

National Enforcement Priorities for Northern Ireland

Feed law enforcement and food
hygiene law enforcement at primary
production

April 2024

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Summary

This publication aims to guide Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) enforcement officers in Northern Ireland on the areas to focus on during the delivery of official controls for:

- feed (at all stages of production, processing, storage, transportation and distribution including import and the primary production of feed) and
- food hygiene at primary production

Legal status

The National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) should be considered alongside the [links](#) to legislation and guidance to support DAERA to embed these priorities within their annual plan of official feed and food controls can be found within this document.

The following priorities are intended to support DAERA to focus their official controls which should be conducted at the frequency set out in the Feed Guidance, the Food Law Code of Practice and the Service Level Agreement.

Who is this publication for?

This document is primarily intended for DAERA enforcement officers. However, it will also be of interest to all food and feed business operators at the level of primary production, the Food Standards Agency (FSA), approved industry assurance schemes and private sector assurance bodies. Please note that some links in this document are only available to enforcement authority officers.

Review date

This document will be reviewed before March 2025.

Main points

This document sets out the FSA's:

- National Enforcement Priorities for Northern Ireland, in respect of animal feed at all levels of production and/or supply and food hygiene at the level of primary production
- expectations of DAERA to implement, where relevant, these priorities in the course of delivering their intervention programme

Introduction

The objectives of the priorities are to:

- drive an intelligence led approach to official controls
- maintain a level playing field for compliant food and feed businesses, which is in the interests of industry as a whole and supports trade in feed and food
- reduce unnecessary burdens by focusing DAERA activity on areas of potential non-compliance that present a higher risk to food and feed safety
- drive up the quality and consistency of official controls
- realise [the FSA Strategy of 'Food you can trust'](#)

The priorities:

- have been informed by intelligence from non-compliance data and feed incidents
- have been developed in consultation with feed industry and [DAERA enforcement authority](#) representatives; National Trading Standards ([NTS](#)); the National Agriculture Panel (NAP) and National Animal Feed at Ports Panel (NAFPP) members

The gathering and exchange of information, data and intelligence between competent authorities, central government departments and industry, including FSA approved assurance schemes, is a key element to an effective risk-based system of official feed and food controls.

DAERA is expected to ensure effective information sharing, communication and exchange of intelligence in accordance with the Feed Guidance. DAERA should share all intelligence they become aware of in relation to known or suspected cases of food and/or feed fraud, including historic cases, with the [National Food Crime Unit \(NFCU\)](#).

National Priorities 2024/25

The priorities are not listed in any particular order; the numbering is for reference only.

Animal Feed Priorities

- Priority 1:** Verification of effective implementation and maintenance of feed safety management systems
 - a:** Verification at all feed business types
 - b:** Verification at co-producers and businesses supplying former foodstuffs

- Priority 2:** Effective monitoring of feed on farms
 - a:** Examination of former foodstuffs / co-products being used for feed on farms
 - b:** Effective monitoring of pest control procedures
 - c:** On-farm record keeping requirements and documented procedures

- Priority 3:** Effective monitoring of storage arrangements at feed premises

- Priority 4:** Verification of feed labelling

- Priority 5:** Effective monitoring of consignments of feed originating from non-EU countries, at points of entry

Food Hygiene at Primary Production Priorities

- Priority 6:** Effective identification, registration and inspection of food businesses producing higher-risk, fresh produce operating at the level of primary production

Further information on each priority is provided in the sections below.

Animal Feed Priorities

Priority 1: Verification of effective implementation and maintenance of feed safety management systems

DAERA is expected to give priority to verifying feed safety management systems including permanent written procedures based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. This includes ensuring Feed Business Operators (FeBOs) understand legal requirements, are implementing, maintaining and reviewing, as appropriate, their feed safety management systems and HACCP plans, having regard to the nature, size and scale of the business.

1a: Verification at all feed business types

This should include a focus on the following:

- a) identification of hazards, ensuring all steps in the process have been considered and any grouping of steps (e.g. consideration of individual ingredients) is appropriate and not done in such a way that hazards are overlooked or risk-assessed incorrectly
- b) where a hazard is not adequately controlled by a prerequisite procedure, Critical Control Points (CCPs) are correctly identified, properly defined and effectively controlled in a timely manner. (NB. In relation to raw pet food, CCPs should include safe sourcing)
- c) establishing that appropriate systems are in place to minimise cross-contamination between batches of feed, particularly in respect of those containing coccidiostats, veterinary medicines or [feed additives](#) with maximum permitted levels for any target species
- d) appropriate sampling programmes at the feed business are in place to verify compliance with maximum levels of undesirable substances in feed materials and feed additives. Checks should include an examination of analytical results and consideration of whether appropriate action has been taken
- e) scrutinising traceability systems to ensure that product
 - i) can effectively be traced in the event of a product recall or withdrawal
 - ii) not intended for feed use is not diverted into the feed/food chain

