



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

T:
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www.defra.gov.uk

Our ref: 6128
Date: 10/01/2014

Dear

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Number of parties consulted on the data to be published in the FQA Register and the percentage of those consulted who were in agreement.

Thank you for your request for information about the number of parties consulted on the data to be published in the FQA Register and the percentage of those consulted who were in agreement, which we received on 11th December 2013. As you know, we have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information and give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Here is the information you requested:

We wrote to all 835 individual licence holders who hold FQA units on the 19th November 2013 and all 343 licence holders or companies who hold FQA units on dummy licences on the 21st November 2013. In our correspondence we advised licence holders which details we proposed to publish and invited them to comment. Defra had only written 4 responses, all of which disagreed with us about the need to publish the exact amounts and break down of FQA units held by each holder. Defra also had 3 telephone calls which were asking for general information about the FQA register and they made no comment to either agreeing or disagreeing with what was proposed to be published. Marine Scotland had 10 phone calls asking for general information about the FQA register, none of which disagreed with what was proposed to be published. Marine Scotland also had one response from a Producer Organisation which was in agreement with both the register being published and the level of data to be provided.

In addition to this, Defra had a meeting with 3 representatives of NFFO on the 9th October 2013 to discuss any possible commercial harm arising from the FQA register. During this meeting the 3 representatives expressed concerns over the publication of detailed information such as the exact amounts and break down of FQA units held by each holder.



As you know, there is significant public interest in the information on the FQA register. Careful consideration was, however, given to the level of data to be published on the Register to ensure that it would not cause significant harm to quota holders' commercial interests, and to ensure that disclosure of any personal data would not breach the Data Protection Act.

In compliance with the EIRs, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours

T:

Annex A

Copyright

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF