

Permitting Decisions - Variation

We have decided to grant the variation for Wood Farm Poultry Unit operated by Stonegate Agriculture.

The variation number is EPR/HP3807LU/V002.

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

The variation is to increase pullet places from 136,000 to 408,000. To also, add eight additional houses within the installation boundary, with high velocity roof extraction with 5.5m height & 7 m/s efflux velocity with additional drainage in place for the new houses.

Purpose of this document

This decision document provides a record of the decision-making process. It

- highlights [key issues](#) in the determination
- summarises the decision making process in the [decision considerations](#) section to show how the main relevant factors have been taken into account
- shows how we have considered the [consultation responses](#)

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise, we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

Read the permitting decisions in conjunction with the environmental permit and the variation notice.

Key issues of the decision

Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs BAT Conclusions document

The Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference document (BREF) for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs (IRPP) was published on 21st February 2017. There is now a separate BAT Conclusions document which sets out the standards that permitted farms will have to meet.

All new and redeveloped housing applied for in a permit variation must be compliant with the BAT Conclusions from the first day of operation. The BAT compliance of any existing housing has been subject to a sector review, however, for some reviewed permits, only generic limits have been included and individual housing should now be considered. Any existing housing that undergoes redevelopment with changes to housing location or expansion beyond the existing footprint is classed as new plant.

There are some additional requirements for permit holders. The BAT Conclusions include BAT-Associated Emission Levels (BAT-AELs) for ammonia emissions, which will apply to the majority of permits, as well as BAT-AELs for nitrogen and phosphorus excretion.

For some types of rearing practices, stricter standards apply to farms and housing permitted after the BAT Conclusions were published.

BAT Conclusions review

There are 34 BAT Conclusion measures in total within the BAT Conclusion document dated 21st February 2017.

The Applicant has confirmed their compliance with all BAT conditions for the new housing in their document reference 'Application Variation V002 Wood Farm Poultry Unit BAT Document' and dated 13/05/2026, which has been referenced in Table S1.2 - Operating Techniques, of the permit.

The following is a more specific review of the measures the Applicant has applied to ensure compliance with the above key BAT measures:

BAT 25 Monitoring of emissions and process parameters – Ammonia emissions

Table S3.3 of the permit concerning process monitoring requires the Operator to undertake relevant monitoring that complies with these BAT Conclusions.

The Applicant has confirmed they will report the ammonia emissions to the Environment Agency annually by utilising estimation by using emission factors.

BAT 27 Monitoring of emissions and process parameters - Dust emissions

Table S3.3 of the permit concerning process monitoring requires the Operator to undertake relevant monitoring that complies with these BAT Conclusions.

The Applicant has confirmed they will report the dust emissions to the Environment Agency annually by utilising estimation by using emission factors.

Detailed assessment of specific BAT measures

Ammonia emission controls

A BAT Associated Emission Level (AEL) provides us with a performance benchmark to determine whether an activity is BAT. The BAT Conclusions document does not have a BAT-AEL for pullets and therefore an ammonia emission limit value has not been included within the permit.

The poultry house will comply with BAT 31 technique b5 (non-caged with deep litter system).

Industrial Emissions Directive (IED)

This permit implements the requirements of the European Union Directive on Industrial Emissions.

Odour management

Intensive farming is by its nature a potentially odorous activity. This is recognised in our 'How to Comply with your Environmental Permit for Intensive Farming' EPR 6.09 guidance.

Condition 3.3 of the environmental permit reads as follows:

"Emissions from the activities shall be free from odour at levels likely to cause pollution outside the site, as perceived by an authorised officer of the Environment Agency, unless the Operator has used appropriate measures, including, but not limited to, those specified in any approved odour management plan, to prevent or where that is not practicable to minimise the odour."

