

Food Standards Agency: Information released under the Freedom of Act

Date released: 10 January 2019

Request

I am interested in animal welfare non-compliance, I was requesting more information than the dataset you have linked to.

Can you provide me with further information about each non-compliance event from the introduction of the data in April 2017? I would like the date, location and description of each event.

I would like to receive the information in an electronic format. If you feel that a substantive response to this request is not possible within a reasonable timeframe or the request is too broad, I would be grateful if you could contact me by email and provide assistance as to how I could refine the request.

Response

The data you have requested is provided the Excel Spreadsheet. Some information (establishment name, approval number and geographical location) has been redacted and replaced with a deterministic modifier, using a unique code to identify each establishment.

Animal welfare non-compliances are categorised from 2-4. A full definition of these scores is included in the Manual for Official Controls section 3.4.3, page 26. But in summary they are defined as:

Score	Descriptor	Definition
2	Minor non-compliance	An isolated low risk situation observed with the requirements of legislation but with no immediate risk of injury, avoidable pain distress or suffering. There was a technical infringement that does not impact on the welfare of animals.
3	Serious non-compliance	Welfare practices were observed as failing to comply with the requirements of legislation and there was no potential risk to animals. There were no animals suffering any avoidable pain, distress or

		suffering during their killing and related operations. This may lead to a situation that poses a risk to animals, causing pain, distress or suffering, which would result in a 4 score. Welfare of animals during transportation was suspected to be compromised.
4	Critical non-compliance	Welfare practices were observed as failing to comply with legislative requirements, and there was evidence of animals suffering avoidable pain, distress or suffering during their killing and related operations or a contravention poses a serious and imminent risk to animal welfare. Welfare of animals during transportation was seriously compromised with evidence of animals suffering unnecessary or avoidable pain, distress or suffering. DOA red meat animals will require a 4 score as the cause of death is not determined. These will be referred to the Local Authority.

Background

The FSA is responsible for the delivery of official controls in approved meat establishments (slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments) subject to veterinary control within England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This work is carried out for the FSA by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland through a Service Level Agreement.

The FSA monitors and enforces welfare compliance in approved slaughterhouses on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in England and Wales through a Service Level

Agreement. The FSA has a zero tolerance approach to animal welfare breaches and all staff are instructed to take prompt and proportionate enforcement action where breaches are identified. This means that we apply the enforcement hierarchy in a way that allows informal enforcement action to be taken where breaches are minor and where we believe that this will be effective in avoiding future non-compliance, and take formal action, such as serving of notices in cases where non-compliance falls into the most severe categories which may have caused pain or suffering or where informal enforcement has not resulted in subsequent compliance by the business operator.

FSA official veterinarians and meat hygiene inspectors, either employed by the FSA, or supplied through an approved contractor, are routinely present during processing of animals. They carry out a range of duties, including ante-mortem and post-mortem checks (checks on live animals and carcasses and offal) which include checks on the health and welfare of animals presented for slaughter. These official control duties ensure that food businesses operators have produced meat in accordance with regulatory requirements, with a health mark applied to show that meat is safe to enter the food chain.

A number of reported animal welfare non-compliances relate to the suitability of transport facilities and condition of the animals upon arrival at an abattoir from a farm. These are separate to any issues occurring at the abattoir, but are detected by FSA officials on the animals' arrival. The findings are referred to Local Authorities / Trading Standards Officers in the case of welfare in transport issues, and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) where the issue originated on farm. Local Authority / Trading Standards Officers have enforcement responsibility for transport, with APHA enforcing welfare issues on farm. For these reasons we have not included data relating to transport or on-farm related non-compliances as these are the enforcement responsibility of either Trading Standards or APHA.