



# Consultation on the Introduction of Mandatory Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in Slaughterhouses

March 2025



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

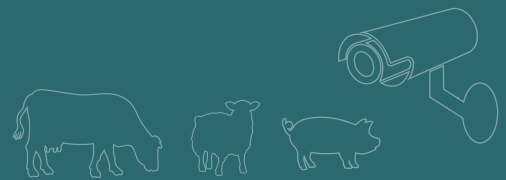
An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



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Write to: Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
Jubilee House  
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Or alternatively, by email: [animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk)



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## Ministerial Foreword

I am pleased to launch a public consultation on mandatory closed-circuit television (CCTV) coverage in slaughterhouses in Northern Ireland. Animal welfare is one of my top priorities and the implementation of this proposal would bring Northern Ireland into parity with the rest of the UK and underline my commitment to closing legislative deficits.



I am aware that slaughterhouses in Northern Ireland operate to a very high standard, and nearly all have CCTV coverage in place. This policy will supplement those high standards through three key aims; enhancing coverage by making CCTV mandatory in unloading, handling, lairage, stunning and the kill areas of the slaughterhouses; allowing unrestricted access to the CCTV recordings for officials; and requirement that all recordings are kept for 90 days.

Where it has been introduced, it is accepted that mandatory CCTV coverage can lead to improvement in practices and operating processes, a greater ability to observe animals in areas that are inaccessible, improve consumer perception of slaughterhouses and help prevent and deter offences.

I encourage all those with an interest in this proposal to respond to this consultation by 21 May 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Muir', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

**Andrew Muir MLA**

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs



# Background

The welfare of animals at the point of slaughter is protected in law under European and domestic legislation.

EC Council Regulation 1099/2009 'on the protection of animals at the time of killing' came into force in the UK, including Northern Ireland, on 1st January 2013, increasing welfare protection for animals at the time of slaughter. The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 was introduced to enable the enforcement of the European regulations.

The proposed legislation is aimed specifically at preventing harm to of animals when they are being held and processed in a slaughterhouse, as well as providing legal mechanisms to combat poor or negligent practice. It will set down specific requirements which must be complied with at all stages of the slaughter or killing process; and it is offence to cause any animal avoidable excitement, pain or suffering at any time between its arrival at a slaughterhouse and when it is killed.

At present, it is not compulsory for slaughterhouses in Northern Ireland to have CCTV cameras in operation in all parts of the establishment where animals are kept. It should be noted that the overwhelming majority of slaughterhouses use CCTV; however, this proposal would make it compulsory for all slaughterhouses to use CCTV, set minimum standards for the systems to be used and enable Official Veterinarians (OVs) to have unrestricted access to systems and footage.

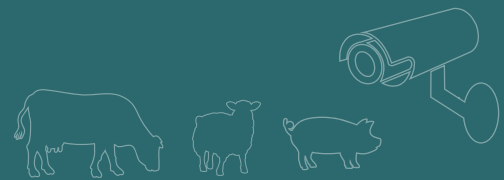
# Consultation Details

This consultation seeks views on a proposal to make the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) mandatory in slaughterhouses. It is aimed at industry stakeholders who have an interest in animal welfare at the time of killing as well as slaughterhouses which would be impacted. A list of consultees is included at **Appendix 1**. This is not meant to be exhaustive, and responses are welcomed from anyone with an interest in, or views on, the matters covered by this consultation paper.

Equality, rural needs screening and regulatory impact exercises have been carried out and can be found at [www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/cctvslaughterhouses](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/cctvslaughterhouses)

The consultation is being conducted using the online survey tool Citizen Space and will commence on **26 March 2025**. It will run for eight weeks closing on **20 May 2025**.

Following analysis of the responses received, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (the Department) will publish a summary of the responses received. Subject to the nature of those responses, the Department will then take steps to introduce legislation to make the use of CCTV in all slaughterhouses mandatory.



## Rationale for Proposal

In 2015, the Farmed Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC – now known as the Animal Welfare Committee), which advises all UK administrations on the protection of animals at the time of killing, published an assessment of the benefits of CCTV in slaughterhouses.

The Committee was asked to gather and analyse evidence on the potential impacts of introducing CCTV coverage, what the financial and intangible benefits could be, the thoughts of stakeholders within the industry, impacts on privacy and challenges that would be faced by slaughterhouses.

