

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, Defra, 11 June 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 to Official Statistics Order 2008

Date of occurrence

10 June 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 Pre-release Access (PRA) to the statistical release had been granted to a list of ministers and officials at the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Welsh Government (WG).
- A press notice which included the latest incidence figure was sent by a press officer to two policy officials not on the Pre-Release Access list to clear.
- 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 particularly low.

- The breach occurred on Tuesday 10 June 2014 at 16:14. It was noticed by the lead statistician at 08:27 the following morning (11 June 2014).
- The lead statistician immediately informed the Head of Profession (08:41) and put steps in place to restrict further circulation of the statistics by the two people on the copy list (08:50).

Reasons for breach

Human error. The press officer had failed to comprehend that the press release should only be sent to people on the PRA list.

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 Head of Profession 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 once the breach had been identified.
- The Publication Hub was updated on the day of release.

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.
- The Office of the Head of Profession will provide briefing for press office to reduce the risk of similar breaches occurring in future, and put in place measures to build stronger relationships between statisticians and press officers
- The acting head of News and External Communications immediately reminded all members of the press office about the need to comply with the strict rules governing the access to statistics in advance of publication
- 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+March+2014&lday=11&lmonth=6&lyear=2014&uday=11&umonth=6&uyear=2014&theme=&source-agency=Environment%2C+Food+and+Rural+Affairs&pagetype=calendar-entry](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/about/statistics#corporate-procedures-and-standards)

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>.