

## 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')

Monthly UK Slaughter Statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cattle-sheep-and-pig-slaughter>

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, 18 April 2013

### 2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 – Release Practice 4

Date of occurrence

18 April 2013

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

- The UK Slaughter Statistics are published monthly. The release, which comprises of the main Statistical Notice and supporting monthly dataset, was due to be published at 09:30 on Thursday 18 April 2013.
- The dataset went live at 09:30 but the Statistical Notice was not published until 09:50.
- There is also a quarterly dataset associated with the Statistical Notice. This is not due for publication until 28 June.

## Reasons for breach

Technical issue resulting in a short delay in publishing the part of the statistical release. This is a problem with the new single government website. Defra migrated to this on 10 April 2013.

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

- The problem with the release was identified immediately by the lead statistician.
- The files were loaded onto the Government Digital Service (GDS) system on Wednesday 17 April with an automated publication date and time of 09:30 on 18 April.
- On the main landing page for this statistical series it looked as if the release had been published on time. It was when we checked the individual documents that the delay in publishing the Statistical Notice was identified.
- As we were investigating the problem and arranging to publish a short statement, the Statistical Notice went live.
- The Head of Profession was advised at the earliest opportunity, and subsequently advised the National Statisticians Office.
- At the time of writing this report, no complaints have been received.

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

This is a “system error” and nothing Defra have done or have control over.

The issue was reported to GDS helpdesk.

We have spoken to other Departments and are looking at a possible short term fix that we have discussed with colleagues in Department for Transport.

The problem was flagged-up to GDS at a senior level. We quickly received an explanation of what caused the problem and assurance that adding ‘cache busting’ to the system will address this. Cache busting should be deployed on 19 April.

The Defra e-communications team have also been informed.

We will continue to monitor the situation.

### **5. Links to published statements about this breach**

This was a minor delay. No statement was published.