

**From:** [SM-Defra-RESP-notifications \(DEFRA\)](#)  
**To:** [Harry Edwards](#)  
**Cc:** [Cummins, Kate](#); [Noden, Dean](#)  
**Subject:** EPR/BP3709LB/V003 and EPR/BP3709LB/S004 - We Need More Information About Your Applications (not duly made request for information) CRM:0270062  
**Date:** 18 December 2024 11:14:52  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)  
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[Application Variation V003 - Wheaton Aston spreadsheet - baseline check for old and new EFs 18122024.xls](#)

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Dear Harry Edwards

## **Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016**

**Application references: EPR/BP3709LB/V003 and EPR/BP3709LB/S004**

**Operator: BELMONT FARMS LIMITED**

**Facility: Wheaton Aston Farm Pig Unit - EPR/BP3709LB, Little Onn, Stafford, ST20 0AU**

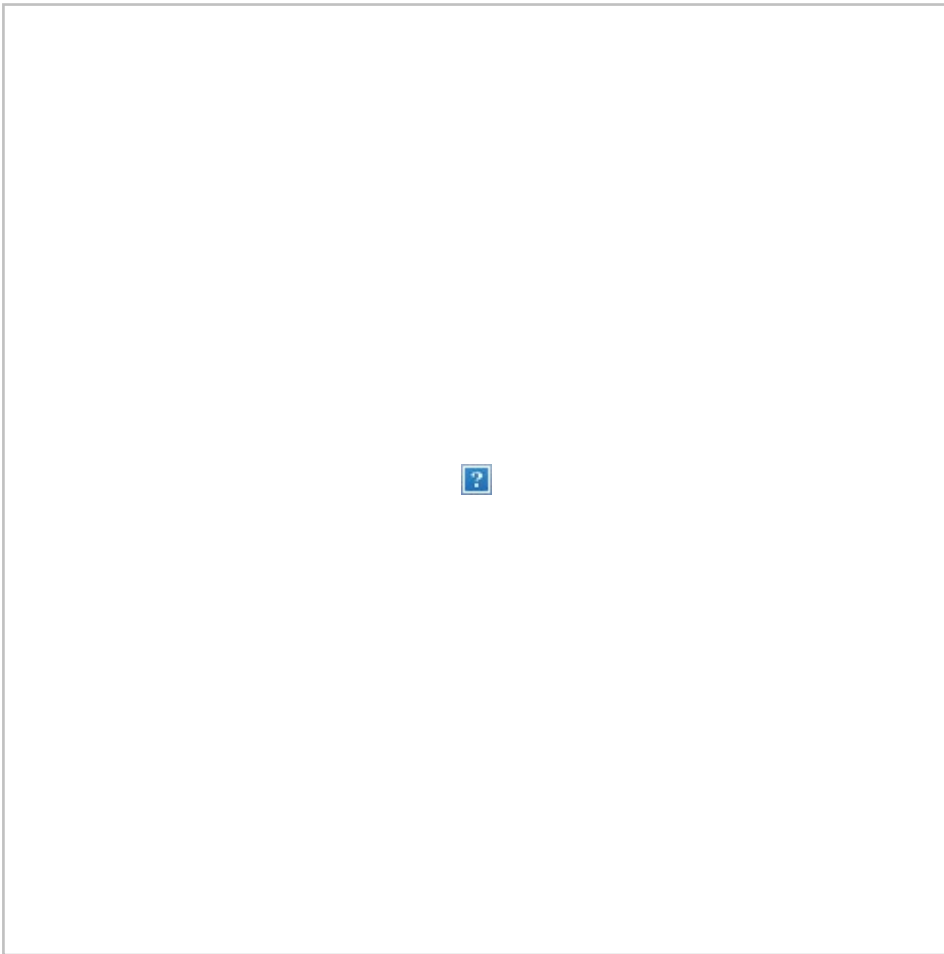
Thank you for your applications received on 21/11/2024.