The FAWC report identified that the use of CCTV coverage in slaughterhouses would be a supplement physical observation; would be able to verify the correct handling procedures were occurring; and establish where cases of the treatment of the animals was being compromised.

FAWC recommended that CCTV cameras should be installed in all areas that live animals are present within slaughterhouses, including the stunning and kill areas. These cameras should be installed to offer a clear uninterrupted view of each area that can be reviewed by the slaughterhouses themselves, and Official Veterinarians (OVs). The footage would then be retained for a period of three months to be available for access by authorised officers.

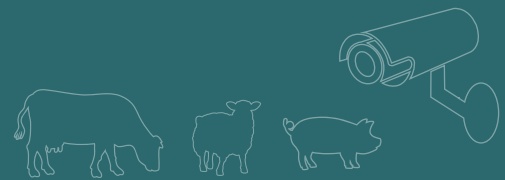
FAWC also identified the benefits that would be available to the slaughterhouses and to animal welfare, these included:

- providing evidence of due diligence and compliance with legislative and commercial standards and responsiveness to consumer concerns increasing public trust;
- contributing to slaughterhouses reviews of effectiveness of operations (including improving handling and reducing stress in animals) and enable the FBO to make improvements to processes and operating instructions;
- providing a valuable training tool for slaughterhouse staff;
- encouraging collective responsibility in slaughterhouse staff;
- providing evidence for disciplinary action; and
- enabling disputes to be resolved including relating to spurious allegations.

Subsequently, the FAWC report contained 12 recommendations, with the overall aim being that approved slaughterhouse operators should install CCTV in all areas where live animals are kept and where animals are stunned and killed.

## Other Jurisdictions

England took forward legislation in 2018, following a public consultation that concluded in 2017; Scotland chose to legislate in 2021; and on 1 June 2024, legislation in Wales came into force. All jurisdictions provided a minimum of six months from the introduction of the legislation for slaughterhouses to comply before powers to inspect and enforce came into effect.



The Republic of Ireland have not moved to enhance the established standards under Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing by introducing mandatory CCTV in their slaughterhouses.

Currently, the use of CCTV surveillance is not mandatory under EU law. A recent European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) report has indicated that CCTV use should be made compulsory across all Member States, however, no proposal on introducing this has been announced at this juncture.

## Enforcement and Penalties

Every slaughterhouse in Northern Ireland has an Official Veterinarian (OV) assigned from DAERA, who are responsible for inspections, enforcement, verification and audits within the slaughterhouse. At present, OVs do not necessarily have unrestricted access to the footage from areas where animals are unloaded, handled, kept, stunned and killed for the purpose of monitoring and ensuring animal welfare rules are being fully complied with. Under current legislation it is not a requirement for a slaughterhouse to keep CCTV coverage for any set period of time.

It is not always possible for OVs to be present at all parts of the slaughter process at all times; and offences could be committed where there is no ongoing oversight. With adequate CCTV coverage authorised officials would have the ability to review and observe processes and verify if any animal welfare offences have occurred or alternatively confirm compliance with animal welfare standards by the slaughterhouse operators.

The use of CCTV cameras can also provide operators the opportunity to improve practices in their operation by allowing them to view procedures in hard to view areas of their slaughterhouse, especially the stunning and killing locations. This ability can be beneficial both to the animals themselves and also offer insight and opportunity to improve for the business operators and their teams. Detection of animal welfare breaches can result in outcomes that can act as a deterrent to future poor practice as well as providing feedback and the opportunity for continuous improvement in slaughterhouse practices.

Food Standards Agency enforcement data for England and Wales for 2020/21 indicates that at least 10% of slaughterhouse non-compliances are identified either by live or retrospective CCTV viewing and CCTV is routinely used as evidence to support enforcement action.

CCTV also plays an active role in suspension and revocation of Certificates of Competence (CoC). Thirty-nine certificates were suspended or revoked in 2020/21 in England, and 13 of these utilised CCTV recordings to support determination of the outcome, this equates to 33% of all suspensions and revocations (FSA data). CCTV can also provide valuable evidence to support the actions of CoC holders where uncertainty over performance existed.

As part of early fact finding and research in preparation for this consultation, key stakeholders have identified that CCTV footage can be used to identify incidences of good and bad welfare standards and utilised to demonstrate best practice. They described how some plants have



excellent footage which identifies exemplary skills of individuals which can be shared in training. CCTV can also help identify the root cause when there has been an incident and the best way to move forward and prevent re-occurring issues.

