



ASSURING THE SAFETY, QUALITY & EFFICACY  
OF VETERINARY MEDICINES

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**ATI 297**

**Request**

**From:** [Redacted under section 40 of the FOIA]

**Sent:** 29 April 2014

**Subject:** FOI on antibiotic sales and use

Could the VMD/DEFRA please provide specific data on antibiotic sales and use relating to Scottish salmon farms since 2003.

**VMD Reply**

**Sent:** 2 May 2014

**To:** [Redacted under section 40 of the FOIA]

**Subject:** FOI on antibiotic sales and use

**Your Request**

Thank you for your email dated 29 April 2014.

We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked for specific data on antibiotic sales and use relating to Scottish salmon farms since 2003, including a breakdown of which antibiotics are used, a list of the names and the totals used/sold per year since 2003 on salmon farms only or (at least) a list the antibiotics used/sold.

**Our Reply**

The use of veterinary medicinal products is not centrally recorded in the UK. The VMD collect, collate and publish figures on UK **sales** volumes of active antimicrobial ingredients in products authorised for use in animals. It is reasonable to assume that there is a close correlation between the reported quantities of products sold and those used in the UK in the species indicated. These data are published retrospectively on an annual basis at: [http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/public/antimicrobial\\_pubs.aspx](http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/public/antimicrobial_pubs.aspx)

We are unable to provide the breakdown of sales data to the level of detail you request and beyond that we have already provided you under AT1296. To do so would breach confidentiality agreements with the individual manufacturers who supplied their commercially sensitive data and breach the Section 43 exemption in the FOIA, which covers information whose disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person.

In the highly competitive world of veterinary pharmaceuticals, it is widely accepted that knowledge of other companies' sales data can be used by competitors to identify opportunities for them to develop competitor products. We consider that release of sales data information could serve to weaken a company's position since it releases market-sensitive information of potential usefulness to competitors.

Companies are obliged to provide sales information to the VMD as part of the regulatory system. Such information is vital for the VMD and we must be able to ensure that companies provide us accurate sales information in the knowledge that we will not release that information.

Publishing sales information on a particular product, or where the range of products is small the product's active ingredient, could undermine the veterinary pharmaceuticals industry's trust in the regulatory process as well as the companies' commercial position. This could lead to companies becoming unwilling to place product on the UK market, which would have a detrimental affect on animal welfare.

We consider such factors weigh against the public interest in disclosing sales information. In these circumstances, we consider that Section 43 of the FOIA would apply to such information and that it would not be in the public interest to release it.

### **Our Service**

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint, you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this e-mail. If you would like to request an internal review please write to [Redacted under section 40 of the FOIA] at the VMD via [ati@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ati@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk). If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office  
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