

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Ken Roy
Head of Profession for Statistics (Defra group)
Natural England
[by email]

07 April 2017

Dear Ken,

National Statistics Status of Milk Utilisation Statistics

Thank you for your letter of 31 March setting out the situation regarding your statistics on milk utilisation. I am grateful to you for consulting with us in this proactive and constructive way, and welcome your commitment to the continuous improvement of the statistics.

Your letter raised the issue of whether it would be more appropriate for these statistics to be published without National Statistics status until the methodology issues have been addressed. I am grateful to you for reflecting on the meaning of National Statistics status. Designation as National Statistics shows that the statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. Having reviewed the information that you have shared with us, I agree with you that these statistics should not be published as National Statistics until the data quality review has been completed.

I welcome your close engagement with stakeholders and the quick action you are taking to respond to their concerns about the quality of the data. I also appreciate the careful thought you have given to the implications of removing the National Statistics status, including adding a clear explanation for users on the landing page of the statistics.

I would expect to be able to restore National Statistics status once the methodology issues have been resolved, subject to a review by my Office. I would be grateful if you could update me on the outcomes of the data quality review once it has been completed.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Humpherson