

BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

This document reports a breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, or the relevant Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Orders, to which the Code applies as if it included these orders.

1. Background information

Name of Statistical Output (including weblink to the relevant output or 'landing page')

National Statistics on the Incidence of Tuberculosis (TB) in Cattle for Great Britain
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incidence-of-tuberculosis-tb-in-cattle-in-great-britain>

Name of Producer Organisation

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Name and contact details of the statistical Head of Profession (Lead Official in an Arm's Length Body) submitting this report, and date of report

Peter Helm, Head of Profession for Statistics (HoP),
Defra, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX. Tel: 01904 455240.
14 May 2014

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

- Protocol 2 – Release Practices, Practices 7 & 8
- Paragraphs 2 and 6(1) of the Schedule to The Pre-Release Access (PRA) to Official Statistics Order 2008

Date of occurrence

13 May 2014

Nature of breach (including links with previous breaches, if any)

- The Incidence of TB in Cattle in Great Britain statistics are published monthly.
- 24 hour PRA to the statistical release had been granted to a list of ministers and officials at the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and the Welsh Government.

- Following an email discussion of the statistics between recipients of PRA, the final email in the chain was forwarded by the Policy Deputy Director to nine people not on the PRA list.
- The email forwarded did **not** contain the statistical notice or datasets. However it did contain discussion of the latest figure for the incidence rate and comments on it being uncommonly low.
- The breach occurred on Tuesday 13 May at 15:42 and was immediately identified by the lead statistician.
- The lead statistician put steps in place to restrict further circulation of the statistics by the nine people on the copy list at 15:48. This included the Head of Profession.
- The lead statistician formally informed the Head of Profession for Statistics at 15:53.

Reasons for breach

Human error. The Policy Deputy Director had failed to realise that the discussion referenced statistics not yet published.

3. Reactions and impact (both within the producer body and outside)

- On identification of the breach, the lead statistician took immediate action to stop any further circulation of the breached statistics beyond those on the PRA list.
- The HoP was advised at the earliest opportunity.
- As these are GB level statistics, the Devolved Administrations were informed.
- A public statement was issued on the Defra website on the day of release. It was not possible to publish the statement on the Defra website on 13 May because, due to the way releases must be pre-prepared for the GOV.UK website, this would have over-written the information already setup for the release the next day.
- The Publication Hub was updated on the day of release. The Hub was not immediately updated because of an incompatibility issue with Tridion and Windows 7. Following a department-wide upgrade of laptops, we no longer have enough people who can update the hub at short notice. The only way to update the Publication Hub is via a written request to the Publishing Support Team. IBM is aware and is looking in to this problem, as is the IT team at the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

4. Corrective actions taken to prevent reoccurrence of such a breach (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)

The breach occurred as a result of human error.

- The individual responsible for the error has been reminded of the conditions relating to pre-release access of official statistics. Further guidance will be issued by the Office of the Head of Profession to reduce the risk of similar breaches occurring in future.
- The subject heading of the PRA email will be changed in future to include the OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE security marking and to explicitly state DO NOT FORWARD.
- If the statistics are discussed by email among people on the pre-release access circulation list, a repetition of the text highlighting the restrictions on circulation will be copied to a prominent position at the top of each email exchange.
- Note: we already include the names of the people linked to the roles on the published PRA list in our internal documents as a reminder of who the statistics can be sent to under these rules.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

Initial statement published in 'details' at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incidence-of-tuberculosis-tb-in-cattle-in-great-britain>

Publication Hub updated at: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/release-calendar?newquery=Incidence+of+TB+in+Cattle%2C+Great+Britain++Data+to+February+2014&lday=14&lmonth=5&lyear=2014&uday=14&umonth=5&uyear=2014&theme=&source=agency=Environment%2C+Food+and+Rural+Affairs&pagetype=calendar-entry>

A link to where this breach report is published on the Statistics Authority website will be provided from GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/about/statistics#corporate-procedures-and-standards>.