



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

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

www.gov.uk/apha

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our ref: FOI2026/14381
21 July 2026

Dear [REDACTED] ,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Church Farm Yorkshire

Thank you for your request for information of 30th June about Church Farm Yorkshire .
APHA have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your information request and our response are set out below.

“Church Farm, Main Street, Ravenfield, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S65 4NA
Coordinates: 53.449327, -1.266946 County: South Yorkshire Region: Yorkshire and the
Humber Local Authority: Rotherham Operator: GW Woolhouse & Sons Ltd Permit
Reference: EPR/BP3437MR

Period covered: From 1 September 2025 to the date of your response.

I request:

1. Records of any inspection, visit, audit, or welfare assessment carried out at the site during the above period, including inspection reports and any associated notes.
2. Photographs or video footage taken during any such inspection or visit.
3. Correspondence between APHA and the operator before, during, or following any inspection or visit.
4. Any care notices, formal warnings, improvement notices, or enforcement actions issued or considered in relation to the site.
5. Records of any complaints received by APHA relating to animal welfare at the site, and records of how those complaints were handled.
6. Records of any referrals made by APHA to other bodies in connection with the site, including (but not limited to) the Environment Agency, the Crown Prosecution Service, or local authorities”

APHA can confirm that inspection records, photographs and correspondence are held in relation to your request. However, APHA have concluded that this information is exempt from disclosure under Section 41(1) and Section 43(2) of the FOIA.

Section 41(1) – Information Provided in Confidence

Some of the information you have requested is exempt from disclosure under Section 41(1) of the FOIA. Section 41 relates to information that has been provided to APHA in confidence, and the disclosure of which would constitute an actionable breach of confidence. The information was obtained from a third party.

The information you have requested (specific details regarding an inspection visit at a particular premises), was provided to APHA on a confidential basis. At the time the information was obtained, it was communicated under circumstances that imposed an expectation of confidentiality. The release of such information may undermine the trust required to support people to comply with animal welfare legislation; that is a key part of how APHA carries out its regulatory role.

Furthermore, the release under FOIA of animal welfare concerns reported to APHA by third parties would have a chilling effect on the reporting of welfare concerns, as individuals would be deterred from providing information for fear of disclosure. Releasing this information would therefore breach the trust placed in us by the third party. We believe that disclosure would give rise to an actionable breach of confidence because it was provided under confidential conditions, and both parties understood this expectation. Section 41 is an absolute exemption; there is no public interest test for APHA to apply.

Section 43(2) - Commercial Interests

The information is being withheld under the exemption at section 43(2) of the FOIA, which relates to information which if disclosed would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of the third party (including the public authority holding the information). In this case, disclosure of the records relating to inspections, visits and welfare assessments including records of complaints, evidence provided and referrals would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the relevant farm. These forms contain sensitive operational details, methods of animal care, and other information that, if disclosed, could:

- Give competitors unfair insight into individual practices;
- Affect contractual arrangements or reputational standing with associated third parties;
- Undermine the commercial viability of any organisations involved in their operations.

Section 43 is a qualified exemption, and APHA have therefore considered the public interest in disclosing the information against the public interest in maintaining the exemption. We recognise there is a general public interest in promoting transparency and accountability, particularly where inspections relate to animal welfare.

In applying this exemption, APHA have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest of releasing it. 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. We recognise that there may be general public interest in the disclosure of information concerning farm animal welfare. However, on the other hand, there are considerable factors in favour of withholding this information.

In this instance, APHA believes the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the interest in disclosure. Releasing the inspection information could result in harm to the commercial interests of the parties involved, resulting in significant financial losses, and could negatively impact the business's ability to compete for contracts with processors.

Releasing communications with the farm would also impact future cooperation with inspection and regulatory regimes, leading to an increased likelihood of stakeholders being less open and candid in their communications with APHA. This would hinder the effectiveness of inspections and investigations, compromising APHA's ability to carry out its regulatory functions and protect animal health, welfare, and public confidence in the regulatory system.

APHA have concluded that in all the circumstances of the case, the information should be withheld.

An annex is attached giving 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

enquiries@apha.gov.uk

Annex

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, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to the Access to Information Team 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 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

Please click [here](#) for further contact details.