry.** | **Severe incidents with potential to cause death or serious illness to animals or humans**.  Tend to be complex with a large number of affected products, a high level of resources required to manage the incident, likely to generate a high level of concern by the public and media. | Implementation of DAERA’s Major Emergency Response Plan considered. |

* 1. Criteria can be used for the escalation of incidents (called triggers) to rapidly identify that an incident has ‘RED’ or high attributes. These candidate triggers are as follows:

1. Likely severity of animal and public health risk using figures in the risk assessment in **Annex 5** of this plan as a guide;
2. Size and scale of incident (local/national/international; number of companies and products potentially affected; resource required to manage);
3. 10% - 50% of businesses affected and/or impact on Agri-food sector is significant;
4. Potential level of media interest;
5. Public perception of the risk or likely acceptability of the risk;
6. Precedents in similar cases, earlier risk management decisions;
7. Novel or unusual aspects.
   1. An incident classified as RED is likely to score highly on two or more of the triggers. It is important to note that whilst these triggers provide an important checklist for aiding decisions, judgement and experience will always be brought to bear on the process.
8. **Tactical Command – structure and role** 
   1. The structure of Tactical Command (SILVER) is shown in Table 2. Tactical command is responsible for the tactical management of the feed incident. Where the MERP is implemented, it ensures that strategic advice is translated into practical instructions for those carrying out the operational response.

**Table 2: Structure of Tactical Command**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tactical Command** | |
| Chairperson & Tactical Level Commander: | Tactical Level Emergency Response Commander – Director of Epizootic Division, VSAHG |
| Spokesperson for DAERA: | Tactical Level Emergency Response Commander |
| Scientific & Technical Advice: | Departmental Scientific Adviser  AFBI Scientists (where required) |
| Staff/Resources: | Grade 7 Business Management Branch, VSAHG &/or Grade 7 DAERA HR – procurement of additional resource |
| Policy Guidance: | Relevant Policy Director(s) from Food and Farming and Veterinary Service Animal Health Groups  FSA (as required) |
| Communications | DAERA Press Officer |
| Operational Command | Chair of Operational Command or Deputy |
| Incident Support Co-ordinator: | Incident Support Team (IST) Co-ordinator or member of IST/other assigned |

* 1. Tactical Command will be chaired by the Director of Epizootics Division.
  2. As soon as is reasonably practicable, the Tactical Level Emergency Response Commander should inform key personnel (as appropriate) that a potential incident is being investigated, initially including:

1. Chief Veterinary Officer or Deputy;
2. Head/Deputy of Animal Disease Control & Trade Policy Branch, VSAHG (in relation to medicated feed);
3. Chief Executive or Deputy in Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI);
4. Head of Food Hygiene Policy and Operations, Food Standards Agency (FSA).
   1. Tactical Command will be focused on defining, reviewing and refining the approach to managing the tactical response to the emergency, communications, recall and/or disposal, and recovery.
   2. Where a scale-up of resources is identified (likely when the MERP is actioned), CPED will assist and implement their agreed procedures and arrangements.
   3. In a local level emergency, where only this plan is implemented, Tactical Command will generally only meet as required to consider issues escalated by Operational Command and ensure communication with the Top Management Group, the Minister and Media.
   4. In situations where the DAERA MERP is implemented, Tactical Group will need to meet more regularly taking on a wider role. The key functions of tactical level management during an emergency could include:
5. Translating direction from Strategic Command into operational requirements;
6. Identification and escalation as appropriate of tactical and operational issues to Strategic Command;
7. Providing advice to Strategic Command;
8. Providing Top Management Group (TMG) or Strategic Command with regular updates using the template at **Annex 2**;
9. Where required identifying a member of Tactical Command to represent DAERA on the Northern Ireland Civil Contingency Group (CCG (NI)) and other cross-departmental emergency groupings as appropriate.
10. Technical advice, particularly resolving difficult cross-cutting tactical issues escalated from Operational Command;
11. Legislative and policy advice including emergency regulations/derogations;
12. Determining priority in resource allocation;
13. Obtaining staffing and financial resource;
14. Directing planning and co-ordination the tasks which Operational Command will undertake;
15. Co-ordinate groups of Operational Partners who may carry out work on behalf of DAERA during the emergency (local councils, PSNI, Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group, NIEA etc).
16. Determining the need for and taking forward Ministerial submissions;
17. Keeping the Chair of FFIMG Informed;
18. Considering the shape of ongoing Stakeholder Engagement.
    1. The Tactical Commander will ensure Tactical Command meet as required during the emergency; draw on the standard agenda at **Annex 3**; ensuring minutes are maintained; and an ongoing action log outlined in **Annex 4** is kept updated.
    2. The Departmental Scientific Adviser (DSA) or deputy shall provide scientific support and advice to Tactical Command on the nature of the problem and the risk involved. The DSA will provide scientific input for policy/media requirements as needed and provide advice to PMB3 (Programme Management Board 3 with responsibility for research on Animal Health and Welfare) on whether additional research is required to provide a full response to future incidents.
    3. Tactical Command must give consideration to advising the widest possible spectrum of persons/organisations that may be affected by the incident or its potential aftermath.
19. **Operational Command – structure and role**
    1. Operational Command Structure is shown at Table 3. The Operational Command will implement tactical level advice in line with guidance set out in this plan and operational instructions. They will also report back to the Tactical Command on progress in dealing with the incident.
    2. In a local level emergency, where only this plan is implemented, Operational Command will generally manage the response only escalating issues to Tactical Command, which cannot be resolved and ensuring communication with the Top Management Group, the Minister and Media takes place via Tactical Command.
    3. If, on completion of a preliminary investigation or in situations where it is deemed that the problem constitutes an incident, the Head of Agri-food Inspection Branch or their deputy should, without delay:

