



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

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[REDACTED]
{By Email}

Our Ref: ATIC1209

13 December 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about avian influenza which we received on 22 November 2017. Your request has been handled under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

The information you requested and our response is detailed below:

- “How many individual dead wild birds, of which species, were tested for bird flu viruses in England, in each month from, and including, September 2016 to, and including, April 2017?”

[Please see Appendix 1 for the information requested.](#)

- How many individual live wild birds, of which species, were tested for bird flu viruses in England, in each month from, and including, September 2016 to, and including, April 2017?

[There is no longer a requirement to test live wild birds for bird flu. Therefore no live wild birds were tested as part of our annual surveillance in this period.](#)

- How many shot Pheasants were tested for bird flu viruses in England, in each month from, and including, September 2016 to, and including, April 2017?

[There is no longer a requirement to test shot birds for bird flu. Therefore no shot birds were tested as part of our annual surveillance in this period.](#)

- Which species (plural) of wild bird does Defra regard as the most likely carriers of bird flu to commercial poultry flocks and on what basis is that assessment made?

[There is a list of species of wild bird which are considered the most important in the transmission of avian influenza. This list is used to drive our wild bird](#)

surveillance and testing. The list has been drawn up using the best expert evidence at the European Food Safety Authority and has recently been reviewed. The report is available on the EFSA website, here:

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/5018>

- What were the results of the 'full investigations' carried out to identify the source of the infections of Pheasant farms in Lancashire and Turkey farms in Lincolnshire in the winter of 2016/17?

The epidemiological reports regarding the avian influenza outbreak in 2016-17 are published online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reports-relating-to-recent-cases-of-avian-influenza-bird-flu>

- What lessons have been learned which will aid dealing with any further bird flu outbreaks?

The lessons identified from the 2016-17 outbreak are published online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-lessons-identified-from-the-december-2016-to-june-2017-outbreak>

Additionally, for any new outbreak of avian influenza we carry out epidemiological investigations into the source and spread of disease, applying genotyping results from the National Reference Laboratory, and use expert ornithologists to undertake field assessments.

- How many premises were licensed for holding gamebirds (over 50 individuals even temporarily) on 30 September 2016 and 30 September 2017? What steps has Defra carried out to ensure compliance with this regulation?"

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the information that you have requested is not held by APHA. The information therefore falls under regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to information which is not held at the time when an applicant's request is received. Please see below for further details on regulation 12(4)(a).

Background information about registering poultry:

In March 2013, the Great Britain Poultry Register was de-commissioned, with APHA's SAM database becoming the repository for recording poultry data. SAM is an internal database that records owner and animal information. You do not need a license for holding poultry as it is a registration method as explained below.

Poultry flocks must be registered with APHA if they contain 50 or more birds that are 'owned', or for which a person is responsible. Poultry flocks do not have to all be the same species. This requirement applies even if a premise is only stocked for part of the year. If fewer than 50 birds are held, there is no requirement to register. However, voluntary registration is encouraged. APHA rely upon the poultry keepers to de-register themselves.

Due to the nature of this system and the way in which poultry flocks are recorded, the poultry register only captures data extant in the system at the time a report is run. It cannot cover historical periods.

Regulation 12(4)(a)

Regulation 12(4)(a) is a qualified exception, which usually means that a public authority is required to conduct a public interest test to determine whether or not information should be disclosed or withheld. However, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who is the independent regulator for requests made under the EIRs, takes the view that a public interest test in cases where the information is not held would serve no useful purpose. Therefore, in line with the ICO's view, APHA has not conducted a public interest test in this case.

Information disclosed in response to this EIR request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIR and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on GOV.UK, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

I attach an Annex which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you and contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Access to Information Team at the email address below or postal address at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM

Email: enquiries@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Annex

Copyright

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Complaints

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

If you wish to request an internal review, please contact: The Access to Information Team at enquiries@apha.gsi.gov.uk or at the postal address at the top of this letter, who will arrange for an internal review of your case.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have 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 APHA's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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