

Name: Ms Annand

Ref No: FOI 1643

By email: request-238886-fb3269db@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Ms Annand,

Date: 5 December 2014

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Further to my letter of 17 November 2014 acknowledging your request for information which was received by us on 12 November 2014, I am now in a position to respond.

You requested the following:

1. The percentage prevalence of each combination of stunning and slaughter methods for the following species:

- a) cattle;*
- b) chickens - i) broilers; ii) boiling fowl;*
- c) sheep;*
- d) pigs; and*
- e) turkeys*

E.g. 1(b)(i) Chickens (broilers) - water bath stunning followed by exsanguination - 85%; captive bolt stunning followed by gassing - 2%.

Your request is being handled under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

The FSA does not routinely record the information you have requested on stunning and slaughter methods, neither do we hold it in format that you have requested. The information you have requested is, in part, in the public domain although not recorded in the manner of your question.

The FSA carried out an animal welfare survey in September 2011 in slaughterhouses in Great Britain to provide assurance that FBOs are taking active steps to comply with legal requirements; achieve necessary animal welfare standards; and official veterinarians and frontline teams are carrying out their roles

effectively, with appropriate monitoring and relevant enforcement action being taken in the event of Food Business Operator non-compliance.

Full results of the survey can be found at the following link:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/board/fsa120508annexes.pdf>

There are details in the survey of the number of animals, per species, slaughtered in a single week period and these can also be found on pages 28 -31. With fluctuations in the number of animals processed by week, it is however not appropriate to aggregate these figures to give an annual figure as that would not give an accurate reflection.

The FSA carried out a further animal welfare survey in September 2013. The results of the survey are currently being validated and will be published by the FSA later this month. As such this information is exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the FOI Act, which states that

(1) Information is exempt information if -

(a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),

(b) the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for information was made, and

(c) it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a).

As section 22 is a qualified exemption, we have considered the public interest for and against disclosure. In favour of disclosure we have recognised the general public interest in openness particularly with regard to animal welfare. On the other hand there is a public interest in permitting public authorities to publish information in a manner and form and at a time of their own choosing, so that pre-publication procedures, such as verifying that survey results are accurately collated and fully reviewed are followed. In this case we consider that it is preferable to put the information into the public domain by publishing it as planned rather than disclosing it prematurely to an individual applicant. Overall we consider the balance is in favour of withholding this information at this time.

Details of those slaughterhouses that are approved to use bovine restraining boxes for non-stun slaughter are held by Defra. A list of all FSA approved meat premises, including the plant's approval number, is available on the FSA's website:

<http://food.gov.uk/enforcement/sectorrules/meatplantsprems/meatpremlcence>

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number at the top of this letter in any future communications.

If you are not satisfied with the way the Agency has handled your request for information, you should write within two calendar months of the date of this letter to the Openness Team, and ask for an internal review. They will arrange for the FSA's Complaints Coordinator to conduct the review. Their address is Food Standards Agency, Room 2C Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6NH (email: Openness.team@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Agency. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or through the website at: www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Emma Monks', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Emma Monks
Private Secretary to Chief Operating Officer