1. Call a meeting of Operational Command;
2. Notify and update the Tactical Command Emergency Response Commander;
3. Ensure that an Incident Support Team (IST) is in place to co-ordinate the flow of information between members of Operational Command and Tactical Command;
4. Arrange for relevant laboratories to be informed.
   1. If a TSE or ABP issue is suspected the Programme Director for IRM & Cross Compliance, Standards & Compliance, TSE/ABP, Epizootics and CPED Programme (or deputy) must be notified who will in turn notify relevant parties within VSAHG.

**Table 3: Operational Command Structure**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **OPERATIONAL COMMAND** | |
| Chairperson & Operational Commander: | Agri-food Inspection Branch– Head of Branch or deputy. |
| Incident Manager: | Agri-food Inspection Branch – Section Head or deputy. |
| Scientific & Technical Advice (including risk assessment): | Representatives from:   * DAERA’s Science Advisory Branch * Veterinary Service Animal Health Group * AFBI Representatives as appropriate from Veterinary Science Division (VSD) or Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division (SAFSD) * FSA |
| Policy advice: | * Farm or Food Policy Branch as appropriate * FSA * Animal Disease Control and Trade Policy (Veterinary Medicines) * Guidance from other policy areas as appropriate |
| Technical Support Officer: | One Grade III officer from Agri-food Inspection Branch in a supporting and co-ordinating role. |
| Investigating Officers: | Group 4 & Gp 2/3 Agri-food Inspection Branch inspector(s). |
| Staff/Resources: | Head of Agri-food Inspection Branch’s Administration & Technical Support. |
| Incident Support Co-ordinator: | Incident Support Team (IST) [[2]](#footnote-2)Co-ordinator or member of IST/other assigned <http://nics.intranet.nigov.net/daera/documents/afib-emergency-plans> |

* 1. Once an initial meeting of Operational Command has been called by Agri-food Inspection Branch’s Head of Branch (or deputy) the following steps will be taken by Operational Command:
     1. Appraise the threat posed by the incident, based on the risk assessment outlined in **Annex 5** of this plan.
     2. Consider the completed Animal Feedingstuffs Incident Report form **Annex 6** of this plan and forward to FSA.
     3. Direct the operational investigation and decide on what actions are needed to determine the scope of the problem and take action to contain and ultimately eliminate the problem with specific consideration of:
* Risk to public health;
* Risk to animal health;
* Immediate prevention of use of contaminated material including:
* Issue of Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) by FSA
* DAERA/DAFM Feed Incident Early Warning Protocol
* Detention and Recall of contaminated material;
* Disposal of contaminated material;
* Environmental issues;
* Limiting unnecessary damage to the industry.
  + 1. Decide if an incident room is required for co-ordinating the response to the Incident; this will be arranged by the Incident Support Team.
    2. Identify and refer specific issues requiring Tactical Command’s consideration.
    3. Keep Tactical Command updated using the template at **Annex 2**.
    4. Prepare reports as appropriate including a continually updated Event Log, **Annex 7** of this plan, showing daily activity by all those involved with the investigation. This Event Log to be updated by the Technical Support Officer.
    5. Consider potential financial implications of the incident which may include additional staffing, significant analytical costs, transport & storage of seized feedingstuffs.
    6. A contact list for all those who should be copied into all correspondence will be determined by the Head of Operational Command and set up by the IST co-ordinator. Staff must copy the IST co-ordinator into all correspondence and ensure co-ordinator is kept up-to-date with additions to the list.
    7. The Incident Manager (or deputy) will consider requirements for additional laboratory capacity.
    8. In all instances of sabotage the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) should be contacted by the Incident Manger or deputy. See contact details in Part 2 of 2 of this plan.
    9. Should the investigation detect contamination of waterways, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and DAERA Rivers Agency must be informed. NIEA should also be contacted on all matters concerning waste material and disposal of contaminated material. Contact points are listed in Part 2 of 2 of this plan.
  1. The Operational Commander (or Deputy) will take responsibility for ensuring Operational Command discharges its functions as per paragraph 9.5 and:
     1. Ensure relevant members of Operational Command meet as required during the emergency; draw on the standard agenda at **Annex 8**; ensuring minutes are maintained; and an ongoing action log outlined in **Annex 4** is kept updated.
     2. Provide direction in the operational management of the incident including updates to Tactical Command, and securing additional resources if required.
     3. Notify UFU; NIAPA; NIGTA; Dairy UK; other relevant Industry bodies as appropriate.
     4. Provide information to the Technical Support Officer and Incident Support Team for inclusion in Event log and Timeline.
  2. The Incident Manager will take responsibility for:
     1. Leading the investigation;
     2. Notifying relevant FBOs;
     3. Notifying the EC via DEFRA and the FSA as appropriate;
     4. Providing the Operational Commander with regular updates including resourcing issues;
     5. Identifying the member of staff for the role of Technical Support Officer;
     6. Managing information flows with the Technical Support Officer and the IST.
  3. DAERA’s Science Advisory Branch shall:
     1. Provide scientific support and advice to Operational Command on:
* The nature of the problem;
* The risk involved;
* Safe disposal of contaminated material;
* Cleansing/disinfection of contaminated equipment/stores.
  + 1. Communicate directly with AFBI on behalf of the Operational Command;
    2. Advise both the DAERA Policy Lead and AFBI Sponsor Branch (ASB) as required;
  1. The Technical Support Officer shall support the Incident Manager, Investigative Officers and Operational Command by:
     1. Arranging product testing;
     2. Gathering / sourcing of required background information;
     3. Briefing Feeds Inspectors/Investigating officers as required;
     4. Collating information gathered by Investigating Officers;
     5. Monitoring and updating the Event Log and Situation Report (SitRep);
     6. Providing technical/legislative support to Incident Manager and Investigating officer(s);
     7. Providing summary reports for each Operational Command meeting;
     8. Supporting the Operational Commander with briefing for Tactical Command Group;
     9. Maintaining the risk assessment;
     10. Carrying out other related duties as required.
  2. The Investigating Officers shall:
     1. Conduct an investigation in accordance with the relevant legislation and internal procedures (P006). To ensure a consistent approach, **Annexes 6, 9 and 10** of this plan to be completed by investigating officers to assist with assessment and implementation of the Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food (RASFF). An explanation of RASFF is provided in **Annex 11**.
     2. Provide clear guidance to industry on information required from them including a timeframe within which businesses need to provide this information to ensure the incident can be managed effectively;
     3. Provide reports, as necessary, to the Operational Command at appropriate stages during the investigation;
     4. Provide assistance to the Operational Command in determining the most appropriate enforcement action. Powers of entry are listed in **Annex 12.**
  3. IST Co-ordinator / Secretariat Responsibilities – depending on the contamination involved in the incident will be responsible for:
     1. Setting up the Incident management centre in an allocated room in Dundonald House / Loughry Campus if requested by Operational Command;
     2. Arranging locations for meetings of Operational Command;
     3. Producing accurate minutes of all meetings of Operational Command and action logs; providing all members of the team with copies of both;
     4. Producing briefing material for Tactical Command;
     5. Commence and maintain a detailed timeline. This is separate to the enforcement event log which will be maintained by the Feeds Technical support Officer;
     6. Co-ordinating communication within Operational Command.
     7. Organising other secretarial or administrative resources required by Operational Command, as appropriate.