We need to ask you for some missing information before we can do any more work on your applications (I have separated out the questions 1 - 8 for the variation application and 9 - 12 for the partial surrender application below). Please provide us with more information to the following questions, and submit the additional fee required:

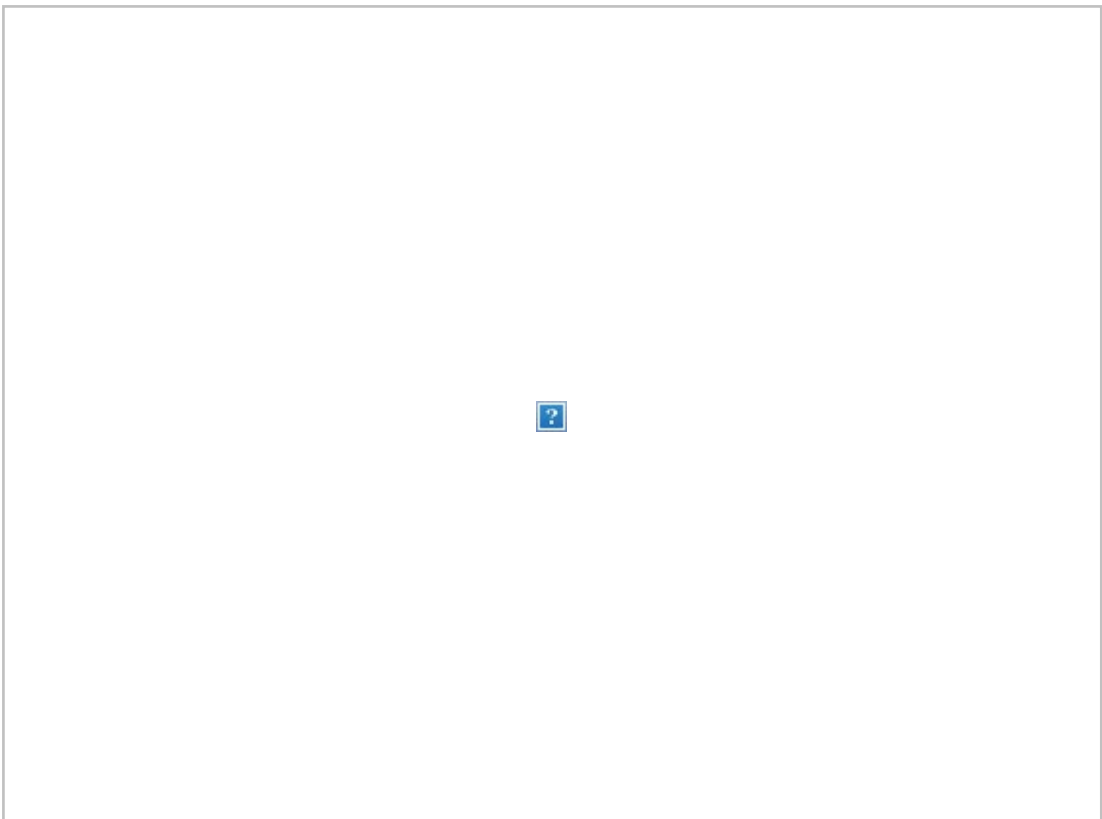
### **EPR/BP3709LB/V003 – substantial variation application**

1. **Installation boundary** – it appears that the AD plant has been built outside of permitted boundary in EPR/KP3537MX/V002 issued 09/06/11, so this area will need to be included in an updated installation boundary plan and details added to an updated site condition report (requested below). Please note, your revised installation boundary plan may need to include the area to be partially surrendered if you cannot provide one or more of the responses required for the partial surrender application below, because if we are able to progress the variation to duly made but not the partial surrender then we will be assessing the variation with the increased areas of land and the areas you wish to surrender will still need to be included in the installation boundary. *We cannot remove areas of land in a variation application only, although we can extend the boundary to include the additional areas required for the AD plant and slurry tanks.*

Current installation boundary:



Proposed installation boundary:



2. **Non-technical summary (NTS)** – you have ticked in application form C3.5 that the NTS is document 002; this document is named as the ‘summary of proposed changes’ and mentions the surrender of land to the **east**, which is not clear in any of the plans. We believe that the main area to be surrendered is to the north/northwest? Please clarify and include in the document an NTS in the usual format describing the operations in general, as these are changing from the original NTS. Please adapt this document if any of the responses for the partial surrender application queries below cannot be provided and the partial surrender application cannot be duly made.

