



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

Animal and Plant Health Agency  
Access to Information Team  
Woodham Lane  
New Haw  
Addlestone  
Surrey  
KT15 3NB

[enquiries@apha.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@apha.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/apha](http://www.gov.uk/apha)

Our Ref: ATIC2494

[REDACTED]  
{By Email}

15 September 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

## PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about sheep embryos and semen, which APHA received on 31 August 2021. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

The information you requested and our response is detailed below:

"I'm trying to find some information on exporting sheep embryos from the UK to Australia. Under the freedom of information act 2000....will it be possible to have a copy of the embryos /semen that's been shipped over to Australia already please."

You clarified on 1 September 2021 that:

"I was looking for information i.e (identification number of the Sheep, and of identification of Rams) from 2019 onwards."

Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) can confirm that 153 Export Health Certificates for embryos and semen to Australia were issued in 2019, and 213 were issued in 2020.

The specific information you have requested, regarding identification numbers is not held on APHA databases. The information is held within the individual Export Health Certificates. To provide this information each certified copy of the certificate would need to be located and the appropriate data extracted. This has therefore been withheld under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information (FOIA). Please see below. However please see this link for more general information regarding Export Health Certificates.

[Get an export health certificate - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

### Section 12

You can refuse a request if deciding whether you hold the information would mean you exceed the cost limit, for example, because it would require an extensive search in a number of locations.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

By virtue of regulation 12(2) of the FOIA, APHA may refuse to disclose information if the request for the information would involve the diversion of resources and incur excessive cost, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in applying the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. In reaching our decision with respect to the public interest, we considered the following matters:

Regulation 12(2) of the FOIA also requires public authorities to apply a presumption in favour of disclosure. However, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information. Your request covers a substantial amount of information some of which may not be held in the same location. Gathering this specific information together, would involve a significant cost and diversion of resources from APHA's other work.

Locating individual certificates, and then reviewing each certificate for the appropriate identification details will be a costly exercise. It has been estimated that this will exceed the appropriate limit, which currently stands at £600 (£25 per hour). On the basis of our estimates, we consider that the cost would exceed this limit and, as such, we are refusing your request.

Section 16 of FOIA requires APHA to provide advice and assistance to help you to focus more clearly on information that would satisfy your request without a significant burden on the Agency. Unfortunately, your request is phrased in very broad terms and requires the locating and examining of whole documents. This means that we are unable to advise on a solution that would satisfy your interest. It should be noted that it is likely that some of the information held in relation to certificates will include or amount to the personal information of the individuals involved and may therefore be exempt under the FOIA.

APHA consider that your request falls under regulation 12(2) on cost and resource grounds in determining whether all the information is held. Having carried out the above investigation, we have concluded that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest falls in favour of applying the exemption.

Information disclosed in response to this FOI request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOI 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.

An Annex is attached 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.

### **Postal requests during the COVID-19 outbreak**

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

APHA are currently experiencing delays in replying to post received. You should send queries to the relevant email address (details below) wherever possible. Please remember to include a return email address.

Yours sincerely

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM**

Email: [enquiries@apha.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@apha.gov.uk)

## Annex

### 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 or logos) can also be 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](#).

### 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 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to the Access to Information Manager at the address at the top of this letter or email [enquiries@apha.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@apha.gov.uk) and the team will arrange for an internal review of your case.

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's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted APHA's own complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted at:

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

### Coronavirus

If you need to contact the ICO during the Coronavirus pandemic, it's best to do so online. Please click [here](#) for contact details. You can also call them on 0303 123 1113.