Under section 3.3 of the guidance, an Odour Management Plan (OMP) is required to be approved as part of the permitting process if, as is the case here, sensitive receptors (sensitive receptors in this instance excludes properties associated with the farm) are within 400 m of the installation boundary. It is appropriate to require an OMP when such sensitive receptors have been identified within 400m of the installation to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to minimise the risk of pollution from odour emissions.

There is one receptor within 400 m of the installation, however this has been confirmed by the operator to be a building used for livestock with limited human presence whose primary purpose was for farming activities and with no human residence. Therefore, we conclude that an OMP is not required for assessment. A plan was submitted but has not been assessed. The operator has provided an odour risk assessment. Condition 3.3.2 has been added to the permit to ensure an OMP is provided if odour problems arise from this site in the future.

Noise management

Intensive farming by its nature involves activities that have the potential to cause noise pollution. This is recognised in our 'How to Comply with your Environmental Permit for Intensive Farming' EPR 6.09 guidance.

Condition 3.4 of the permit reads as follows:

"Emissions from the activities shall be free from noise and vibration at levels likely to cause pollution outside the site, as perceived by an authorised officer of the Environment Agency, unless the Operator has used appropriate measures, including, but not limited to, those specified in any approved noise and vibration management plan, to prevent or where that is not practicable to minimise the noise and vibration".

Under section 3.4 of the guidance, a Noise Management Plan (NMP) is required to be approved as part of the permitting process if, as is the case here, sensitive receptors (sensitive receptors in this instance excludes properties associated with the farm) are within 400m of the installation boundary. It is appropriate to require a NMP when such sensitive receptors have been identified within 400m of the installation to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to minimise the risk of pollution from noise emissions.

There is one receptor within 400m of the installation, however this has been confirmed by the operator to be a building used for livestock with limited human presence. Therefore, we conclude that an NMP is not required for assessment. A plan was submitted but has not been assessed. The operator has provided an odour risk assessment. Condition 3.3.2 has been added to the permit to ensure an NMP is provided if odour problems arise from this site in the future.

Dust and bioaerosols management

The use of Best Available Techniques and good practice will ensure minimisation of emissions. There are measures included within the permit (the 'Fugitive Emissions' conditions) to provide a level of protection. Condition 3.2.1 'Emissions of substances not controlled by an emission limit' is included in the permit. This is used in conjunction with condition 3.2.2 which states that in the event of fugitive emissions causing pollution following commissioning of the

installation, the Operator is required to undertake a review of site activities, provide an emissions management plan and to undertake any mitigation recommended as part of that report, once agreed in writing with the Environment Agency.

In addition, guidance on our website concludes that Applicants need to produce and submit a dust and bioaerosol management plan beyond the requirement of the initial risk assessment, with their applications only if there are relevant receptors within 100 metres including the farmhouse or farm workers' houses. Details can be found via the link below:

www.gov.uk/guidance/intensive-farming-risk-assessment-for-your-environmental-permit#air-emissions-dust-and-bioaerosols.

There are no relevant receptors within 100 metres of the installation boundary.

Standby Generator

There is one standby generator with a net thermal rated input of 0.694 MWth and it will not be tested more than 50 hours per year or operated (including testing) for more than 500 hours per year (averaged over 3 years) for emergency use only as a temporary power source if there is a mains power failure.

Ammonia

The Applicant has demonstrated that the housing will meet the relevant NH₃ BAT AEL.

There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Ramsar sites located within 5 kilometres (km) of the installation boundary. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located within 5 km of the installation boundary. There are two Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within 2 km of the installation boundary.

Ammonia assessment – LWS

The following trigger thresholds have been applied for the assessment of these sites:

- If the process contribution (PC) is below 100% of the relevant critical level (CL_e) or critical load (CL_o) then the farm can be permitted with no further assessment.

Initial screening using ammonia screening tool version 4.6 (dated 21/04/2026) has indicated that emissions from Wood Farm Poultry Unit will only have a potential impact on the LWS sites with a precautionary CL_e of 1 µg/m³ if they are within 781 m of the emission source.

