

**Department Operations Centre – DAERA**  
**SITUATIONAL REPORT 027**

All new information should be noted in **RED**

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**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

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Information correct as of 15:00 hrs on **21.04.2020**

| Overall DOC Assessment   |  |   |            |      |
|--|--|---|------------|------|
| Overall Delivery Confidence  | A  | Essential services are being delivered either remotely or on a risk basis. Staffing has stabilised in critical roles such as meat plant inspectors. |            |      |
| Key Issues – Please detail your key issues or imminent risks only, that may require escalation.  |  |   |            |      |
|  | Description  |   | BRAG       |      |
| 1.   | DfI, DfE and TEO leading. Ferry/Port companies were signalling financial difficulties with potential disruption to food, feed, seed supply and clinical/hazardous waste. Stenaline have confirmed that their NI routes are no longer ‘at risk’ following a support package agreement on 20/4/20.                     |   | A          |      |
| 2.   | Agri-food supply chain, farm and horticultural businesses signalling difficulties with range of issues.  |   | A          |      |
| 3.   | Waste management. Ongoing issues with a range of waste management processes covering councils & the private waste industry. Ongoing monitoring of fly tipping and focus currently on Household Waste Recycling Centres with three sites opening in Mid-East Antrim Council area, Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne. |   | A          |      |
| Items for Escalation – Please confirm if the DOC has any items that require escalation to the Hub for support/assistance.  |  |   |            |      |
|  | Description  |   | CCG        |      |
| For info   |  |   | For action |      |
|  |  |   |            |      |
| DOC Status Update  |  |   |            | BRAG |
| Staffing– Staff teams and rotas in place.  |  |   |            | G    |
| ICT/Remote Working - Increasing staff number who have access to remote working technology.   |  |   |            | G    |
| Real Estate - DAERA DOC aims to work remotely and this is possible without recourse to DAERA real estate. Several DAERA HQ buildings have closed to all but essential staff. |  |   |            | G    |
| Liaison Officers in place  |  |   |            | G    |

**Forward Look for next 1-2 days.**

1. DfI/DfE/TEO lead - Ferry/Ports/airports – food, animal feed, spare parts, clinical/hazardous, paper waste streams, and other goods supply chain with current emphasis on the haulage sector. Impact of agreed support package for ferries.
2. DAERA has updated its advice to the public on how they can continue to use forests and country parks for local pedestrian access. Lisburn/Castlereagh Council have opened parks for pedestrian access and Hillsborough Forest park for public access from 21 April 2020.
3. Continued engagement with Councils in relation to options for re-opening of Household Waste Recycling Centres with three sites open in Mid-East Antrim.
4. PSNI leading. Wildfires - a number of significant wildlife incidents have occurred in Co Tyrone. NIEA are assisting. Fire risk remains high this week.

**Forward Look for this/next week.**

1. DAERA officials working with aquaculture industry on a range of measures to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on businesses including a potential support package.
2. AFBI have received a number of PCR test kits. Quality assurance of the test kits is progressing well with the expectation of full testing beginning shortly.
3. DAERA Forest Service are liaising 4 Councils to help when required in assisting DfC which is leading on delivering food supplies to people identified as vulnerable by DoH.
4. Waste management. Continued monitoring of fly tipping trends. Trend at present is downward.
5. Monitoring of on farm milk collections continues. Red Tractor Assurance Scheme commencing phased introduction of "Remote Assessment".

**Forward Look >2 weeks.**

1. Maintain monitoring brief of fishing and aquaculture industry issues.
2. Air quality monitoring continues - Levels of Particle Matter (PM) pollutant have been increasing since the start of the year and have continued to rise during period of lockdown. Levels of NO2 have not dropped significantly during the lockdown. Reported trends remain unchanged w/c 20 April 2020.
3. Contact details of DAERA Veterinary Epidemiologist Unit have been passed to PHA to enable involvement with the COVID-19 prevalence study.
4. Re-opening of more livestock marts in line with agreed industry stakeholder protocols week commencing 27th April.