3. **Ammonia and BAT assessments**

Since submission of the application, we have published revised ammonia emission factors (EFs) on 29/11/2024; please see the following link for further information: [Ammonia emission factors for pig and poultry screening, modelling and reporting - GOV.UK](#). This means that the modelling you have submitted is not using the correct emission factors and they may also not meet the required BAT AELs. We can complete sensitivity checks during the audit of the modelling once the application is duly made, against the changes and any other discrepancies (see below) however if the conclusion is different to the current one of demonstrating a reduction of impacts from the change in proposal then we may require you to submit updated modelling. Please confirm the following:

- a. Please confirm the heights and efflux velocities for the roof fans in pig houses with this type of ventilation – the height and velocities are inconsistent in the pre-application request (which stated all at height 5.5m or greater and efflux velocity at or greater than 7m/s - which is the criteria for high velocity roof fans), and the modelling report which has a height of 5.5m for house 2, and 4.5m for houses 5 – 9, and all these houses with an efflux velocity of 5m/s, which would indicate they are not classed as high velocity fans. The TS information for these is also inconsistent. I have attached a spreadsheet with the discrepancies highlighted.
- b. Following publication of revised emission factors on 29/11/2024 we can no longer accept frequent slurry removal emission factors unless this is weekly removal. Therefore we apply the fully slatted floor (FSF) emission factors. Please see the attached spreadsheet which includes some information comparing the mass balance ammonia emissions using the old emission factors with the new ones we propose are the appropriate ones. Please confirm you agree with the emission factors indicated for each livestock type or amend any details and highlight them where you have made any changes. *Please note, the mass balance calculations for the baseline livestock numbers shows that the new EFs will be a lower baseline and this will be used in our sensitivity checks for the modelling. Please call me if you need further explanation for this.*
- c. Please confirm if the dry sows in proposed houses 2 and 3, and the production pigs > 30kg (unserved gilts) in proposed houses 5 – 8 are remaining as the same type of livestock, or if these houses are currently used for other types of livestock in the current permit, ideally providing a plan of the existing layout out with houses

numbered B1 – B24. *Dry sows and production pigs > 30kg (unserved gilts) do not meet the BAT AEL for new plant (which includes refurbished plant to accommodate a different livestock type). Figures 3a and 3b on page 18 of the detailed ammonia modelling report submitted with the application show the locations of the sources (pig houses) but they aren't numbered. We need to establish which houses are B1 – B24 in figure 3a, so it can then be checked if the houses have the same type of livestock in for the proposal and therefore are classed as existing plant or the livestock is changing (and hence rearing regime) and are classed as new plant for BAT AEL purposes.*

- d. *If houses 2, 3 and 5 – 8 are classed as new plant (as described above) then please provide mitigation measures to reduce the emission factor to meet the BAT AELs, with evidence to back up the % reduction claimed. One measure would be if the crude protein levels in the feed were lower than those assumed in the new emission factors. The new emission factors for sows on FSF and production pigs on FSF are 2.94 kg NH<sub>3</sub>/ap/year and 2.813 kg NH<sub>3</sub>/ap/year respectively and these are based on average crude protein levels of 15.8% and 18%, respectively. For every 1% reduction in CP % we can apply a 10% reduction in the emission factor (up to a maximum of 20% reduction in the emission factor) but we need evidence of the feed crude protein levels to be provided. Also please note, as you have confirmed the slurry depth will not exceed 800mm in depth we can accept this FSF system meets narrative BAT techniques regardless of slurry removal frequency, without the need for further mitigation for new or redeveloped housing permitted after the publication of the IRPP BAT conclusions on 21/02/2017, such as an air cleaning system, slurry cooling and/or pH reduction of slurry. as you have confirmed the pit will not exceed 800mm we can accept this FSF system meets narrative BAT techniques regardless of slurry removal frequency, without the need for further mitigation for new/redeveloped housing permitted after the publication of the IRPP BAT conclusions on 21/02/2017, such as an air cleaning system, slurry cooling and/or pH reduction of the slurry. as you have confirmed the pit will not exceed 800mm we can accept this FSF system meets narrative BAT techniques regardless of slurry removal frequency, without the need for further mitigation for new/redeveloped housing permitted after the publication of the IRPP BAT conclusions on 21/02/2017, such as an air cleaning system, slurry cooling and/or pH reduction of the slurry. Also please note, as you have confirmed the pit will not exceed 800mm we can accept this FSF system meets narrative BAT techniques regardless of slurry removal frequency, without the need for further mitigation for new/redeveloped housing permitted after the publication of the IRPP BAT conclusions on 21/02/2017, such as an air cleaning system, slurry cooling and/or pH reduction of the slurry. Also please note, as you have confirmed the pit will not exceed 800mm we can accept this FSF system meets narrative BAT techniques regardless of slurry removal frequency, without the need for further mitigation for new/redeveloped housing permitted after the publication of the IRPP BAT conclusions on 21/02/2017, such as an air cleaning system, slurry cooling and/or pH reduction of the slurry.*
- e. *Are there any boars on site, both for the current permit and the proposal, and if so how many and where are they housed? These will need to be included in the ammonia assessment.*

