



**Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland  
Statement of Compliance**

**With the**

**PRE RELEASE ACCESS TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS ORDER**

**(Northern Ireland 2009)**

This statement is published in conformance with the Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order (Northern Ireland) 2009.

This statement outlines the Livestock and Meat Commission of Northern Ireland's (LMCNI) operational arrangements for giving LMC's Chief Executive exclusive pre-release access to the organisation's own official statistics once they are in their final form prior to publication.

These arrangements are designed to ensure that such pre-release access is justified, limited, controlled and publicised and complies with statutory requirements. Their purpose is to maintain public confidence in the integrity of official statistics published by LMC while also allowing the LMC Chief Executive to account immediately for the implications of statistics on operational areas for which they are responsible.

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**Introduction**

This statement sets out the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland's (LMCNI) operational arrangements for providing LMC Chief Executive exclusive pre-release access to official statistics published by LMC once they have been finalised prior to publication. These arrangements are designed to ensure that such pre-release access is justified, limited, controlled and publicised and complies with statutory requirements. Their purpose is to maintain public confidence in the integrity of official statistics published by LMC while also allowing the LMC Chief Executive to account immediately for the implications of statistics on operational areas for which they are responsible.

**Exclusion**

Different arrangements apply to the Chief Executive's access to the organisations own administrative or management data where those data subsequently form the basis for published official statistics. These arrangements are set out separately.

See Statement of Administrative Sources

**Authority**

These arrangements have been drawn up by LMC's Lead Official for Statistics in consultation with LMC's Sponsor Body (DARD) and LMC's Chief Executive. The Lead Official for Statistics is also responsible for ensuring the day to day implementation of these arrangements.

**General Principle**

The LMCNI operates under the general principle that pre-release access to official statistics must be:

- limited to the minimum number of persons deemed necessary to allow the Chief executive to either:
  - provide responses to questions, or make statements about those statistics at, or shortly after, their time of publication;
  - take action just before, at, or shortly after the time of publication.
- allowed in circumstances where the public benefit likely to result from such access outweighs the detriment to public trust in official statistics likely to result from so doing.

**Grant of advance access**

The arrangements set out in this statement are confined to those persons who meet the eligibility criteria set out in Annex A (i) attached. Recipients can, in addition, share their access with their immediate administrative support staff even though those staff may not directly engage with the

statistics in question. Their advance access is limited to statistics which meet the eligibility criteria set out in Annex A (ii) attached, and which are in their final form prior to being published for the first time.

### **Documentation and Publication**

In the interests of openness and transparency, LMC maintains a public record on its website listing the titles of all the statistical releases to which these arrangements apply, as well as the job title of all those persons to whom pre-release access has been granted, and the organisations to which they belong (see Annex A iii)

### **Period of Access**

In line with the legislative rules, pre-release access to the organisations official statistics is restricted to a maximum of 24 hours before their public release on the following day.

In exceptional circumstances only, and in accordance with Article 3 (5) of the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order (Northern Ireland) 2009, LMC's Lead Official for Statistics may grant pre-release access in excess of 24 hours. They will only do this if, in their opinion, the public benefit outweighs the detriment to public trust which is likely to result from such extended access. When this happens the Lead Official for Statistics will publish on the LMC website their reasons for granting extended access, and will also inform the UK Statistics Authority's Chief Executive- The national Statistician.

### **Conditions of access**

Those persons who are given access to LMC's official statistics ahead of their release must keep the statistics secure and under embargo, and they must abide by certain conditions of access. They must avoid

- Disclosing the statistics or any part of a publication containing these statistics to any person not listed as a pre-release recipient
- Providing any indication of the size or direction of any trend revealed by the statistics
- Using such access for personal gain, or taking any action for political advantage
- Exploiting such access to change or compromise the content, presentation or timing of publication of official statistics.

Where the statistics in question are market sensitive, each recipient must sign a declaration to the above effect

### **Special Circumstances**

Aside from the circumstances described above, the Lead Official for Statistics may also allow access to statistics ahead of their release to a limited number of persons in a limited number of special circumstances, sometimes for more than 24 hours. In each case such access will be documented in the relevant release. For example

- Access may be given to the compilers of complementary reports due to be published at the same time as, or shortly after the statistics so that they can incorporate the latest available figures. Such access may also be longer than 24 hours
- International organisations may gain access in order to compile supra-national statistics

### **Breach of conditions of release**

In the event of a breach of the principles and rules set out in the legislation and described in this Statement, the Lead Official for Statistics will notify the UK Statistics Authority's Chief Executive (the national Statistician) as well as the Authority Head of Assessment; take action to prevent a recurrence; and provide the Authority with a written explanation. The National Statistician may decide to conduct an inquiry on behalf of the Authority; the results of which will be posted on the Authority's website.

### **Sanctions against non-compliance**

LMC's Lead Official for Statistics may, for a period, withdraw pre-release access from any person judged to have breached the conditions of their access.

In addition a heavier sanction can be applied by the UK Statistics Authority which has a statutory duty to assess the extent to which any organisation's 'National Statistics' comply with the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order (Northern Ireland) 2009 and with the associated obligations set out in this Statement. The authority can, for instance, challenge an organisation where it considers that pre-release access is not justified or where an organisation is failing to conform with these arrangements. It can also withdraw, or consider withdrawing 'National Statistics' designation from the statistics in question.

In the event of any such challenge or any such withdrawal the Lead Official for Statistics will publish LMC's response on LMC's website along with LMC's plan for achieving conformance.