**Expected Media Attention – Please confirm if the DOC has any items that will have expected media releases**

1. Support package for ferries operators agreed on 20/4/20
2. Access to forest and country parks has been reaffirmed for local pedestrian access only.
3. Current media focus on the options for Councils to re-open Household Waste Recycling Centres.
4. Minister Poots was interviewed by News Letter (Laura McMullan) on 20 Apr – discussing the impacts of Covid-19 on agri-food sector and funding support for the sector. The article will be published this week.
5. Media interest also shown in air quality, fly-tipping, gorse fires.

| Detailed issue description: <i>Please provide additional information on issues mentioned above.</i>  |  |             |   |
|--|--|-------------|---|
| Issue  | <b>DfI, DfE and TEO leading.</b> Ferry/Port companies were signalling financial difficulties with potential disruption to food, feed, seed supply and clinical/hazardous, paper waste streams. Stenaline have confirmed that their NI routes are no longer 'at risk' following a support package agreement on 20/4/20. | BRAG Status | A |
| <b>1.Detailed description:</b><br>Significant drop in freight traffic and passenger traffic at all ports, lead to financial difficulties for all ferry operators. Staffing of ferries is a concern due to social isolating and self-isolation. Stenaline have confirmed that their NI routes are no longer 'at risk'.  |  |             |   |
| <b>What are the specific impacts, including metrics?</b> All carriers reported significant financial issues due to the drop in freight and passenger traffic. Hauliers continue to have significant revenue issues with empty loads on return journeys from GB, as an example one large operator is running 45% empty on cross channel GB to NI.   |  |             |   |
| <b>What is being done about it? (Tolerate, Treat, Transfer):</b> Treat. Transfer. <b>DfI, DfE and TEO leading.</b> The NI Executive have agreed to a Department for Transport (DfT) support package on 20 Apr designed to protect continuity of ferry operations between NI and GB. The package will be targeted at the ferry companies operating on the 5 key GB to NI sea crossings. It is to be for two months and is estimated to cost between £10.6-£16.6m. They have further agreed a maximum contribution from the Executive of 40% of the total costs. DAERA officials continue to monitor crossings from GB to Dublin re supplies. DAERA will continue to engage and press for intervention for Hauliers through NI Freight Group to DfT. |  |             |   |

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| Issue  | Agri-food supply chain, farm and horticultural businesses signalling difficulties with range of issues. | BRAG Status | A |
| <b>Detailed description:</b><br><b>2.</b> A wide range of issues including safe social distancing working conditions (including for official veterinarians at FBO's), PPE availability, exports to some markets, closure of livestock markets, industry concerns regarding farm gate prices, supply chain difficulties, animal by-products, and absenteeism, loss of outlets for ornamental and cut flowers are contributing to difficulties for the food chain, farm and horticulture businesses.   |   |             |   |
| <b>What are the specific impacts, including metrics?</b> Social distancing working conditions in all agri-food businesses remains a priority in line with key health working instructions. NIFDA estimate output from the sector remains at 100% with levels of absenteeism now reported at 9.2% (17/4) on average. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently no reports of any disruptions to milk collections from NI farms. Processor base prices are back by 1 – 1.5 ppl for March supplies.</li> <li>UFU Milk Price Indicator (17/04) is back 0.59ppl from a fortnight earlier.</li> <li>The latest market statistics shows beef prices had been stable since the beginning of the year but started to fall three weeks ago with prime cattle down 13p/kg (4%) and cull cows down 24p/kg (10%). The quotes for this</li> </ul> |   |             |   |



week indicate a further fall of 2-6p/kg (approx. 1-2% down) for prime cattle and no change for cows. Likewise, lamb prices within the latest market statistics had been reasonably stable but fell three weeks ago by 40p/kg (11% down). However, in contrast lamb prices recovered the following week by 24p/kg (6% up) and the quotes for this week and last indicate a further improvement of 30-50p/kg (approx. 10%).

- There has been a >50% reduction in TB testing levels compared to same period last year. Industry requesting further changes to TB testing which are being considered by officials.
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**What is being done about it? (Tolerate, Treat, Transfer):** Treat. Transfer.