Beyond 781 m the PC is less than 1 µg/m³ and therefore beyond this distance the PC is insignificant. In this case all LWSs are beyond this distance (see table below) and therefore screen out of any further assessment.

Table 1 – LWS Assessment

Site	Distance from site (m)
Evedon Wood	1,926
Ruskington Pit	1,970

No further assessment is required.

Decision considerations.

Confidential information

A claim for commercial or industrial confidentiality has not been made.

Identifying confidential information

We have not identified information provided as part of the application that we consider to be confidential.

The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on confidentiality.

Consultation

The consultation requirements were identified in accordance with the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations (2016) and our public participation statement.

The application was publicised on the GOV.UK website.

We consulted the following organisations:

- Health and Safety Executive
- North Kesteven District Council- Environmental Health

The comments and our responses are summarised in the [consultation responses](#) section.

The site

The Operator has provided a plan which we consider to be satisfactory, showing the extent of the site facilities.

The plans show the location of the part of the installation to which this permit applies on that site.

The plan is included in the permit.

Nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations

We have checked the location of the application to assess if it is within the screening distances, we consider relevant for impacts on nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations. The application is within our screening distances for these designations.

We have assessed the application and its potential to affect sites of nature conservation, landscape, heritage and protected species and habitat designations identified in the nature conservation screening report as part of the permitting process.

We consider that the application will not affect any site of nature conservation, landscape and heritage, and/or protected species or habitats identified.

See Ammonia section in the Key Issues above for more details.

Environmental risk

We have reviewed the Operator's assessment of the environmental risk from the facility.

The Operator's risk assessment is satisfactory.

General operating techniques

We have reviewed the techniques used by the Operator and compared these with the relevant guidance notes and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility.

The operating techniques that the applicant must use are specified in table S1.2 in the environmental permit.

The proposed techniques for priorities for control are in line with the benchmark levels contained in the Sector Guidance Note EPR6.09 and we consider them to represent appropriate techniques for the facility. The permit conditions ensure compliance with The Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference document (BREF) for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs (IRPP) published on 21st February 2017.

Emission limits

No emission limits have been added, amended or deleted as a result of this variation.

Monitoring

We have decided that monitoring should be carried out for the parameters listed in the permit, using the methods detailed and to the frequencies specified.

Monitoring has not changed as a result of this variation.

These monitoring requirements have been imposed in order to ensure compliance with Intensive Farming BAT Conclusions document dated 21/02/2017.

Management system

We are not aware of any reason to consider that the Operator will not have the management system to enable it to comply with the permit conditions.

The decision was taken in accordance with the guidance on Operator competence and how to develop a management system for environmental permits.

Previous performance

We have checked our systems to ensure that all relevant convictions have been declared.

No relevant convictions were found.

Growth duty

We have considered our duty to have regard to the desirability of promoting economic growth set out in section 108(1) of the Deregulation Act 2015 and the guidance issued under section 110 of that Act in deciding whether to grant this permit variation.

Paragraph 1.3 of the guidance says:

“The primary role of regulators, in delivering regulation, is to achieve the regulatory outcomes for which they are responsible. For a number of regulators, these regulatory outcomes include an explicit reference to development or growth. The growth duty establishes economic growth as a factor that all specified regulators should have regard to, alongside the delivery of the protections set out in the relevant legislation.”

We have addressed the legislative requirements and environmental standards to be set for this operation in the body of the decision document above. The guidance is clear at paragraph 1.5 that the growth duty does not legitimise non-compliance, and its purpose is not to achieve or pursue economic growth at the expense of necessary protections.

We consider the requirements and standards we have set in this permit are reasonable and necessary to avoid a risk of an unacceptable level of pollution. This also promotes growth amongst legitimate operators because the standards applied to the Operator are consistent across businesses in this sector and have been set to achieve the required legislative standards.