CCTV should not, however, replace, reduce or be considered a substitute for current controls of slaughterhouse practice undertaken by OV's, slaughter operators and others.

Should the legislation be made, the offences and penalties for a person guilty of an offence will be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level five on the standard scale, which at present, is a maximum of £5,000.

## Proposal

There are currently 20 licenced slaughterhouses in Northern Ireland. Established slaughterhouses here who already have contractual agreements with major UK food retailers, will have CCTV obligations with the businesses they supply, and that while they deploy full CCTV coverage, provide unrestricted access for OV's and retain 90 days holding of footage, there is no legal requirement for these slaughterhouses to comply with officials and requests. The majority of slaughterhouses in Northern Ireland are already in a strong position to comply with any potential new legislation, however, there are still gaps across the industry at large with some slaughterhouses having only partial or no CCTV coverage whatsoever.

Consequently, the Department proposes to make the use of CCTV mandatory in all approved slaughterhouses in Northern Ireland.

This would require slaughterhouse operators to install CCTV in all areas where live animals are kept and where animals are stunned and killed. Installation of the cameras should permit a clear and uninterrupted view of the processes being recorded at all times. These areas include unloading, handling, lairage, stunning and killing.

**Q1. Do you agree CCTV cameras should be installed in all approved slaughterhouses in Northern Ireland in areas where live animals are present, including areas where animals are unloaded, kept, handled, stunned and killed?**

**Q2. Should CCTV be installed in all approved slaughterhouses, regardless of size?**

Furthermore, the Department proposes that CCTV footage should be accessible to and viewed on a regular basis by slaughterhouse staff, and OV's to ensure business compliance. This is especially relevant to the areas that are difficult to view and access.

CCTV footage must be retained by the slaughterhouse for a period of 90 days and be available to authorised officers.





**Q3. Do you believe it is reasonable to require slaughterhouses to retain CCTV footage for 90 days?**

**Q4. Should there be unfettered access to CCTV footage, both real time and stored, for authorised officers, e.g. Official Veterinarians or DAERA Officers?**

## Financial Implications

### Financial Implications

The Department recognises that the proposed legislation could place a financial burden on some smaller slaughterhouses. However, it is in the interests of the slaughterhouses to have full CCTV coverage to assist OV's in checking compliance with legal requirements. There will also be increased opportunities to protect the food chain and public health. Additionally, full CCTV coverage could deter staff from carrying out any cruel treatment of animals. It will also offer a valuable training tool for slaughterhouse staff to promote best practice and ensure compliance with legislative and commercial standards. It also means slaughterhouses have the recordings to use as supplementary evidence in response to any allegations of illegal practice.

**Q5. Do you feel that the potential costs of introducing mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses is reasonable and proportionate for individual businesses, irrespective of size?**

The Department considers the proposals outlined above will augment the excellent standards in place and ensure Northern Ireland laws mirror those in place in the rest of the UK. The Department believes the introduction of legislation will support training and improvement practices in slaughterhouses, which in turn, enhances protections for animals and ultimately assists slaughterhouse operators.

## Impact Assessments

### Equality and Rural Needs Assessment

Equality and Rural Needs assessments have been carried out to consider potential impacts of the proposals within this consultation. We welcome any comments or views you may have in respect of our assessments; responses can be made through Citizens Space or by emailing [animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk). Copies of these assessments are available online at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations>

### Regulatory Impact Assessment

A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) has been carried out to consider the potential impacts of the proposals. We welcome any comments or views you may have in respect of the RIA;



responses can be made through Citizens Space or by emailing [animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk). A copy of the assessment is available online at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation>

## Next Steps

Following the public consultation the Department will publish a response document outlining the proposed way forward. Subject to views of consultees, the Department will take the necessary steps to bring forward the required legislation to give effect to the proposal.

## How to respond and when

### Responses

You can respond to this consultation online by accessing the consultation at the following link: [www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations).

If you wish to respond in writing, you can request a copy of the written response template by e-mailing: [animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk).

Written responses should be sent to:

E-mail: [animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Postal address: Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
Jubilee House  
111 Ballykelly Road  
Ballykelly  
Limavady  
BT49 9HP

When responding, please state whether you are doing so as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents, and where applicable, how the views of its members were assembled.

### Closing date

Responses should be submitted by **noon, 21 May 2025**.



## Confidentiality

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, the Department in this case. This includes information provided in response to this consultation.

