Ministry of Defence

Secretariat
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12 September 2019

Ref. FOI 2019/09684

Dear ██████████

Thank you for your email of 22 August 2019 requesting the following information:

"I wish to make a Freedom of Information request for information relating to the Armed Forces consumption of meat originating from outside the UK in order to understand why the British meat isn't being bought.

Specifically I am looking for the following information:

1. The quantity of meat in Kg purchased by the Armed Forces where the origin of the meat is outside the UK. To be broken down by both country of origin and meat type (beef, chicken, lamb, etc).

2. The value in £(GBP) of the meat purchased by the Armed forces where the origin of the meat is outside the UK. To be broken down by both country of origin and meat type (beef, chicken, lamb, etc).

3. Any assessments conducted by the MoD or Armed Forces on the environmental impact of importing meat from outside UK.

4. Any assessments conducted by the MoD or Armed Forces on the cost of purchasing meat from outside the UK compared to purchasing meat from within the UK.

When compiling the data Care should be taken to highlight where the meat has been purchased where a military unit is deployed and so UK meat is considered unavailable."

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 that no information in scope of your request is held.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to know that:

- MOD does not hold information in relation to procured foods and approved brands as this is a matter for the contractors providing the service.

- Contractors are obliged to source on the open market and, wherever competitive, give full consideration to procuring meat products.

- Contactors procure meat in line with the UK buying standards. Under the terms of the MOD contract it is in the interests of the contractor to procure meat at the lowest price. Any increase in the cost of meat will be met by the contractor and not the department.

- The contractors can set a deal with wholesalers to agree a set price for meat a year in advance, thus avoiding any seasonal fluctuations in price.

- The MOD is bound by EU public procurement directives which demand fair and open competition for all food contracts involving the expenditure of public funds. The directives do not permit the MOD to specify only British products or only to source products from a particular region.

- All food procured for MOD personnel must comply with MOD food quality standards. These standards comply with all UK and EU production standards, Farm Assurance or equivalent.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request 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.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made in writing within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at https://ico.org.uk/.

Yours sincerely,

DIO Secretariat