

Natural Resources Wales permitting decisions

Avara Foods Limited (Nant Coed Farm Poultry Unit) Decision Document

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Variation

The variation number is: EPR/AB3096HU/V004

The applicant /operator is: Avara Foods Limited

The installation is located at: Nant Coed Farm Poultry Unit, Nant Coed Farm, Nantycaws, Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire, SA32 8HB

We have decided to issue the variation for Nant Coed Farm Poultry Unit operated by Avara Foods Limited. The operator's current permit allows them to house 160,000 broiler birds. This variation will allow the operator to rear up to 70,000 pullets. The site will either grow broilers or rear pullets and will not stock both at the same time.

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

Purpose of this document

This decision document:

- explains how the application has been determined
- provides a record of the decision-making process
- shows how all relevant factors have been taken into account
- justifies the specific conditions in the permit other than those in our generic permit template.

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

Key issues of the decision

Receipt of application

The application was received at Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on 8th July 2020 and was accepted as duly made on 10th September 2020. This means we considered it was in the correct form and contained sufficient information for us to begin our determination, but not that it necessarily contained all the information we would need to complete that determination.

Confidential information

The applicant made no claim for commercial confidentiality. We have not received any information in relation to the application that appears to be confidential in relation to any party.

Consultation

Due to the nature of the application, there was no requirement to advertise it or consult on it externally. The decision was taken in accordance with RGN 6 High Profile Sites, our Public Participation Statement and our Working Together Agreements.

A copy of the application and all other documents relevant to our determination are available for the public to view. Anyone wishing to see these documents could arrange for copies to be made.

Operator

We are satisfied that the operator is the person who will have control over the operation of the facility after the issue of the variation. The decision was taken in accordance with EPR RGN 1 ‘Understanding the meaning of operator’.

The facility

The installation is subject to the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) because it carries out an activity listed in Schedule 1 Part 2 of EPR:

- Section 6.9 Part A(1)(a)(i) Rearing poultry in an installation with more than 40,000 places.

An installation may also comprise “directly associated activities”, which at this installation includes.

- Dirty water tanks

Together, these listed and directly associated activities comprise the installation.

Legislation

NRW is satisfied that this decision is compatible with its general purpose of pursuing the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR) in relation to Wales and applying the principles of SMNR. In particular, NRW acknowledges that it is a principle of sustainable management to take action to prevent significant damage to ecosystems. We consider that, in issuing the variation a high level of protection will be delivered for the environment and human health through the operation of the installation in accordance with the permit conditions.

All applicable European directives have been considered in the determination of the application.

The site

Nant Coed Farm Poultry Unit is situated approximately 1km south east of the village of Nantycaws in the county of Carmarthenshire. It is approximately centred on National Grid Reference SN 46492 17253. The installation is currently permitted to house a maximum of 160,000 broiler birds for the purposes of meat production. The birds are housed at one day old and the site is depopulated when the birds are approximately 38 days old. The birds are delivered and removed on an “all in all out” basis.

Birds are grown in four poultry houses which each have capacity for 40,000 birds. The houses are sited on concrete bases which are covered with a layer of wood shavings which is maintained in a dry, friable condition through the regulation of drinking water supply, temperature and humidity. Temperature in the houses is regulated through the use of liquid petroleum gas heaters. Ventilation is provided by high-velocity, roof ridge-mounted fans which are controlled centrally through an automated system. The automated ventilation system is used to maintain the optimum atmosphere for bird welfare and to minimise ammonia and odour release. During periods of warm weather, additional ventilation is provided from gable-end fans.

Feed is delivered in covered vehicles and stored in enclosed galvanised steel silos. Birds which die during the production cycle are recorded and removed from houses on a daily basis. Carcasses are stored in sealed, vermin proof containers prior to removal under the fallen stock scheme.

At depletion the litter is transported off site in sealed containers. The floors and walls of the poultry houses are cleaned using high pressure water jets and wash water is diverted via the site's drainage system to a bunded underground dirty water tank. Wash water is removed off site via road tanker.

The operator has applied to vary their permit to allow them to rear up to 70,000 pullets. The birds will be delivered to the site at one day old and reared to approximately 16 weeks of age. Houses will be empty for 3-4 weeks before the next cycle, giving 2.5 cycles per annum. The site will either grow broilers or rear pullets and will not stock both at the same time. There are no changes to ventilation, drainage (foul and clean), heating system, litter management, waste water removal or fallen stock collection processes as a result of this variation.

A plan is included in the permit and the operator is required to carry on the permitted activities within the site boundary. There are no changes to the site boundary as a result of this variation.

