



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

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Our Ref: ATIC2684

[REDACTED]  
{By Email}

10 March 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

## PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about avian influenza, which APHA received on 16 February 2022, and clarity on 17 February 2022. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

The information you requested and the response is detailed below:

“1/ What test Kits are you using for detecting Avian Influenza? I require the Exact Name of the Kit the supplier, the maker and addresses of both supplier and factory of production.

And clarity: Is in relation to the Test Kits, what brand and make are you supplying vets?

For the detection of Avian Influenza APHA do not used ‘off the shelf’ kits but have bespoke internationally validated assays designed in-house. These assays undertake ongoing fitness for purpose and source reagents from several suppliers both in the UK and internationally.

The laboratory protocols used in the determination of avian influenza are available to the public via the GobaFLuNet website (<https://science.vla.gov.uk/flu-lab-net/index.html>).

2/ Are you using Farm Vets (who may have experience, but not expert in Avian breeds), apposed to Avian Experts for the detection of Avian Influenza?

All veterinarians delivering Avian Influenza (AI) work on behalf of APHA are members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and meet the professional criteria to deliver the work required. The vets deployed do receive AI training and direct support from APHA staff. There is no requirement to be an specialist in poultry breeds or diseases to be able to detect signs of Avian Influenza in birds.

To make sure our work is delivered consistently, APHA has a quality assurance system in place to ensure that any vet deployed by APHA does a good job:

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.

1. During an AI outbreak all vets are briefed by a full time APHA vet before doing any APHA (surveillance or tracings) visits.
2. Any vets required to do on farm disease investigations must discuss all findings with a full time APHA vet in our Veterinary Exotics Disease Unit (VENDU) to ensure that any decision taken is both, sound and consistent with APHA protocols.
3. All vets are debriefed after their visits to ensure that correct actions have been taken and recorded properly.
4. There are Quality Assurance systems in place to ensure that audits are completed on all official forms and reports.

3/ Are you aware there are more issues with birds than just Avian influenza?

4/ Are you aware that your lockdown measures on breeds like Geese, can actually cause dietary problems that could lead to serious problems, or even death?

5/ You use APHA phone lines, to establish via question, whether people have bird Flu on their land, before they can get a vet, HOWEVER If it IS known why a Bird is ill, AND IT IS NOTHING TO DO WITH BIRD FLU, do you not realise that time is of the essence where birds and illness are concerned, and that such delays needlessly, could cause death in peoples "livestock"/pets that may otherwise have been avoided?"

As explained previously, questions 3-5 are not requests for recorded information and do not fit the criteria of a Freedom of Information request under the FOIA.

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.

Yours sincerely

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM**

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

## Annex

### Copyright

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### 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.