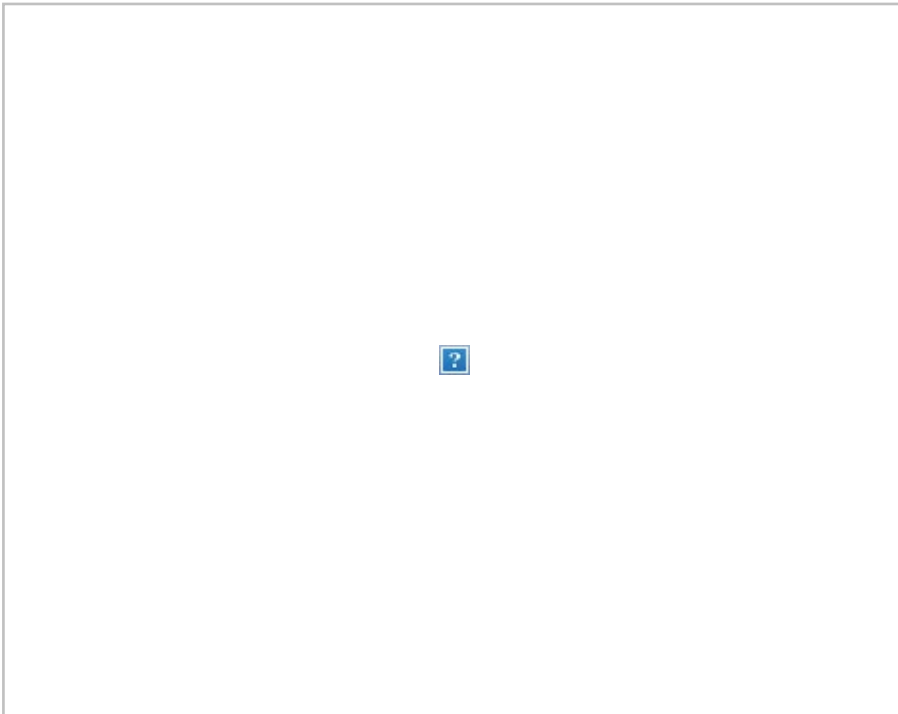
- f. The modelling hasn't included two LWS that didn't screen out, as listed in the pre-application advice letter as The Rookery LWS and Gorse Covert LWS – the nearest points to the installation boundary are at approximately 384464, 314486 and 383383, 315201 respectively. We can complete sensitivity checks for these but may require revised modelling if the outcome doesn't agree with the overall conclusion of a reduction in impacts for the proposal.
- g. The area of the slurry lagoon in the modelling is 2,794.5m<sup>2</sup>, however the area for the pre-application request was stated as 2,479m<sup>2</sup>, which is correct?
- h. Modelling data files - please submit the modelling input data files to enable the audit to be undertaken.

