



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Animal and Plant Health Agency
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Our Ref: ATIC2905

[REDACTED]
{By Email}

02 November 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about Avian Influenza testing, which APHA received on 18 October 2022. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

The information you requested and the response is detailed below:

“Subject: Avian Influenza

I refer to the above subject and press release - dated 17 October 2022 - issued jointly by DEFRA and APHA.

I have noted the content and would be grateful if you could arrange to provide me with the following information from DEFRA records.

1. Details of the approved diagnostic test for Avian Influenza and”

The front-line tests routinely run are:

- Real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) for detection of virus genome
- Virus isolation in embryonated fowls' eggs
- Haemagglutination inhibition test for detection of antibodies to H5 and H7 avian influenza viruses

Approved tests also run less frequently are:

- Cleavage site nucleotide sequencing for determination of virus pathogenicity
- Intravenous pathogenicity test (IVPI) for determination of virus pathogenicity
- Neuraminidase inhibition test

Information on APHA's PCR testing used can be found here:

The currently used TC0691 real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay is the heavily validated published method of Alexander Nagy et al. 2021. Link to the published document below:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33471840/>

As a prelude to the 2021 manuscript showing the validation of the TC0691 PCR test, Alexander Nagy also published another study showing how good his PCR test design was for universal detection of avian influenza A viruses. Link to the published document below:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30733500/>

General information on testing at APHA:

[Disease Surveillance Tests \(vla.gov.uk\)](http://vla.gov.uk)

2. "A list of the approved laboratories in England, Wales and Scotland authorised to undertake the diagnostic tests for Avian Influenza."

This information is not held by APHA.

As far as APHA are aware we are the only lab in England, Wales or Scotland doing this testing. Private labs may run RT-PCR or serological tests but we are not aware who they are or their approval status.

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

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.

Email: enquiries@apha.gov.uk

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Annex

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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 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

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