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for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

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**Your ref:**  
**Our ref:** RFI 5677  
**Date:** 20 August 2013

Dear,

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: IMPACT OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

Thank you for your request for information about the days lost and cost to the public purse of industrial action, which we received on 25 July 2013. As you know, we have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

“Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, can you please provide the following data?”

- i) How many working days have been lost in your department, and among those you employ, as a result of industrial action since the 2010 general election?
- ii) What has been the cost to the public purse of covering for strike absence, or due to lost productivity, as a result of the industrial action?”

The information provided is in respect of Defra and its Executive Agencies, which are:

- Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agencies (AHVLA)
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (core DEFRA)
- Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA)
- Regional Payments Authority (RPA)
- Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)

The information you requested is as follows:

1. The table below sets out the number of days lost due to industrial action in the core Department and its agencies since the 2010 general election. We have shown total numbers of days lost, rather than instances in each year. Where strike action lasted for half a day we have shown the actual time lost rather than the number of people who went out on strike.



<b>CORE &amp; AGENCIES</b>	<b>Number of days lost 2010</b>	<b>Number of days lost 2011</b>	<b>Number of days lost 2012</b>	<b>Number of days lost 2013</b>	<b>Total</b>
AHVLA	0	678	225	318	1,221
Cefas	0	141	5	0	146
Core Defra	0	768	245	230	1,243
FERA	0	239	1	5	245
RPA	0	2,401	1,357	1,830	5,588
VMD	0	10	5	2	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	0	4,237	1,838	2,385	8,460

Please note the data shown in the above table is by calendar year

2. Since the General Election on Thursday 6 May 2010 a total of 8,460 working days were lost due to industrial action. There have been 7 occasions on which industrial action has taken place. Action consisted of strike action, lasting for a single or half day. In most cases the action was due to either changes to the Civil Service Pension Scheme, Pay or Civil Service Reform.

3. Employees who were absent due to strike action were not paid and the time they were absent did not count towards their reckonable service for compensation or pensions.

4. There has been no additional cost to the public purse for covering strike action as a result of industrial action. Employees going on strike did not have a significant impact on delivery in core Defra or its Agencies work and no additional resources were needed to cover for employees who were absent.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

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 sincerely,

David Pearsall

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**Email.**David.Pearsall@defra.gsi.gov.uk

## **Annex A**

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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](mailto: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