Consultation Responses

The following summarises the responses to consultation with other organisations, our notice on GOV.UK for the public and the way in which we have considered these in the determination process.

The consultation commenced on 01/07/2026 and ended on 29/07/2026.

Responses from organisations listed in the consultation section

Response received from: North Kesteven District Council- Environmental Health on 01/07/2026

Brief summary of issues raised: North Kesteven District Council recommended that a fly and pest management plan was requested and included in the permit.

Summary of actions taken: Fly nuisance has not been highlighted as an issue at the installation therefore a pest management plan was not required. However, condition 3.6.2 has been included in the permit, which requires the Operator to submit a pest management plan to the Environment Agency should one be required.

Representations from community and other organisations

Response received from: Communities Against Factory Farming on 27/07/2026

Brief summary of issues raised, and action taken:

1. Questions relating to slurry have been answered incorrectly.

The method in which the slurry is stored and disposed of has not changed as a result of this variation and therefore question 8e was answered correctly. The discrepancy in the Technical Standards document as to where each house drains was an error and was rectified at determination. We are satisfied that the operator will be managing slurry as per our guidance.

2. Ammonia screening has not included slurry.

No manure or slurry is stored within the Installation boundary; all manure is exported from the Installation for spreading on land owned by third parties.

The land where manure may be stored or spread does not form part of the installation and so manure exported from the installation for storage and spreading outside the installation is outside the scope of our determination. The EPR scope of regulation is limited to preventing significant pollution from emissions from the installation. Emissions are substances released from the

installation whilst something exported in a controlled manner for subsequent use elsewhere is not considered an emission. The latter includes manure and litter removed as part of poultry house cleanouts.

The installation boundary for permitted farms typically includes the livestock housing, any yard and ranging areas and associated infrastructure but does not routinely include wider adjacent land. Whilst on farm slurry and manure management, yard run off and drainage are regulated by the permit, the spreading of manures and slurry to land (and the associated potential for water quality impacts) is primarily regulated through separate regulatory regimes namely the Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations (Farming Rules for Water), and, in designated areas, the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations.

Therefore the ammonia screening assessment does not need to include slurry storage at this installation.

3. The applicant should provide a map of receiving land to ensure litter and slurry are not moved to an NVZ. The impact of spreading of manure and slurry.

See response number two for details of manure and slurry movements. Also note that the Applicant has confirmed that the receiver of the manure will confirm it is spread to land in accordance with the Code of Good Agricultural Practice, or in accordance with the manure management plan for the receiving land.

4. Incorrect information on the Odour Management Plan.

As stated in this document, an Odour Management Plan was supplied. However, this was not formally required due to the building within 400 m being a building to house livestock with limited human presence, therefore the Odour Management Plan has not been assessed and does not form part of the determination process for this variation.

5. Animal welfare.

Animal welfare is not within the regulatory responsibility of the Environment Agency. It does not form part of the Permit decision making process. The Environment Agency is responsible for ensuring that the activities at the Installation do not have an unacceptable impact on the environment or human health.

The principal regulator for animal health is the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), whose main purpose is to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

6. Imported soy for animal feed and the environmental consequences.

This is not an issue under the Environment Agency's regulatory responsibility. It does not therefore fall within the scope of the Permit determination.

7. Biodiversity and habitat loss.

Given the nature of the proposed activity, there is the potential for atmospheric ammonia to be released into the environment and impact nearby sensitive habitats and species. For this reason, we have carried out an assessment of the risk and concluded that all ammonia emissions from the site are insignificant. The key issues section of this document summarises our ammonia assessment. The installation boundary is marked clearly and is included in the permit and does not encroach on local habitat sites.

8. Use of antibiotics.

The use of antibiotics does not fall within the regulatory responsibility of the Environment Agency.

9. Greenhouse Gasses.

A Greenhouse gas assessment is not required as part of the EPR permit application.

The Health and Safety Executive was also consulted but no responses were received and no public responses were received.