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of Defence

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

13 July 2017

Ref. FOI2017/06148

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 27 June 2017 requesting the following information:

**"I am writing to request information, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, on:**

- **How much food was procured for the catering operations for which your department has responsibility in (a) 2015-2016 (b) 2016-2017 in pounds.**
- **What proportion (%) of that food procured in (a) 2015-2016 (b) 2016-2017 was UK produced.**
- **Do you ensure the Government Buying Standards are adhered to?**
- **If so, how?**
- **Do you have a policy in place for procuring UK produced food for your catering operations.**
- **If so what is your policy?"**

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and I can confirm some information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below,

**How much food was procured for the catering operations for which your department has responsibility in (a) 2015-2016 (b) 2016-2017 in pounds.**

Contractors purchase approximately £100m of food a year.

**What proportion (%) of that food procured in (a) 2015-2016 (b) 2016-2017 was UK produced.**

The requested information is not held, but under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that European Commercial Law is such that we cannot specify buying British.

**Do you ensure the Government Buying Standards are adhered to?  
If so, how?**

All MOD contractors are required to abide by the current mandated Government Buying Standards (GBS) Food and Catering Services which are at present only applicable in England.

In order to maintain standards, caterers are mandated to provide a number of nutritious Core Meal choices at each mealtime. They are provided with an example 28 day menu cycle which is validated by the Institute of Naval medicine to ensure that nutritional guidelines are met. In addition to the review of the menu before menu launch, sessions are held with the contractor whereby the meals are reviewed and the contractor is asked to confirm that they meet the GBS. Where there is a conflict in policy between the JSP, GBS or Armed Forces Food Based Standards the contractor is required to provide the product at the best standard of the three. For example GBS states sausage meat should be a minimum of 47% meat content our contractors are required to provide sausages with a minimum of 55%.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) work with the TLB catering Subject Matter Experts who are on sites in order to conduct the relevant catering checks which will look at the standard of the food before food preparation ensuring that other areas of the GBS are met for such things as percentage fat/meat content, reporting to DIO as required.

**Do you have a policy in place for procuring UK produced food for your catering operations.  
If so what is your policy?"**

The requested information is not held, but under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that Contractors providing food under these arrangements are obliged to source on the open market consistent with meeting European Union (EU) quality standards and wherever competitive, give full consideration to procuring British products.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

DIO Secretariat