The Department will publish a synopsis of responses to the consultation. This will include a list of names of organisations that responded but not personal names, addresses or other contact details.

The Department cannot automatically consider information supplied to it in response to a consultation, to be confidential. However, it does have a responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to a consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or be treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public, please include an explanation in your response. Please be aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, except in very particular circumstances. Please note, if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, it won't count as a confidentiality request.

Should you respond in an individual capacity; the Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that your personal information will not be disclosed to third parties should you request confidentiality.

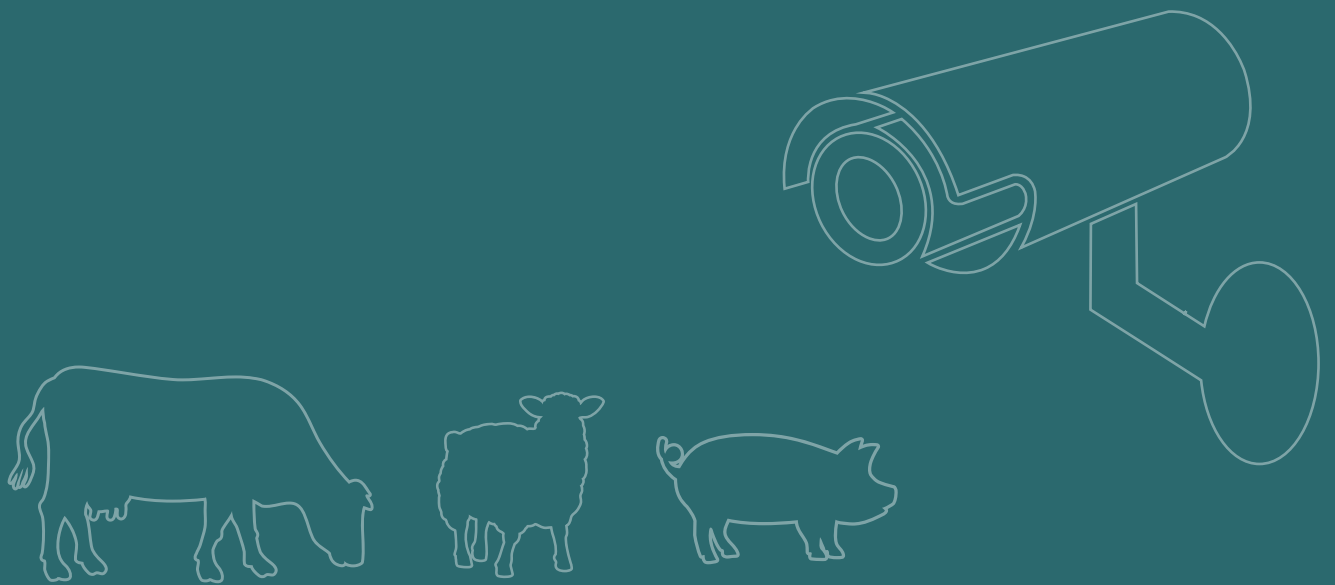
For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (see its website at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>).



# Appendix 1: List of Consultees

This consultation document has been sent to statutory consultees and the following organisations:

• ABP Lurgan	• McKeown's Fine Food
• ABP (Newry) Ltd	• Moy Park Ballymena
• Association of Independent Meat Suppliers (AIMS)	• Moy Park Dungannon
• Association of Veterinary Surgeons Practising in NI	• National Beef Association
• British Veterinary Association NI	• National Sheep Association
• Cranswick Country Foods	• NI Independent Retail Trade Association
• DMP Foods Ltd	• NI Meat Exporters Association
• Dunbia (Ballymena & Dungannon)	• NI Veterinary Association
• Farmers for Action	• Northern Ireland Companion Animal Welfare Group (NICAWG)
• Food Standards Agency (FSA)	• Primestock Meats
• Foyle Meats	• Rockvale Poultry
• Foyle Omagh	• Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
• Galloway Turkeys	• Royal Ulster Agricultural Society
• Humane Slaughter Association	• Rural Action
• International Fund for Animal Welfare UK	• Tullyelmer
• Karro Cookstown	• Ulster Farmers' Union
• Kearns Poultry	• Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (USPCA)
• Lakeview Farm Meats	• Vet NI
• Linden Foods	• W D Meats Ltd
• Livestock and Meat	• Wm Grant & Co Ltd
• Livestock Auctioneers Association (NI)	• Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster



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