1b: Verification at co-producers and businesses supplying former foodstuffs

Every year in the UK, around [650,000 tonnes of former foodstuffs are processed as animal feed, worth £110 million](#). Where former foodstuffs intended for use in feed are delivered with packaging, it must undergo further treatment to remove the packaging before being used as feed. This process is often carried out at a specialist former foodstuffs processing premises.

NTS have produced a [toolkit](#) to support officers in relation to businesses supplying former foodstuffs and co-products.

Priority should be given to co-producers and independent retailers supplying former foodstuffs who may be supplying direct to farm or to intermediary collectors delivering to processing facilities.

In addition to the points covered by Priority 1a, this should include a focus on the following:

- a) the identification of control points to ensure that material is suitable for use as animal feed, for example feed for farmed animals does not include items such as meat, fish and shellfish (including products containing them or that have been in contact with them)
- b) appropriate segregation of material not intended for use as feed
- c) the existence of an appropriate recorded training programme for staff in charge of dealing with former foodstuffs
- d) material is only supplied to a registered feed business
- e) suppliers and hauliers in the chain of processing former foodstuffs to feed and co-products are all registered as feed businesses

Priority 2: Effective monitoring of feed on farms

2a: Examination of former foodstuffs / co-products being used for feed on farms

DAERA is expected to examine, where applicable that any former foodstuff or co-product being used for feed on farms:

- a) is not contaminated
- b) does not contain prohibited substances as listed in Annex III of [Regulation \(EC\) 767/2009](#) on the placing on the market and use of feed
- c) is being sourced from a registered feed business establishment

2b: Effective monitoring of pest control procedures

Monitoring of measures and record keeping to demonstrate that as far as possible pests are prevented from causing hazardous contamination of feed on farm.

2c: On-farm record keeping requirements and documented procedures

Compliance with the record keeping requirements detailed in Annexes I and II of [Regulation \(EC\) No 1831/2003](#) laying down requirements for feed hygiene, should be examined on farms, including:

Annex I

- a) any use of plant protection products and biocides;
- b) use of genetically modified seeds;
- c) any occurrence of diseases that may affect the safety of primary products;
- d) the results of any analyses carried out on samples taken from primary products or other samples taken for diagnostic purposes that have importance for feed safety;
- e) the source and quantity of each input of feed and the destination and quantity for each output of feed.

and, in addition, for farms subject to the requirements of Annex II (R10):

- a) traceability records in relation to purchased feeds, with a particular focus on feed additives and/or premixtures
- b) documented procedures based on the principles of HACCP

Priority 3: Effective monitoring of storage arrangements at feed premises

At all stages of the feed chain suitable storage and product identification is necessary to prevent the introduction of hazards to feed.

DAERA is expected to give priority to:

- a) ensure separation of feed materials and additives from finished feed
- b) feed kept separate from any ~~non-feed~~non-feed materials such as plant protection products, cleaning chemicals and waste etc. that could contaminate the feed
- c) that facilities are secure from external hazards e.g. rain, sewage and other sources of contamination
- d) the suitability and cleanliness of containers for feed, where used
- e) ensure feed in storage is readily identifiable

Priority 4: Verification of feed labelling

Information on feed labels is essential to enable FeBOs, throughout the feed chain, to make appropriate use of material used in the manufacture of feed or for direct feeding and for traceability in the event of a product recall or withdrawal.

DAERA is expected to give priority to:

- a) verifying additives present in feed are authorised (included in [EU Register of Feed Additives](#)) in line with [Regulation \(EC\) No 1831/2003](#) on additives for use in animal nutrition, and are supplied by appropriately approved or registered feed businesses
- b) verifying the accuracy of claims as set out in Article 13 of [Regulation \(EC\) 767/2009](#) on the placing on the market and use of feed.
- c) ensuring the traceability information is sufficient and accurate to identify the supplier of the feed and enable confirmation that the feed supplied matches the description purchased

Priority 5: Effective monitoring of consignments of feed originating from non-EU countries, at points of entry

Imported feed makes up a significant proportion of feed used in the UK. To support a consistent and risk-based approach to monitoring imports DAERA is expected to give priority to monitoring irregular consignments of feed originating from non-EU countries (including feed that has transited through the EU), in consideration of:

- a) [NTS guidance](#) on consistency and prioritisation of the delivery of official controls at points of entry
- b) sampling consignments which have not been sampled recently or have not been seen before at the point of entry or where there is reason to believe they might fail to comply with legal requirements
- c) the [Risk Likelihood Dashboard](#)

Food Hygiene Primary Production Priorities

Priority 6: Effective identification, registration and inspection of food businesses producing higher-risk fresh produce operating at the level of primary production

DAERA is expected to give priority to the identification, registration and inspection of food businesses producing higher-risk fresh produce operating at the level of primary production. Some examples are given to illustrate each category, however these are not intended to be an exhaustive list and officers are advised to use their professional judgement.

