

Environment Agency permitting decisions

Variation

We have decided to issue the variation for Grange Farm, Hall Farm and Old Hall Farm operated by Mr Steven Wilkinson & Mrs June Wilkinson (trading as Wilkinson Brothers).

The variation number is [EPR/EP3831MA/V007](#)

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

Purpose of this document

This decision document:

- explains how the application has been determined
- provides a record of the decision-making process
- shows how all relevant factors have been taken into account
- justifies the specific conditions in the permit other than those in our generic permit template.

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

Structure of this document

- Key issues
- Annex 1 the decision checklist
- Annex 2 the consultation and web publicising

Key issues of the decision

This installation consists of three aggregated farms: Grange Farm Poultry Unit (centred on TF 04923 76760), Hall Farm (centred on TF 04364 76639) and Old Hall Farm (centred on TF 04210 76567 and TF 04233 75975).

Grange Farm Poultry Unit currently comprises eight poultry houses with side wall inlets and roof ridge extraction fans.

This variation is to increase the number of broilers on Grange Farm Poultry Unit by 50,000 making a total of 310,000. The variation will also include a new poultry house, to accommodate the increase in bird numbers, with fully littered floors and high velocity roof fans. The total numbers of birds over the three farms will be:-

- Grange Farm, 310,000 broilers
- Hall Farm, 27,500 breeder/layer places
- Old Hall Farm, 15,100 breeder/layer places

The total will therefore be 352,600.

The total number of poultry houses will increase to nine. The Operator will also be installing re-circulation units and fans in the eighth poultry house in line with those used in buildings one to seven.

The total area of the site will be extended at the north-west corner to accommodate the additional poultry house. The land where the poultry house will be located has historically been used for agricultural purposes. The site condition report for Grange Farm demonstrates that there are no hazards to land or groundwater and no historic contamination on site that may present a hazard.

The changes to ammonia emissions from the installation, as a result of the increase in bird numbers, have been assessed. The assessment demonstrates that impact at local conservation sites, within the relevant screening distances, is not likely to be significant.

Table S3.4 has also been renumbered as Table S3.3 in order to correct a typographical error in a previous variation.

Emissions to Land and Groundwater

Wash waters from cleaning operations at Grange Farm will go to the existing drainage system and will continue to be operated using the existing operating techniques. There are no other changes to activities at Grange Farm.

The site condition report for Grange Farm, Hall Farm and Old Hall Farm demonstrates that there are no hazards to land or groundwater and no historic contamination on site that may present a hazard. In addition, the Operator has confirmed that the condition of this additional area and the permitted activities which will take place on it, are the same as for the existing installation.

The site lies on Glacial Till followed by Oxford Clay providing low permeability therefore impact to ground water from activities at the site is unlikely.

Based on the measures already in place at Grange Farm, we are satisfied that there is unlikely to be any significant impact to land or groundwater

Emissions to air.

The main pollutant of concern at the installation, as a result of increasing bird numbers, is ammonia emissions. We carried out an initial ammonia screening at pre-application and concluded that the nutrient nitrogen process contribution may exceed the relevant critical load at the nearby Sudbrooke Park Local Wildlife Site (LWS) . Therefore detailed modelling would be required to assess impact at Sudbrooke Park LWS.

Based on this pre-application screening, the Applicant carried out detailed modelling using two scenarios:

1. Existing eight poultry houses each with two high velocity roof fans housing 260,000 broilers; and
2. Proposed change to nine poultry houses each with two high velocity roof fans housing 310,000 broilers

The modelling assessed ammonia against the appropriate level of 3.0 µg/m³ and concluded that the greatest contribution of ammonia levels, and nutrient nitrogen critical load would occur at the most northern point of the LWS. The contribution at this location, for each scenario, is detailed in the Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Scenario 1, ammonia process contribution for 260,000 broilers

Location	EQS/EAL (µg/m ³)	PC (µg/m ³)	PC as % Of EQS/EAL
Sudbrooke Park LWS	3.0	0.522	17.4

Table 2: Scenario 2, ammonia process contribution for 310,000 broilers

Location	EQS/EAL (µg/m ³)	PC (µg/m ³)	PC as % Of EQS/EAL
Sudbrooke Park LWS	3.0	0.666	22.2

The Operator's modelling shows that although there is an increase in ammonia at the LWS of less than 5% of the relevant standard, it is still significantly less than the screening criteria for the nearby LWS.

The Operator's modelling of nutrient nitrogen concluded that the greatest contribution would occur at the most northern point of the LWS. The contribution at this point, for each scenario, is detailed in the Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3: Scenario 1, nutrient nitrogen critical load for 260,000 broilers

Location	EQS/EAL (10 kg N ha/yr)	PC (kg N ha/yr)	PC as % Of EQS/EAL
Sudbrooke Park LWS	10.0	2.682	26.8

Table 4: Scenario 2, nutrient nitrogen critical load for 310,000 broilers

Location	EQS/EAL (10 kg N ha/yr)	PC (kg N ha/yr)	PC as % Of EQS/EAL
Sudbrooke Park LWS	10.0	3.424	34.2

The modelling shows that although there is an increase in the nutrient nitrogen critical load of approximately 8%, it is still significantly less than the screening criteria for the nearby LWS.

We carried out detailed check modelling and sensitivity analysis of the Operator's modelling based on the Operator's modelling files. We also carried out sensitivity analysis on additional non-statutory sites within 2km; British Rail Wood LWS and Ash Holt LWS.

Based on our assessment and check modelling, we agree with the Operator's conclusions that the contribution of ammonia to the critical level or the nitrogen critical load from the proposed increase of broilers, is unlikely to be greater than screening criteria at any of the nearby habitat receptors.