1. **Communication**
   1. Where the DAERA MERP is implemented The Tactical Command for Communications & Resources will lead on Communications. The Tactical/Operational Commands will input as appropriate drawing on guidance in this section.
   2. Internal communications
      1. To ensure a consistent approach in how we communicate the Investigating Officers and others who may be dealing with affected parties will follow instruction from Operational Command through line management.
      2. At appropriate stages Tactical Command or nominated staff from Agri-food Inspection Branch will:

* Provide briefings/submissions/lines to take to the Minister and Permanent Secretary on the incident to include: policy position and implications/impacts/operational response, with support from DAERA Policy and AFBI as required;
* Ensure liaison with FSA in NI;
* Collate briefing and helpline scripts and forward to admin teams dealing with enquiries for any possible helpline/web bulletin board[[3]](#footnote-3);
* Ensure internal colleagues with an interest are made aware of the situation (e.g. by copy of Ministerial submission);
* Attend briefings with the Minister/Permanent Secretary as required; and
* Draft and update frequently asked questions (FAQs) and liaise with the DAERA Press Office.
  + 1. All information created by or received by other members of the team must be sent to the IST Co-ordinator to ensure that it is properly recorded and distributed. All draft submissions must be completed using the templates available on the DAERA intranet and signed off by the Head of Agri-food Inspection Branch.
  1. Communication with other Government Departments
     1. Tactical Command should consider the need for communication with other officials and agencies which may be affected by the incident. This will initially be achieved through FFIMG.
     2. Should Operational Command discover the potential impact of the incident and management activities on, for example, other farming sectors, the environment, food supplies, transport and tourism, Tactical Command & FFIMG will be notified by the Chair of Operational Command.
  2. External Communication
     1. DAERA Press Office will advise on media handling, take all media enquiries, issue press releases, organise press briefings/conferences and interviews with DAERA Minister or DAERA officials as appropriate. It is important to provide clear, up to date information for the public and stakeholders to maintain confidence in the handling of the incident. A Media Handling Plan is outlined in **Annex 13**.
     2. Tactical Command should consider the setting up of a helpline and associated requirements, such as scripts for staff on helpline duty, for serious incidents to ensure enquiries from members of the public are answered quickly and accurately from the one source and advise senior management accordingly.
     3. As part of the Department’s commitment to a two-way communication process, Tactical Command should maintain regular updates with stakeholders. Appropriate information should be shared with other organisations that may be approached by the media or the public for comment or advice, such as industry representative bodies (NIGTA, UFU, NIAPA, etc.) and scientific bodies. If meetings are required then the frequency should be determined in discussion with stakeholders.
     4. For incidents classified as red, Tactical Command should give consideration to the creation of a web section on the DAERA website, containing background information. Ownership of the helpline and website will be determined depending on the incident. It is vital that both information sources be updated whenever new information becomes available.
     5. A telephone number and email address for any enquiries should be included in all communications about the incident. Operational Command must identify an appropriate person(s) to be responsible for dealing with email enquiries.
  3. External communication with other jurisdictions
     1. Sharing of information between other jurisdictions will be implemented as required and as laid down in Articles 36 – 39 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 on official controls performed to ensurethe verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.
     2. DAERA/DAFM Feed incident early warning protocol to be implemented as required, see **Annex 14, Parts A & B**.
     3. The processes at (a) and (b) above will be taken forward by Operational Command.

