



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Our ref: RFI 6632
Date: 01/08/2014

Dear ██████████

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Social Media Analysis

Thank you for your request for information about analysis and monitoring of social media, which we received on 03 June. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). We apologise for the delay in responding to your request.

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked us for:

For the period 1st March to 31st May inclusive:

Any reports, summaries, logs or commentaries you have produced or received containing information on the incidence and/ or nature of material on social media such as Facebook and Twitter (and the sources/ authors of that material) related to the culling of badgers and bovine TB policies more widely.

Please also disclose any email correspondence, internal or external (redacted as necessary) relating to and/ or reviewing any such reports, summaries, logs or commentaries that is eligible to be released

We identified a number of items which fall under the scope of your request. Following careful consideration, we have decided not to disclose this information as it falls under the exception in regulation 12 (5)(a) of the EIRs, which relate to public security and the health and safety of staff.



In applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure.

We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of information concerning social media analysis as bovine TB is a subject of much parliamentary and public interest. Government digital engagement with social media plays an increasingly important role in the policy process, which can be highlighted by the social media analysis we have provided in response to your request.

On the other hand, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information because releasing our social media monitoring would detrimentally impact the ability of Defra security staff to protect ministers, staff and their families, as well as the wider Defra estate. Social media monitoring plays a key role in assessing the risk to ministers and staff. Revealing how and from where this information is collated would seriously impact the ability of Defra security staff to protect ministers and staff across the Defra estate. Anti-cull activists have already previously attempted to trespass on Defra property and have harassed staff and those linked to the pilot culls. Our staff, Ministers (and their families) working away from the office and at home would also be placed in a position of much higher risk. It is not in the public interest to disclose information which endangers staff.

Therefore, we have concluded that, in all the circumstances of the case, the information should be withheld.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of 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,

Defra TB Programme
Ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the [Intellectual Property Office's website](#).

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