The Operator did not include acid deposition in their air modelling assessment. However, we carried out sensitivity checks for acidity at the relevant local wildlife sites. Our checks indicate that there are unlikely to be any exceedances of the critical load.

Conclusion

Based on the measures already in place at the installation, we are satisfied that the proposed increase in broilers at Grange Farm is not likely to pose a significant risk to the environment or lead to an exceedance of the relevant environmental standards.

Annex 1: decision checklist

This document should be read in conjunction with the Duly Making checklist, the application and supporting information and permit / notice.

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
Consultation		
Scope of consultation	The consultation requirements were identified and implemented. The decision was taken in accordance with RGN 6 High Profile Sites, our Public Participation Statement and our Working Together Agreements.	✓
Responses to web publicising	The web publicising, responses (Annex 2) were taken into account in the decision. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance.	✓
Operator		
Control of the facility	We are satisfied that the applicant (now the operator) is the person who will have control over the operation of the facility after the grant of the permit. The decision was taken in accordance with EPR RGN 1 Understanding the meaning of operator.	✓
European Directives		
Applicable directives	All applicable European directives have been considered in the determination of the application.	✓
The site		
Extent of the site of the facility	The operator has provided a plan which we consider is satisfactory, showing the extent of the site of the facility. A plan is included in the permit and the operator is required to carry on the permitted activities within the site boundary.	✓
Site condition report	The operator has provided a description of the condition of the site. The operator has extended the area of the site in the north west corner to accommodate an additional poultry house (referenced as shed 9). They have confirmed that the condition of this additional area and the permitted activities which will take place on it, are the same as for	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
	<p>the existing installation.</p> <p>We consider this description is satisfactory. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on site condition reports and baseline reporting under IED–guidance and templates (H5).</p>	
Biodiversity, Heritage, Landscape and Nature Conservation	<p>The application is within the relevant distance criteria of a site of heritage, landscape or nature conservation, and/or protected species or habitat.</p> <p>An assessment of the application and its potential to affect the local wildlife sites has been carried out (using the Ammonia Screening Tool v4.4) as part of the permitting process. The only change resulting from this variation applies to the Grange Farm area of the site. This is the only area which has been included in the pre-application screening.</p> <p>The increase in ammonia resulting from the increased bird numbers indicated a potential exceedance of the nutrient nitrogen critical load at Sudbrooke LWS. Therefore the Applicant carried out detailed modelling and concluded that there would be no exceedance of the critical load at this site. We carried out check modelling and sensitivity analysis and agree with the Operator's conclusion. Therefore we consider that the application will not affect the features of the sites.</p> <p>Formal consultation has been carried out with HSE, West Lindsey District Council Planning Department and West Lindsey District Council Environmental Protection. The consultation responses (Annex 2) were taken into account in the permitting decision.</p>	✓
Environmental Risk Assessment and operating techniques		
Environmental risk	<p>We have reviewed the operator's assessment of the environmental risk from the facility.</p> <p>The operator's risk assessment is satisfactory.</p> <p>The assessment shows that, applying the conservative criteria in our guidance on Environmental Risk Assessment or similar methodology supplied by the operator and reviewed by ourselves, all emissions may be categorised as environmentally insignificant</p>	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
Operating techniques	<p>We have reviewed the techniques used by the operator and compared these with the relevant guidance notes.</p> <p>The additional area of the site being added as a result of this variation will be operated using the same operating techniques as the other areas of the site.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water delivered via nipple drinkers to minimise spillage. • Water usage is monitored daily. • Wash down water is directed to a foul water storage tank. • High velocity roof fans (minimum efflux velocity of 7m/s) to improve dispersion of emissions. • Carcasses removed daily by an approved contractor. • Litter is transported on covered vehicles. <p>The proposed techniques for control are in line with the benchmark levels contained in the Sector Guidance Note EPR6.09 and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility. The permit conditions ensure compliance with relevant BREFs and BAT Conclusions.</p>	✓
The permit conditions		
Incorporating the application	<p>We have specified that the applicant must operate the permit in accordance with descriptions in the application, including all additional information received as part of the determination process.</p> <p>These descriptions are specified in the Operating Techniques table in the permit.</p>	✓
Operator Competence		
Environment management system	<p>There is no known reason to consider that the operator will not have the management systems to enable it to comply with the permit conditions. The decision was taken in accordance with RGN 5 on Operator Competence.</p>	✓
Relevant convictions	<p>The National Enforcement Database has been checked to ensure that all relevant convictions have been</p>	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
	<p>declared.</p> <p>No relevant convictions were found.</p> <p>The operator satisfies the criteria in RGN 5 on Operator Competence.</p>	
Financial provision	There is no known reason to consider that the operator will not be financially able to comply with the permit conditions. The decision was taken in accordance with RGN 5 on Operator Competence.	✓

Annex 2: Consultation and web publicising.

Summary of responses to consultation and web publication and the way in which we have taken these into account in the determination process.

Response received from
Health and Safety Executive
Brief summary of issues raised
HSE has no comments to make on this application.
Summary of actions taken or show how this has been covered
No further action required.

Response received from
West Lindsey District Council Planning Department
Brief summary of issues raised
The LA Area Development Officer responded that as an authority they have no objections or observation in relation to this application.
Summary of actions taken or show how this has been covered
No further action necessary.

Response received from
West Lindsey District Council Environmental Protection
Brief summary of issues raised
Environmental Health team did not respond.
Summary of actions taken or show how this has been covered
No further action necessary.

No external / local consultation responses were received in response to the web publication which ended 18/09/14.