# Termination of Emergency Action

* 1. Implementation of this plan shall terminate when procedures for long-term management of the problem have been implemented, a final report completed, and the handling of the Incident reviewed jointly by Tactical and Operational Command, as shown in **Annex 15**.
  2. Where the DAERA MERP is implemented an additional review will be undertaken by Strategic Command with input from Tactical and Operational Command as appropriate.

1. **Plan reviews**
   1. This document must be reviewed annually and circulated.
   2. Agri-food Inspection Branch will convene a joint annual meeting of Tactical and Operational Command for this purpose after circulation of the amended plan. Date of the next review of this plan by Operational Command is March 2018.
   3. This plan should be validated by at least one exercise every three years to trial the plan for a serious incident, unless there has been an actual incident in that period.
   4. Part 2 of this document will be reviewed every six months and where staff changes occur.

**END**

# Annex 1 - Incident Decision Tree

***Upon approval of HOB or Deputy*** Verbally inform owner/manager if immediate need for voluntary hold on movement of all suspect feedstuffs.

Serve statutory notice if applicable.

Problem suspected by AfIB staff

Inform FSA that an investigation is underway

Notification from any

source

AfIB investigate, carry out an initial risk assessment (**Annex 5**) and sample if necessary

Inform AfIB HOB or Deputy

**Notification of key personnel:**

AfIB HOB/Deputy to ensure other DAERA HOBs, and if required, other AfIB section Heads are notified of suspect feeds.

**Ongoing as required.**

##### AfIB Investigation confirms no risk to human/animal health

##### CONFIRMED

Presence of contaminant confirmed showing evidence of high risk to animal/human health due to breaches of statutory limits.

Withdraw verbal/written restriction on movement

Inform AfIB HOB/Deputy

AfIB to review initial risk assessment and assess incident classification; Blue, Amber or Red.

AfIB HOB/Deputy to ensure all relevant HOB’s and FSA are notified

DAERA/DAFM Feed Incident Early Warning Protocol (**Annex 14**) progressed if suspected link with ROI

Incidents classified as Blue - managed by AfIB operational procedure for investigations

Incidents classified as Amber or Red - HOB/Deputy activates this plan.

# Annex 2 - Template for Updating Strategic Command/TMG

**Situation Report Form** **–** [Insert Name of Incident]

# 

Ref Number: [Insert Reference Number]

Date/Time: [Insert date]/ [Insert time]

BUSINESS AREA: Animal Feed Safety Incident Operational/Tactical\* Command

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: [Insert Name]

CONTACT DETAILS: [Insert phone/email]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Nature of incident: |  |
| Location of incident: |  |
| Date & time of occurrence: |  |
| Estimate of severity: e.g.casualty numbers, environmental contamination issues, extent of areas affected areas at risk. |  |
| Response Phase Lead: |  |
| The location from which response will be co-ordinated: e.g. Police Silver Command or Sub-regional Multi-Agency Group/DAERA Ops Room Contact details for lead agency: |  |
| Other Organisations/Agencies involved:  Key contact details: |  |
| Identified objectives & priorities: |  |
| Immediate support required:  e.g. provision of accommodation, personnel, equipment or other support. |  |
| Information available regarding access to designated buildings, safe routes etc: |  |
| Estimate of duration of response phase: |  |
| Emerging Issues: |  |
| Key information for public: |  |

\*Delete as appropriate

# Annex 3 - Standard agenda for Tactical Command Meetings

**Agenda –** [Insert Name of Incident]

**Tactical Command Meeting**

Ref Number: [Insert Reference Number]

Date/Time: [Insert date]/ [Insert time]

Location: [Insert location]

1. Action log
2. Issues from Strategic Command
3. Operational update & issues for Tactical Direction
4. Policy and legislative update
5. Science and diagnostics update
6. Risk Assessment - Review
7. Incident response; resourcing; impact on routine business
8. East-West/North-South Government Considerations
9. Communications
10. Internal DAERA
11. Internal NICS Departments/Agencies
12. External Industry
13. External Wider Public
14. External Political
15. External Media
16. Issues for Strategic Command/TMG
17. AOB

Date of next meeting

# Annex 4 - Action Log for Tactical/Operational Command Meetings

**Action Log –** [Insert Name of Incident]

**Tactical/Operational\* Command Meeting**

Ref Number: [Insert Reference Number]

Date/Time: [Insert date]/ [Insert time]

**Open Actions**

| **No.** | **Date** | **Event / Issue**  **(Brief details of event or issue)** | **Action / Decision**  **(Brief details of action taken or decision made)** | **Person Responsible** | **Current Position e.g. in progress, complete & time completed** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** |  |  |  |  |  |

**Closed Actions**

| **No.** | **Date** | **Event / Issue**  **(Brief details of event or issue)** | **Action / Decision**  **(Brief details of action taken or decision made)** | **Person Responsible** | **Current Position e.g. in progress, complete & time completed** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** |  |  |  |  |  |