Site condition report

Due to the nature of the variation application (no addition of land), the operator was not required to provide a description of the condition of the site.

Biodiversity, heritage, landscape and nature conservation

Risks to sites of heritage, landscape or nature conservation, and/or protected species or habitats from rearing of pullets would be via ammonia emissions/nitrogen deposition.

Due to the reasons set out below, we are satisfied that there will be no increased risk to any Natura 2000 site (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)/Special Protection Areas (SPAs)/Ramsars) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as a result of this

variation. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) or CRow Appendix 4 assessment was not required.

The operator's current permit allows them to house a maximum of 160,000 broiler birds. Risks from these birds have already been assessed during the determination of the current permit. The ammonia emission factor for broilers is 0.034kg NH₃/animal place/year.

160,000 broiler places x emission factor of 0.034 = release of 5,440kg NH₃/year.

The operator has applied to vary their permit to allow them to rear up to 70,000 pullet birds. The ammonia emission factor for pullets is 0.06kg NH₃/animal place/year.

70,000 pullet places x emission factor of 0.06 = release of 4,200kg NH₃/year.

This demonstrates a reduction in ammonia emissions of 22% when the site is rearing pullets. The site will not stock both broilers and pullets at the same time therefore we are satisfied that there will be no increased risk from ammonia emissions/nitrogen deposition as a result of allowing the operator the option to either grow broilers or rear pullets.

Environmental Risk Assessment

Air

Due to ammonia emissions from rearing 70,000 pullets being lower than ammonia emissions from growing 160,000 broilers, we are satisfied that air emissions from changes proposed in this variation are not likely to pose a significant or increased risk to the environment or human health.

Water

Changes proposed in this variation will not cause emissions to water.

Soil

Changes proposed in this variation will not impact emissions to soil.

Odour

Ammonia emissions from rearing 70,000 pullets are lower than ammonia emissions from growing 160,000 broilers. Ammonia loading is an indication of total muck produced, which contributes to odour. We are therefore satisfied that the risk of odour pollution at nearby receptors due to changes proposed in this variation, is not increased and is not significant.

Permit condition 3.3.1 requires that emissions from the activities are free from odour at levels likely to cause pollution outside the site. We are satisfied that this condition will be sufficiently protective in conjunction with measures described by the applicant for minimising odour production at the installation in their initial application for a permit.

Noise

Potential sources of noise include vehicles travelling to and from site, ventilation fans, feed transferring from lorries to bins, and bird catching. These on-site processes will mainly remain the same following this variation. Noise from vehicles travelling to and from site and loading/unloading of lorries may reduce due to total delivery and removal of birds being reduced. We are therefore satisfied that the risk of noise pollution at nearby receptors due to changes proposed in this variation, is not increased and is not significant.

Permit condition 3.4.1 requires that emissions from the activities are free from noise at levels likely to cause pollution outside the site, as perceived by an officer of NRW. We are satisfied that this condition will be sufficiently protective in conjunction with the measures described by the applicant for minimising noise produced at the installation in their initial application for a permit.

Fugitive emissions

Changes proposed in this variation will not impact fugitive emissions. We are satisfied that the risk of pollution from fugitive emissions due to changes proposed in this variation is not increased and is not significant.

Monitoring

No new monitoring requirements have been imposed due to this variation.

Reporting

No new reporting requirements have been imposed due to this variation.

Operating techniques

We have reviewed the techniques proposed by the applicant and compared these with the relevant guidance notes. We are satisfied that the techniques represent appropriate measures for the installation in line with BAT standards in Sector Guidance Note (SGN) EPR 6.09 'How to comply with your environmental permit for intensive farming'.

The permit conditions

Updating permit conditions during consolidation

We have updated previous permit conditions to those in the new generic permit template as part of permit consolidation. The new conditions have the same meaning as those in the previous permit(s). The operator has agreed that the new conditions are acceptable.

Use of conditions other than those from the template

Based on the information in the application, we do not consider that we need to impose conditions other than those in our permit template, which was developed in consultation with industry having regard to the relevant legislation.

Raw materials

Changes proposed in this variation will not impact the use of raw materials and fuels.

Waste types

This variation will not impact the specified the permitted waste types, descriptions and quantities, which can be accepted at the regulated facility.

Pre-operational conditions

There are no new pre-operational conditions as a result of this variation.

Improvement conditions

There are no new improvement conditions as a result of this variation.

Incorporating the application

We have specified that the applicant must operate the permit in accordance with descriptions in the application, including all additional information received as part of the determination process. These descriptions are specified in the Operating Techniques table in the permit.