- DAERA officials continue to liaise with the wider agri-food industry regarding safe social distancing working conditions. Private Veterinary Practitioners have started to fill Meat Inspector posts within meat plants.
- DAERA officials monitoring farm commodity prices and are liaising with industry to consider the impact of any persistent drop in farm gate prices in the milk, beef and lamb and non-edible horticulture sectors.
- Officials also working closely with DEFRA and DAs to monitor markets, and discuss strategic intervention plans.
- Measures to mitigate the impact of the current TB testing restrictions on disease control are being considered by officials.
- 5 livestock marts held video sales last week. Police and the HSENI were both aware of the sales taking place and no issues have been raised.
- Northern Ireland Livestock Auctioneers Association report that their members intend to hold sales in line with agreed industry stakeholder protocols week commencing 27th April. Video sales will continue at a number of mart venues this week.
- Almost 500 applications received yesterday the 20th April, bringing the total to 10,840 Single Farm Payment. This is ahead of previous years applications at this time.
- AFBI Corona virus testing - AFBI is undertaking Quality Assurance (QA) processes this week (w/c 20/04/20) which are required before testing can begin. AFBI expect to commence testing mid next week.
- The economy minister has confirmed that all eligible farmers can apply for support under a government scheme to help the self-employed cope with the fallout from coronavirus. The payment would see them qualify for a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits for three months, capped at £2,500 a month.

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| Issue  | Ongoing issues with a range of waste management processes (covering councils and the private waste industry) with focus currently on Household Waste Recycling Centres | BRAG Status | A |
| <b>Detailed description:</b><br><b>3.</b> Need for Councils to maintain their kerbside collections, including recycling services. A need for residual waste to be diverted from landfill to recovery to maintain the viability of key processing facilities to support waste processing & flow |  |             |   |

to supply chains. Mid and East Antrim Council have re-opened 3 Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) **Ballymena, Carrickfergus & Larne weekdays only to accept overflow of wastes collected at kerbsides**. DAERA is continuing to engage with Councils in relation to the options regarding the potential for wider re-opening of HWRCs.

**What are the specific impacts, including metrics?**

- Proportion of waste is going to landfill rather than maintaining recycling waste streams and material flow to waste processors, creating a risk of breaking the waste hierarchy.
- Currently landfill disposal rates are down over 50% due to absence of commercial waste collections; municipal Solid Waste volume is constant. Some landfills operating partial opening and increasing risk others will close, however large amount of landfill capacity remains readily available.
- **92** fly tipping incidents reported up to 09:00 on **21/04/20**. This is a reduction on **106** reports in the same period in 2019 and **111** reports in the same period in 2018.

**What is being done about it? (Tolerate, Treat, Transfer): Treat.**

- PPE availability for operatives has increased.
- Officials monitoring and seeking to mitigate any upward trend of reported fly tipping. Current figures indicate no significant increase in trends.
- Waste –New Regulatory Position Statements being developed.
- Strategic Investment Board establishing a matching service between private sector delivery and Councils.
- DAERA/NIEA and Council officials developing appropriate reporting mechanisms for waste data flow during COVID - 19 in respect of requirements under the Landfill Allowances Scheme (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2004 (as amended).
- DAERA officials, Council officials and waste industry stakeholders meeting together on a weekly basis to seek ways to mitigate disruption to waste management.
- DAERA and Council officials considering a more flexible approach to reopening of HWRCs. Mid-East Antrim (MEA) Council opened its Ballymena HRMC on 17/1/20. Green waste & flattened cardboard is also being accepted. NIEA tracking all 101 HWRCs per Council area.
- **Publication of six new Regulatory Position Statements supporting the waste industry on DAERA's web site.**
- **DAERA has updated its FAQ on Environmental Compliance**
- Government Waste Working Group (GWWG) teleconference **took place on 20/4/20**.

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| Issue  |  | BRAG Status | A |
| <b>Detailed description:</b>                             |  |             |   |
| <b>4.</b>  |  |             |   |
| <b>What are the specific impacts, including metrics?</b> |  |             |   |

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| <b>What is being done about it? (Tolerate, Treat, Transfer):</b> |

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|--|--|----------------|---|
| Issue  |  | BRAG<br>Status | A |
| <b>Detailed description:</b><br><b>5.</b>                        |  |                |   |
| <b>What are the specific impacts, including metrics?</b>         |  |                |   |
| <b>What is being done about it? (Tolerate, Treat, Transfer):</b> |  |                |   |