



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Animal and Plant Health Agency
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Our Ref: ATIC2324

Christian Wesbrook
{By Email}

26 February 2021

Dear Christian Wesbrook

PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about policy and procedures surrounding Avian Influenza outbreaks which we received on 26th January 2021. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI).

The information you requested and our response is detailed below:

“I am making a FOI request for all information related to the contagious nature of bird flu, the efficacy of isolation procedures, and what process was used in determination of DEFRA's gassing of poultry around the Kent area outbreak of bird flu.”

Please find below a link to the Policy paper - Notifiable avian disease control strategy that can be found on GOV.UK. This document contains the policy around Avian Influenza.

NAD Control Strategy

The pages of the report that should assist to answer your queries are as follows:

- Avian Influenza: parag 20-28
- Actions at suspect premises: parag 83-94
- Culling: parag 23-125

With regard to the culling process specifically, please see some further information below:

APHA assign an APHA Case Officer and Welfare Vet to oversee culling operations on an Infected Premises (IP). The Welfare Vet makes decisions on the most appropriate method of culling, taking into consideration a number of different variables. In accordance with the Great Britain Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy, APHA's priority was to complete the culling operation in an efficient and timely manner so as to

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.

minimise the risk of spread of disease whilst safeguarding the welfare of the birds at the time of killing.

In the case of the outbreak in the Kent area, Containerised Gassing Units (CGUs) were deployed as the preferred method of choice to achieve the objectives and the key principles described in the NAD control strategy. The gassing method used is a proven method for the rapid and humane depopulation of poultry premises and complies with the provisions set out in the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) regulations 2015 (WATOK) and Annex 1 of EC regulations on the protection of animals at the time of killing (EC 1099/2009). Alternate methods are also considered as part of this process and may be further deployed should any issues be identified with the primary culling method due to practical and welfare reasons to do with the anatomy of the birds.

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. During the current Coronavirus outbreak, our offices will be closed.

Yours sincerely

ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM

Email: 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 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 wish to contact the ICO please do it via email or telephone as their offices are currently closed following Government advice due to the Coronavirus pandemic. They will therefore not be able to collect correspondence sent via post. Where possible, they ask that you [contact them online](#) or call on 0303 123 1113.