\*Delete as appropriate

# Annex 5 - R007 - Animal Feed Safety Incident Risk Assessment

In considering risk of a feed safety issue, complaint, incident etc the following needs to be considered:

|  | **RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE** | | | | **RISK FACTORS** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION | | | | **Hazard and factors considered:** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hazards can include biological and chemical agents (such as heavy metals, dioxins, excessive levels of pesticides, veterinary drugs and additives) and other undesirable substances eg radioactivity. | Factors to be considered include:     * occurrence of a given hazard in feed; * environmental conditions; * harvesting, drying, processing, storage, handling and transport; * feed ingredients produced as co-products or by-products from other production processes, including industrial processes; * Deliberate fraud/sabotage. | | |
|  | **2. HAZARD CHARACTERISATION** | | | | **Adverse human/animal health effects & sources of information:** | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Hazard characterization refers to the qualitative and/or quantitative evaluation of the nature of the adverse health effects associated with hazards in feed, which may be present in edible products as a result of transfer. | | |
|  | **RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE** | | | | **RISK FACTORS** | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **3. EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT** | | | | **Feed affected:** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The qualitative and/or quantitative evaluation of the likely intake of the hazard(s) via food.  The aim of the exposure assessment in feed risk assessment is to estimate the level or prevalence of hazard(s) in edible product(s) after transfer from feed.  The final edible product(s) in the exposure assessment should be defined as precisely as necessary.  **EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT cont’d**  **EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT cont’d** | **3.1: Animal exposure assessment:**  (a) Identification of feeds which may contribute to intake of a given hazard;  (b) Determination of the concentration of the hazard in feed;  (c) Calculation of hazard intake by the food-producing animal from relevant feed sources, based on information on feeding practices (quantity, frequency and duration of feed intake) as appropriate.  (d) Identification, and if possible quantification, of other sources of the hazard which may contribute to exposure to the hazard in the food-producing animal (e.g. bedding materials, soil, water, air or others).  Note: Animal exposure will differ as a result of the formulation of the feed, the use patterns for the animal, and the exposure scenarios.  Consideration to be given to the number of farms and animals at risk.  Estimate of the number of animals at risk for farms >10.  Note: For information only to facilitate decision-making within IMT  \*figures estimated from The Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland 2016 | | |
| **How much material is involved?** | | Quantity: | | | | | | Scale of distribution (no of mills, farms etc): | | | |
| **Concentration of hazard in feed:** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Level of hazard intake:** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **How many farms affected?** | | *>10 farms see table below* | | | | | | | | | |
| **How many animals at risk?** | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| **Species** | | **No of farms** | | **X** | | **Aver. no of animals on-farm \*** | | **=** | **Estimated total number of animals affected** | | |
| **Poultry** | |  | |  | | 28,000 | |  |  | | |
| **Porcine** | |  | |  | | 1,800 | |  |  | | |
| **Sheep** | |  | |  | | 200 | |  |  | | |
| **Cattle – Dairy** | |  | |  | | 90 | |  |  | | |
| **Cattle - Beef** | |  | |  | | 20 | |  |  | | |
| **Other** | |  | |  | |  | |  |  | | |
| **Likelihood of animals eating the contaminated material?** | | LOW | | | | | | HIGH | | | |
| **Likely effects on animals?** | | None | | | Temporary sickness | | | | | Permanent  damage or death | |
| **Source of hazard:** | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| **How difficult will it be to identify and isolate the contaminated material?**  *Provide detail* | | Not difficult | | | | | | Very difficult | | | |
|  | Exposure assessment for a hazard in feed is a two-step process. The first step concerns the exposure of the food-producing animal to hazard(s) through feed. If such exposure is present, the second step is to evaluate the transfer of hazard(s) to edible product(s) of the food-producing animal. | **3.2: Transfer**  Transfer of a hazard from feed to edible product depends on how it us metabolised in the food-producing animal, including absorption, biotransformation, distribution, excretion, and the potential for accumulation or proliferation in tissues.  Transfer of a hazard may be influenced by:  - Biological or chemical properties of the hazard;  - Species, breed, gender, life stage**,** and health status of the food-producing animal;  - Frequency and duration of feed intake;  - Formulation of the feed and potential interaction between the hazard and feed components.  *Sources of information should be documented.* | | | **Predicted level or prevalence of the hazard in edible product:**  Note: if MRLs in food exist – trigger point for notification to FSA, other AfIB inspectorates and Veterinary Service (as required). | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Human exposure to the hazard:** | | FEW (<10) | | | | | | MANY (>10) | | | |
| **Likely effects on humans?** | | None | | | | | Temporary sickness | | | | Permanent damage or death |
|  | **4. RISK CHARACTERISATION** | | | | **ANIMALS at risk** (an estimate of the probability that in infectious agent in feed could lead to an infection in an animal, which may result in an unacceptable contamination of the edible product):  **HUMANS at risk** (an estimate of the probability that a given concentration of hazard in feed may result in a concentration in edible product which may lead to exceeding a national or international based guidance value): | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | Risk characterisation, in a feed risk assessment, considers the outcomes from the hazard characterization and the exposure assessment to derive a risk estimate for food safety. | |
|  | **5. LEVEL OF RISK** | Overall risk to animal and human health? | | | **LOW** | | | **HIGH** | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | Short and long-term economic implications on those directly involved and the NI agri-food sector as a whole? | | | Short-term | | | **Little effect** | | | | | | | | |
| **Major** | | | | | | | | |
| Long-term | | | **Little effect** | | | | | | | | |
| **Major** | | | | | | | | |
|  | **RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE** | | | | **RISK FACTORS** | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 1. **ACTIONS/ OUTCOME**   **Feed Incident Classifications** | On the basis of point 1-5 the investigation is categorised as  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ relating to the following classifications: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Classification** | | **Description** | | **Action** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **BLUE**  **Low risk to animals, feed businesses or the agri-food industry** | | Investigations with localised effects and few if any animal welfare and food safety implications. | | Dealt with at branch level. The Animal Feed Safety Incident Management Plan would not be initiated in this instance. | | | | | | | | | | |
| **AMBER**  Moderate risk to animals, feed businesses or the agri-food industry | | Incidents involving risk to animal health due to breaches of statutory limits. | | Generally be handled by the Animal Feed Safety Incident Management Plan. Drivers to ‘RED’ would include the scale or subsequent elevated levels of contamination. | | | | | | | | | | |
| **RED**  **High risk to humans, animals, feed businesses or the agri-food industry.** | | Severe incidents with potential to cause death or serious illness to animals or humans. | | Implementation of DAERA’s Major Emergency Response Plan considered. | | | | | | | | | | |

