



John F. Robins
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Our Reference: 202200282122
Your Reference: Scottish Veterinary Service

9 March 2022

Dear John F. Robins,

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 (FOISA)

Thank you for your request dated 18 February 2022 to Ms Gougeon, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA). I have been asked to respond as a member of the team progressing the Scottish Veterinary Service (SVS).

Your request

You asked about visits to salmon farms, whether responsibility for research laboratories in Scotland be devolved and who is on the Board establishing the Scottish Veterinary Service (SVS).

Response to your request

The answer to your questions are as follows.

It is still early in the process since the announcement of the SVS, and its remit is still being formulated. It will be for the SVS Programme Board to recommend to Ministers what is in scope. The Board will assess the range of functions that such a service may deliver. Potential functions for consideration include, the animal health and welfare services currently delivered by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) in Scotland (and other centralised locations in GB), official controls in meat establishments by Food Standards Scotland (FSS), aquatic animal health services by Marine Scotland, and statutory animal health and welfare functions and enforcement by local authorities. The Programme

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Board may also identify other functions for consideration. We anticipate that the scope will be determined before March 2023 and the SVS will be created within the life of the current Parliament (May 2026).

The Programme Board will consist of a number of senior officials from the Scottish Government, FSS, APHA and Scottish local authorities. This will bring together the combined knowledge and understanding from the various organisations that may make up components of the SVS.

Thank you for your various suggestions, which we will make sure the Programme Board are made aware of.

In relation to the question about salmon farm visits, the Scottish Government's Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI) have a publically available [Charter](#), which advises that they will normally contact the fish farmer before an inspection to agree a mutually convenient time. However, this also advises that unannounced visits may also be necessary, for example in the event of an outbreak of a serious disease or when they are investigating alleged offences.

The FHI also have arrangements with wider Marine Scotland assets to facilitate unannounced fish health inspections at marine farms if that is required.

For information, the number of inspections that are made of fish farms by the FHI is available at [Publication of Fish Health Inspectorate information - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#).

APHA also work with Scottish salmon farms. As the APHA are presently a separate government agency, I suggest that you contact them for details of the what work they undertake. You can contact your local APHA office in Scotland via this [link](#).

Thank you for your comments about the welfare of animals in laboratories. I can confirm that is a reserved matter, and so responsibility will remain with the Home Office.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to the Director for Agriculture and Rural Economy, Spur P1, Saughton House, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD, DirectorARE@gov.scot. Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review in accordance with FOISA as soon as possible, and not later than 20 working days from the day following the date we receive your review request. If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website at: <https://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>.

I hope this provides you with answers to your questions, but please come back to me if you have any further questions about the SVS.

Yours sincerely

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Ian Murdoch
AHW : Disease Control

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