

Executive Note

The Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Radioactivity in Sheep) Partial Revocation (Scotland) Order 2008 (SSI 2008/ 63)

The above instrument was made by Scottish Ministers under the powers conferred by sections 1(1) and (2) and 24(3) of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. The instrument is not subject to parliamentary procedure.

Policy Objectives

To partially revoke the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Radioactivity in Sheep) Order 1991 to remove two farms from restrictions on the movement and slaughter of sheep imposed following the Chernobyl accident.

Background

Statutory restrictions on the movement and slaughter of sheep have applied since 1986 to hill farms in areas of Scotland where poor, peaty soils absorbed, and subsequently retained, high levels of radiocaesium deposition resulting from Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident.

All stocked, restricted farms have been subject to an annual post-Chernobyl sheep monitoring programme since the early 1990s when radiocaesium levels in live sheep on some farms were found to have fallen to acceptable levels. This monitoring is carried out on behalf of Food Standards Agency Scotland by SG-RPID, and has allowed the area subject to restrictions to be progressively reduced over time as radiocaesium levels in sheep on restricted farms have fallen.

In 2007, results from initial tests on the restricted farms indicated two farms should be fully tested to assess whether it could be considered for release from restrictions. Whole-flock testing on these farms was carried out and results showed that sheep on both of these farms had radiocaesium levels below the acceptable limit of 1000 Bq/kg and could therefore be released from the restrictions. FSA Scotland issued a Letter of Consent releasing these two farms from restrictions, in accordance with Section 2(1) of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, on 14 January 2008.

The Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Radioactivity in Sheep) Partial Revocation (Scotland) Order 2008 will formally remove these farms from the Scottish restricted areas, leaving five restricted farms in Scotland. The monitoring programme will continue on the remaining five farms.

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