# Annex 6 - R006 Animal Feedingstuffs Incident Report Form

To be completed by the INSPECTOR/INVESTIGATING OFFICER and sent to the CHAIRPERSON/DEPUTY of the Incident Management Team.

**Please provide us with the following details:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. CONTACT INFORMATION |  |
| **Organisation** | **DAERA** |
| **Contact details** |  |
| **Brief Description of incident** |  |
| **Date and time of notification of incident:** |  |
| **Initial Information received by:** |  |
| 2. PRODUCT DETAILS |  |
| Type of feed e.g. compound, feed material, premixtures, additive |  |
| Inclusion rate in the final feed (if appropriate) |  |
| If feed fed directly, feeding rates i.e. quantity of product fed to animals per day/percentage of product in total diet of animal |  |
| Species of animal for which feed intended. |  |
| Age/sex/status of animal e.g. layer or broiler, dairy of beef |  |
| Product Name (if applicable) |  |
| Identification of lot (Batch Number) |  |
| Expiry dates (if applicable) |  |
| Medicine records (if applicable) |  |
| Any other relevant product details |  |
| 3. ORIGIN DETAILS |  |
| **Name & Address of manufacturer/supplier of feed** |  |
| Contact details |  |
| Date of Import (if relevant) |  |
| Contact details of Importer (if relevant) |  |
| Is the importer/manufacturer/retailer aware of the incident? If so what measures have they put in place to deal with it. |  |
| 4. SAMPLING DETAILS |  |
| **Type of sample (formal/informal)** |  |
| **Details of location and method of sampling, including quantities taken (include sampling plan if available)** |  |
| Analyte(s) found |  |
| Results of analysis (levels found) |  |
| Method of analysis (also limits of detection and variation) |  |
| **5. DISTRIBUTION DETAILS** |  |
| Where was the feed first placed on the market? |  |
| Has the feed been used? If so, detail number and species/type of animal  *(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)* |  |
| Any details of further distribution available – quantities/areas/establishments/intermediaries including other Member States and third countries if applicable |  |
| **Has clinical illness occurred in animals? If so include details of type of illness as well as numbers and species of animals affected.** |  |
| Have any potentially affected products entered the food chain, (meat, eggs, milk etc) |  |
| **Has clinical illness occurred in humans? If so include details of type of illness as well as numbers of consumers affected.** |  |
| **6. WHAT ENFORCEMENT ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN?** e.g.relevant parties been informed, been advised on appropriate action, samples taken for analysis, seizures etc…**COPIES OF ANALYTICAL RESULTS AND STATUTORY NOTICES TO BE SENT WITH THIS REPORT FORM TO THE FSA** |  |
| **7. IS THERE MEDIA INTEREST?**  If there has been a press release please send to the FSA with this form |  |
| **8. ANY FURTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION** |  |

Signed: Date:

Job Title:

If this incident is deemed to be significantly serious, this information must be sent by Operational Command chairperson to the Incidents NI and Executive support mailboxes. If this information is being sent outside normal working hours, please contact the FSA ‘out of hours number’ to alert the agency that an Animal Feedingstuffs Incident Report Form has been forwarded. This will then form the basis of a RASFF (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed) to inform the European Commission and other member states about this incident.