These are:

- a) producers of soft fruits and berries, for example raspberries, blackberries, mulberries, loganberries and strawberries, for which a thorough wash post-harvest will be difficult to achieve without damaging the produce

- b) producers of leafy greens and salad fruit and vegetables
 - i) normally eaten raw, for example lettuce, micro leaves, baby leaves, watercress, spinach, herbs and cucumbers
 - ii) that have a short seed to harvest time meaning that they are likely to be harvested within two (2) weeks of last irrigation. If irrigation water is contaminated, this contamination will not have had time to dissipate in short harvest crops

- c) producers of bulb and root vegetables, or vegetables with no protective skin, that are commonly consumed raw, for example salad onions, radishes and celery

Guidance

Animal Feed

Food Standards Agency (FSA)

[Animal feed legislation](#)

[Removal of food grade packaging material in surplus food into the feed chain](#)

[Guidance on HACCP-related requirements for farmers](#)

National Trading Standards (NTS)

[Co-producers and suppliers of surplus food](#)

Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF)

[Review of on-farm feeding practices](#) - updated recommendations on identifying hazards and minimising risks

Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

[How food businesses must dispose of food and former foodstuffs](#)

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)

[Code of Practice for the Control of Salmonella](#) during the Production, Storage and Transport of Compound Feeds, Premixtures, Feed Materials and Feed Additives

British Standards Institution (BSI)

[Prerequisite programmes for food safety in the manufacture of food and feed for animals](#)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and International Feed Industry Federation (IFIF)

[Good Practices for the Feed Sector](#) implementing the [Codex Alimentarius Standards](#) Code of Practice on good animal feeding

European Commission

[Guides to Good Practice](#) developed in accordance with Article 22 of [Regulation \(EC\) No 1831/2003](#) laying down requirements for feed hygiene

- [Community guide to good practice for the EU industrial compound feed and premixtures manufacturing sector for food-producing animals](#) (The European Feed Manufacturers' Federation - FEFAC)
- [Community guide to good practice for feed additive and premixture operators](#) (The Quality and Safety System for Speciality Feed Ingredients -FAMI-QS)

- [Guide to good practice for the manufacture of safe pet foods](#) (The European Pet Food Industry - FEDIAF)
- [European Guide to good practice for the industrial manufacture of safe feed materials](#)
 - [The manufacturing of safe feed materials from starch processing](#)
 - [The manufacturing of safe feed materials from oilseed crushing and vegetable oil refining](#)
 - [The manufacturing of safe feed materials from biodiesel processing](#)
 - Salmonella [auditor checklist](#) and [factsheet](#)
- [European Guide to Good Hygiene Practices for the collection, storage, trading and transport of cereals, oilseeds, protein crops, other plant products and products derived thereof](#)

[Guides to Good Practice](#) developed in accordance with Article 26 of [Regulation \(EC\) 767/2009](#) on the placing on the market and use of feed

- [EU Code of good labelling practice for compound feed for food producing animals \(FEFAC\)](#)
- [Code of Good Labelling Practice for Pet Food \(FEDIAF\)](#)

Industry Standards

Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC)

[Feed Material Assurance Scheme Standards](#) (FEMAS)

[Trade Assurance Scheme for Combinable Crops](#) (TASCC)

[Universal Feed Assurance Scheme](#) (UFAS)

[BRC Voluntary Module 9](#) – Management of Food Materials for Animal Feed

Red Tractor

[Assured Food Standards](#)

The Northern Ireland Beef & Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme

[The Product Standard and Rules of the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme](#)

Imported Feed

Food Standards Agency (FSA)

[Effective Import Controls for food and feed not of animal origin at smaller seaports and airports](#)

Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO)

[Sharing information and intelligence to support delivery of imported feed controls](#)

Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

[UK border control posts: animal and animal product imports](#)

Food Hygiene Primary Production

Food Standards Agency (FSA)

[Primary production food hygiene inspection guidance](#)

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