- 4. **Technical standards** – I haven't assessed this in detail, but the slurry lagoon has been omitted from the 'buildings inventory' (should this be renamed 'emissions table' as referred to in the drainage section?) and it calls the roof fans 'high velocity' fans but they don't meet the criteria of a height of 5.5m or greater (and efflux velocity of 7m/s or greater as detailed above). In addition there is no mention of boars, so please add if there are any on site.
- 5. **Site Condition Report (SCR)** – in application form C3.5 it lists as updated site condition report as document 009 but none has been submitted, so please provide this for the additional area for the slurry tanks included (and for closure of part of site for partial surrender as mentioned below if applicable, depending on whether the partial surrender application can be duly made). Please ensure the SCR is in the H5 format detailed here: [Environmental permitting: H5 Site condition report - GOV.UK](#).
- 6. **Dust and bioaerosol management plan (DBMP) fee** – you have submitted a DBMP as there are receptors within 100m of the installation boundary and there hasn't been one submitted with previous permit applications. Please submit an additional application fee of £620 for its assessment.
- 7. **Standby generator** – in document 010 environmental risk assessment submitted with the application, it mentions a back-up generator for use when power supply is lost. Please confirm the location of the standby generator on a revised site layout plan, the net thermal rated input of the standby generator, and that it will not be tested more than 50 hours per year or operated for more than 500 hours per year (averaged over 3 years) for combined testing and emergency use only as a temporary power source if there is a mains power failure.
- 8. **Summary of Environment Management System (EMS)** – in application form C3.5 it lists as updated summary of EMS as document 006 but none has been submitted, so please provide this.

#### **EPR/BP3709LB/S004 – partial surrender application**

- 9. **Site surrender plan 020** – in the plan (see below) it has indicated the area to be

removed but this also removes the area which includes (in part – see point 1 above) the AD plant. Please submit a revised plan ensuring the area for the AD plant is not removed.



10. **Low risk surrender agreement** – you have ticked the box in form E2 that you have had pre-application discussions and provide document reference 001 as evidence, but this is for the pre-application ammonia screening advice. You need to provide confirmation from the area regulatory officer that a site visit has been completed and they are happy for the low risk surrender to take place. Please refer to the E2 guidance here: [Form-guidance-EPC-Part-E2-surrender-application.pdf](#) for further information. *Please note, the site inspector Dean Noden is currently on leave, returning on 02/01/2025 so I suggest contacting him as soon as possible on his return to discuss this. I have copied him in for awareness and so you have his email address.*
11. **Partial surrender procedures** – within document 002 summary of proposed changes it refers to part surrender procedures document, including mention of decommissioning one of two lagoons. I assume the partial surrender procedures document is 021 Proposed Part Surrender, but this doesn't include mention of the lagoon being removed and what measures have been completed to remove it, or where the lagoon is located. Please indicate the location of the lagoon to be removed on the revised surrender plan requested above.
12. **Site Condition Report (SCR)** - please provide an updated SCR including sections 8 – 10 for closure of part of site (as mentioned above for variation application V003).

If you are unable to arrange a site visit for the surrender application before the deadline for responses below, we may be able to proceed with the variation once we have acceptable responses for points 1 – 8, and return the partial surrender application as not duly made

(retaining 20% of the application fee), and you may submit that at a later stage.

You must send us the information and payment by **06/01/2025**.

Details of how to pay are given in Part F of the application form.

If we do not receive this by this deadline we will return your application.

If we receive what is missing by the deadline, we will continue to check your application. We'll check to see if there's enough information for the application to be 'duly made'. Duly made means that we have all the information we need to begin determination. Determination is where we assess your application and decide if we can allow what you've asked for.

We'll let you know by email whether your applications can be duly made. If they can't be duly made, we'll return your applications to you.

If we do have to return your application(s) we'll send you a partial refund of your application(s) payment. We'll retain 20% of the application charge to cover our costs in reviewing your application. This maximum amount we'll retain is capped at £1,500. Further information on charging can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-permits-and-abstraction-licences-tables-of-charges>.

Note: Our email system has a file size limit of 25MB, if your returns exceed this limit you will have to arrange an online file transfer. Please ensure the file transfer link does not have a time limit on it.

If you have any questions please phone or email me, but please note, I am only in work today and tomorrow 19/12/2024, next week Tuesday (Christmas Eve) until 12pm, and Friday 27/12/2024, and then off until 02/01/2025.

**Please reply directly to this email with your information, and copy me in.**

Kind regards,  
Kate

**Kate Cummins**

Senior Permitting Officer, National Permitting Service, Operations – Regulation, Monitoring and Customer

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