E-MAIL:[incidents.ni@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:incidents.ni@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

**CC** : [executive.support@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:executive.support@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

**FSA out-of-hours telephone number: 078 8447 3022**

# Annex 7 - Operational Command Event Log

Typical event log table headings:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** | | **Staff informed** | | **Action/feedback received** | | | **Further action** | | **Additional information** |
|  | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Inclusion rates and deliveries** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | |  |  |  | |  |  | |  | |
| **Customer Deliveries** | | **Tonnes** | **Start** | **End** | | **% ingredient in finished feed** | **Estimated level of total undesirable based on indicative result** | | **Estimated level of total undesirables based on Agricultural Analyst result** | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Customer Returns** | **Tonnes** | **Date** | **Returned to (location):** |

# Annex 8 - Standard Agenda for Operational Command Meetings

**Agenda –** [Insert Name of Incident]

**Operational Command Meeting**

Ref Number: [Insert Reference Number]

Date/Time: [Insert date]/ [Insert time]

Location: [Insert location]

1. Action log
2. Issues from Strategic & Tactical Command
3. Investigation update & Review of Events Log
4. Policy and legislative update
5. Science and diagnostics update
6. Risk Assessment - Review
7. Incident response; resourcing; impact on routine business
8. East-West/North-South Government Considerations
9. Communications
   * Internal DAERA
   * Internal NICS Departments/Agencies
   * External Industry
   * External Wider Public
   * External Political
   * External Media
10. Issues for Tactical Command/TMG
11. AOB

Date of next meeting

**Annex 9 - R006a Animal Feedingstuffs Incident Information Request Form**

**Agri-Food Inspection Branch |** Feed & Food Inspectorate

R006a Animal Feedingstuffs Incident Information Request Form - Guidance

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Inspector** |  |  |  | Date | **/ /** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Mill Name** |  |  |
| **Raw Material** |  |  | **Address** |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Supplier** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | *(tonnes)* |
| **Raw Material** | **Quantity Raw Material Received** | | |  |  |
| **Quantity in store** | |  |  |  |
| **Quantity Raw Material sold straight** | | |  |  |
| **Quantity Raw Material used in compound feed** | | | |  |
| **Compound Feed** | | | | | |
|  |  |  | *(tonnes)* | | |
| **Ration Name** | **Ration Type** | **% Raw Material in Ration** | **Quantity Made** | **Quantity In Store** | **Quantity Sold** |
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| **Comments** |  | | | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Inspector signature |  |
| Date |  |
| Hard copy/scanned original attached | Please give details: |

**Continue on additional sheets if necessary - OFFICIAL SENSITIVE**

# Annex 10 - R006b Animal Feedingstuffs Incident Customer Details Report Form

**Agri-food Inspection Branch |** Feed & Food Inspectorate

R006b Animal Feedingstuffs Incident Customer Details Report Form - Guidance

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ration** | |  |  |  |
| **Name** | **Type** | **Quantity (tonnes)** | **Supplied To** | **Address** |
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| --- | --- |
| Inspector signature |  |
| Date |  |
| Hard copy/scanned original attached | Please give details: |

**Continue on additional sheets if necessary - OFFICIAL SENSITIVE**

Annex 11 - Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

What is RASFF?

Launched in 1979, the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) is primarily a tool to exchange information between competent authorities on consignments of food and feed in cases where a risk to human health has been identified and measures have been taken. Measures include: withholding, recalling, seizing or rejecting products. This rapid exchange of information allows all Member States, in real time, to check whether they are also affected and if urgent action is needed. If a risky food or feed product is already on the market and should not be consumed, the Member States' authorities have the power to take an array of emergency measures, including giving direct information to the public.

How does RASFF work in practice?

First the problem is notified by the member of the network who has information relating to the existence of a serious direct or indirect risk to human health deriving from food or feed, using the template in **Annex 6** of this document. This information is immediately notified to the Commission through RASFF who in turn immediately transmits to the other members of the network.

Once the information is received, other Member States will check to see if they are concerned. If the product is on their market they will be able to trace it using the information in the notification. They will report back on what they have found and what measures they have taken.

What are the criteria for sending a notification via RASFF?

Member States must immediately notify the Commission via RASFF when they take action to avoid risk to human health linked to food and feed.

The specific criteria for notification set out in Article 50 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002 are as follows:

* any measure they adopt which is aimed at restricting the placing on the market or forcing the withdrawal from the market or the recall of food or feed in order to protect human health and requiring rapid action;
* any recommendation or agreement with professional operators which is aimed, on a voluntary or obligatory basis, at preventing, limiting or imposing specific conditions on the placing on the market or the eventual use of food or feed on account of a serious risk to human health requiring rapid action;
* Any rejection related to a direct or indirect risk to human health, of a batch, container or cargo of food or feed by a competent authority at a border post within the European Union.

# Annex 12 - Powers of entry and seizure

1. Agriculture Act 1970 (83)
2. The Animal Feed (Hygiene, Sampling etc. and Enforcement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016; Regulation 27 & 28
3. Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 (as amended); Regulations 34 and 35.
4. The Official Feed and Food Controls Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009

# Annex 13 - Media Handling Plan

Once an incident has been triggered DAERA Press Office should be advised as soon as possible and kept up to date as the situation is assessed and decisions are made. Where possible a senior member of press office should be involved in key meetings.

An **action plan** should be drawn up to ensure that the Department communicates the right information, to the right people, at the right time and in the right way

In the initial stages of an emerging incident a short **holding statement** should be prepared. This holding statement can be used, until any emerging details can be confirmed as accurate. Once more details are known and confirmed accurate further information should be issued in a timely way.

From the outset we need to:

* Be clear at all times what the issue is and the message/instruction we wish to convey to the target audience and the public at large.
* Identify particular staff to deal with the media in relation to briefings and interviews.
* Consideration should be given to when it is appropriate for the Minister to take part in media interviews and when officials should take part.
* Establish a plan for the issue of press releases if this is deemed necessary
* Facilitate any press briefings and conferences organised by Press Office if deemed necessary.
* Consider the use of the DAERA website, farming press, radio and broadcast as appropriate in conjunction with the Press Office.
* DAERA Press Office to liaise with other press offices as necessary to ensure that messages are co-ordinated. This includes FSA and DAFM as well as other Government press offices. The PSNI may also be brought into the circle if appropriate.
* Print and advertising/press notices required to be co-ordinated by DAERA Press Office and Graphics Unit.

