

Annex A

Request

Last year I submitted a Freedom of Information request for details of enforcement of animal welfare regulations at slaughter.

You supplied me with this information (see link), with the latest table relating to the financial year April 2013 - March 2014.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/data-and-policies/foia/foirelease/foiaeir2014/regulations-at-slaughter>

Under the Freedom of Information Act, can I now have the same information for the financial year April 2014 - March 2015.

To be clear, the details I want for this financial year are:

- a) The inspection date,***
- b) the establishment,***
- c) what was the nature of the breach, and the severity,***
- d) the species,***
- e) the injury or condition of the animal,***
- f) the action taken.***

Some of the information related to your request is being withheld from disclosure under section 31 of the Act relating to law enforcement, as was done in your previous FOI request. Further details regarding our use of this exemption is provided for in Annex C, attached to this letter. For this reason it has not been possible to provide the details of the locations of the enforcement action.

As was explained in our previous response last year under EU regulations, full responsibility for animal welfare and food safety in slaughterhouses rests with food business operators (FBOs) who must meet legislative requirements in terms of slaughterhouse design, layout and equipment. Their slaughterers must be competent and appropriately trained, and are licensed to slaughter all species presented to them. FBOs are responsible for ensuring animal needs are met and for the welfare of animals in their care.

The FSA licenses slaughterers, making sure they have the right training and competence for the types of animals they are handling, and also enforces legislation relating to animal welfare at slaughter. This work is carried out on behalf of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in England, and the Welsh and Scottish Governments in Wales and Scotland.

Specially trained Official Veterinarians (OVs) carry out checks to make sure that there have been no issues concerning the welfare of animals presented for slaughter - either when the animals were on farm, or during transport, or when the animals arrive at the slaughterhouse. These checks include making sure that the FBO has appropriate procedures in place to safeguard animal welfare. Meat Hygiene Inspectors support them with these duties.

Through monitoring of the actual slaughter process, FSA operational staff ensures that welfare at slaughter is maintained to the highest standards. Checks are made on the positioning of stunning equipment, the effectiveness of the stun, and the efficiency of bleeding, so that the risk of any animal suffering during the process is minimised. This includes monitoring of slaughter by religious methods including special restraint facilities that may be in place for this purpose.

OVs are required to record all issues of non-compliance in relation to the Welfare Regulations on the FSA's Animal Welfare Database. There are three categories of non-compliance that may be recorded.

- The first is when an isolated low risk situation is observed against the requirements of legislation but is not a non-compliance likely to cause risk of injury, avoidable pain, distress or suffering (2 score), this was introduced from October 2014.
- The second category relates to when animals welfare practices were observed as failing to comply with requirements of Council Regulation (EC) 1099/2009, but there was no evidence of animals suffering any avoidable pain, distress or suffering during killing (3 Score).
- The third is where there was evidence of animals suffering avoidable pain, distress or suffering during killing (4 score). Where non-compliances are observed, OVs will carry out appropriate enforcement action, and depending on the nature of the non-compliance, may refer incidents for prosecution.

The attached spreadsheet (Annex B) details the information you have requested and has been taken from the animal welfare database, as was done in response to your previous FOI request last year. The information which has been included is as follows:

- a) The inspection date – *Column C details the date the Welfare Exception was observed, this will be the same date as the date of inspection.*
- b) The establishment – *Column D details this information but has been redacted.*
- c) What was the nature of the breach, and the severity – *Columns F-K detail this information*
- d) The species – *Column L details this information*
- e) The injury or condition of the animal – *Column M details this information (where available). Please note for some Welfare Exceptions recorded, the condition of the animal is not described as the issue is in relation to the processes undertaken, for example if there is an issue with the stunning and killing then the animals condition prior to this would have been confirmed as fit for slaughter at ante-mortem inspection.*
- f) The action taken – *Column N details this information (please note in column N - DVM is Duty Veterinary Manager)*