

-----Original Message-----

Sent: 26 January 2009 14:56

Subject: RFI 2454

Thank you for the information.

Data which you have sent to me in the attached spreadsheet appears to fall short of what I requested for year 2008 which I asked to be treated as the highest priority.

The following is an extract from the request.

<start>

For 2008, please specify the months for which the figures apply. For example you may not have provisional figures for Nov and Dec 2008. If this is the case, please specify that the figures for 2008 cover the period 1st Nov 2007 to 31st Oct 2008.

<end>

I have made a similar request to Wales (freedomofinformationofficer@wales.gsi.gov.uk), Northern Ireland (Freedom of Information request form at www.dardni.gov.uk), Irish Republic (foi@agriculture.gov.ie) and New Zealand (info@maf.govt.nz) and as far as I am aware they have all been able to comply. Indeed in the spreadsheet from DARDNI, the following is stated for the 2008 estimate, "Estimate based on figures for the 12 month period 01/11/2007 to 31/10/2008".

In addition to this, the total number of herds in the attached spreadsheet for all years from 2002 to 2007 inclusive for Devon as well as England (and perhaps for other regions as well) are at least 10% greater than the total cattle holdings reported in the Low-level Agricultural Survey Datasets at http://www.defra.gov.uk/esg/work_htm/publications/cs/farmstats_web/2_SURVEY_DATA_SEARCH/COMPLETE_DATASETS/regional_level_datasets.htm.

Why are these figures so different?

Do the supplied figures represent the total number of populated cattle herds which I have requested?

Again other countries appear to have been able to comply with this. Indeed wales.gsi.gov.uk in their reply stated "With regard to the total number of herds registered, the figures below include populated herds; herds that have been sold/dispersed have been excluded. This is on the condition that Animal Health staff were notified by owners that they no longer keep livestock. It should be noted that this is not always the case. Additionally, the figures cannot account for any temporary measures i.e. livestock owners dispersing herds and restocking some months later."

So in summary there appears to be two issues and these are as follows.

- (a) The 2008 figures do not cover a 12 month period and
- (b) the supplied total number of herds exceed figures published on the DEFRA web site by at least 10%.

I note that in the supplied spreadsheet, figures for total herd numbers from 1998 to 2001 are labelled as "Not available". If you need to supply me with the total herd numbers from a new source and this source includes figures for 1998 to 2001, these figures would be of added benefit to me.

I apologise if I have missed any information which you have sent to me.