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| **From: Dave Foster**  **Natural Environment Policy Division**  **Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group** | Natural Environment Policy Division,  Room 139,  Dundonald House,  Upper Newtownards Road,  Belfast,  BT4 3SB  [ammonia@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:ammonia@daera-ni.gov.uk)  4 January 2023 |

Dear Consultee,

**Consultation on draft Northern Ireland Ammonia Strategy**I am writing to invite you to share your views on proposals for a Northern Ireland Ammonia Strategy. The eight-week consultation period on the draft Ammonia Strategy will run from 4 January to 3 March 2023.

**Background**Agriculture makes a significant contribution to the Northern Ireland economy however it also produces 97% of current ammonia emissions. Therefore, action on ammonia is required urgently to support our local farm businesses and rural communities and help them to thrive and be sustainable, while at the same time protecting our environment. A high-quality evidence base on ammonia has been developed, led by the Agri-Food Biosciences Institute in conjunction with UK partners, and this strategy builds on that evidence base.  
  
The long-term target is to reduce ammonia emissions to a point where Critical Loads of nitrogen deposition and Critical Levels of ammonia are not being exceeded at designated sites. Given the generational challenge posed by the scale of current exceedances, interim targets are required.   
  
The targets DAERA proposes for 2030 are to:

• Reduce agricultural ammonia emissions from Northern Ireland by at least 30%, based on the 2020 emissions levels (from 31.2 kt in 2020 to 21.8 kt in 2030).  
  
• Reduce ammonia concentrations at all designated sites by at least 40% (using 2020 as the baseline year) or to below Critical Levels.

The consultation document proposes two pillars of a strategic approach to achieve these targets:

1. An ambitious and verifiable ammonia reduction programme for implementation on farms, including:
   1. A series of Northern Ireland wide measures.
   2. Spatially targeted measures in areas around internationally designated Natura 2000 sites, designed to meet conservation objectives.
2. A programme of restoration and management of our most valuable habitats to alleviate the symptoms of ammonia and nitrogen exceedance.

**Consultation**

The consultation will run for an 8-week period from 4 January to 3 March 2023. The deadline for responses to this consultation is 23:59 on Friday 3 March 2023. All responses should be

received by then to ensure they can be fully considered.

The consultation documents are available at: <https://www.daerani.gov.uk/consultations/>

This draft strategy was developed under the leadership of the former DAERA Minister and it

will help us plan the way forward to reduce ammonia emissions from agriculture. In DAERA, we

recognise that we do not have all the answers and this consultation will help us strengthen the

draft strategy with your help.

We welcome your views and we have posed questions throughout the draft strategy. We are

keen to have as many responses as possible to these questions and any other practical and

affordable ideas or suggestions. There is more information on page 6 about how to take part in

the consultation and your responses will be used to inform a reworked draft Ammonia Strategy

for an incoming Minister and new Executive to consider.

To reduce the environmental impact of the production of consultation papers, the Department is encouraging stakeholders to respond using the online response function. If you wish to take part in the consultation, once you have considered the proposals, you should respond online, through our survey which can be accessed here: <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/daera/ammonia-strategy-consultation/> We would prefer that you respond via the online consultation process but if you prefer consultation responses may be emailed to [ammonia@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:ammonia@daera-ni.gov.uk)

If required, a pdf hard copy of the consultation questions can be provided - please contact us to discuss your requirements, either by email to [ammonia@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:ammonia@daera-ni.gov.uk) or by telephone (028 9052 4528).

Copies of the consultation document can also be made available, on request, in alternative formats such as large print, Braille disc, audio cassette and other languages. Please contact 028 9052 4528 to arrange such copies, or to discuss the consultation more generally. For those with hearing difficulties, leave a message on DAERA’s text phone (18001 028 9052 4528).

The Department intends to publish a summary of responses following the closing date. Your response, and all other responses to this consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. This means that information provided by you in response to the stakeholder engagement is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor’s Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:   
• The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department’s functions and it would not otherwise be provided;   
• The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties “in confidence” which is not confidential in nature; and   
• Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

The information you provide in completing this consultation will be controlled and processed in line with Data Protection Legislation by DAERA. To find out more about how we handle your personal information, DAERA’s Privacy Notice can be viewed online at <http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daera-privacy-statement>

The Department looks forward to receiving your response to this consultation exercise.

Yours faithfully

**Dave Foster**

**Natural Environment Policy Division**