It is likely that a major incident may require ongoing media handling spanning days or even weeks, possibly on a 24-hour basis. In planning the Press Office capacity consideration will need to be given to staff rotas and the need to supplement the pool from the EIS and other Departmental Offices.

**Recovery**

When a major incident is over there may still be media interest and DAERA Press Office will continue to manage this. DAERA Press Office will maintain a database of media responses issued during the crisis and this will offer solid foundation for any further queries afterwards.

# Annex 14 Part A - Animal Feeds DAERA/DAFM Feed Incident Early Warning Protocol

**Background & Purpose**

A number of feed related incidents over recent years have, to a greater or lesser extent, impacted on our local agri-food industries. In a number of these instances the dual-jurisdiction dimension of the incident meant it was important for DAFM/DAERA feed officials to interact effectively to ensure compliance with EU Feed Regulations.

The purpose of this early warning protocol is to ensure that key pieces of information are provided to the competent enforcement authority in the neighbouring jurisdiction, in a timely manner, enabling them to respond appropriately to a feed incident. A system of early notification of feed incidents is therefore an important step in enabling a prompt response.

**Action to be taken**

**In the event of a feed incident arising in either jurisdiction, the competent enforcement authority will ensure that the following actions are carried out:**

1. As soon as DAFM or DAERA become aware of a feed incident linked in any way to the neighbouring jurisdiction, the Head of the Feed section or their appointed deputy will make contact with their counterparts. Efforts to make contact will continue until verbal or written confirmation (e.g. via email) from the neighbouring jurisdiction is received.
2. An initial report outlining the following available information should be completed and shared with the neighbouring jurisdiction based on the template below in **Annex 14** **Part B**.
3. If DAFM/ DAERA Feed officials become aware of a press release or of any media interest in an incident in their jurisdiction, they will notify their counterparts and provide available details.
4. Copies of RASFF’s (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed) will be copied to Feed Enforcement Counterparts in the neighbouring jurisdiction.
5. DAERA/DAFM will inform their counterparts of enforcement action in relation to the incident such as, detention, prohibition notices, etc.
6. This protocol will be reviewed annually by DAFM/DAERA Feed Enforcement authorities to ensure it is current and fit for purpose.

**Annex 14 Part B - DAERA/DAFM Incident Notification Template**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ACTION** | **ACTION DETAILS** |
| 1 | **Background to the incident** |  |
| 2 | **Risk Assigned & Incident** **detail**  (may be an attachment detailing mills, farms, products etc. involved) |  |
| 3 | **Person(s) contacted**  (Within DAFM/DAERA, other official bodies) |  |
| 4 | **Management/Ministerial brief**  (when issued – key points) |  |
| 5 | **Press Release**  (When issued, copy attached or to be sent) |  |
| 6 | **RASFF status**  (when sent or due to be sent to Commission, copy attached or to be sent) |  |
| 7 | **Enforcement measures**  e.g. Detention Notices issued |  |

# Annex 15 - Incident Review/Final Report

**Incident Review/Final Report –** [Insert Name of Incident]

Ref Number: [Insert Reference Number]

Date/Time: [Insert date]/ [Insert time]

BUSINESS AREA: Animal Feed Safety Incident Operational/Tactical\* Command

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: [Insert Name]

CONTACT DETAILS: [Insert phone/email]

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Review Area** | **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** | **Opportunities** |
| Notification/Preliminary Actions |  |  |  |
| Risk Assessment Process |  |  |  |
| Conduct of investigation/information flow |  |  |  |
| Operation of Command Structures |  |  |  |
| Internal/External Communications (TMG/FSA/Industry Stakeholders) |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Achievement of Plan Objectives** | **Yes *(Describe)*** | **No *(Describe)*** |
| * 1. In its role as lead Department for animal feedingstuffs incidents to ensure DAERA manages all feed incidents consistently and promptly in order to eliminate or minimise the risk to animals and/or humans. |  |  |
| * 1. To provide guidance to all relevant DAERA staff, so that in the event of an incident, DAERA, the FSA and others can take effective and immediate action. |  |  |
| * 1. To ensure procedures for escalation are followed and DAERA’s MERP is activated when required. |  |  |
| * 1. To ensure that where the issue becomes a matter of food safety there is a smooth transition to FSA as lead Government Department. |  |  |

**Action Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Action** | **Responsible** | **Date** | **Update** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

1. FFIMG forms part of the Civil Contingency Thematic work group covering the NI Food/Fuel Supply Chain. It is chaired by DAERA’s Chief Veterinary Officer. FFIMG is responsible for ensuring that the strategic approach in any food or feed incident is mindful of the impact on the food and feed industry in Northern Ireland. It will ensure that all relevant primary personnel, including the Minister and the Northern Ireland Executive, are kept fully appraised of the situation and can feed into the strategic approach taken. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Procedures for the Agri-food Inspection Branch Incident Support Team are available at AE1/17/90047  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Procedures for setting up a helpline/web presence are in the AfIB Incident Support Protocol. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)