An Rialálaí Agraibhia
Agri-Food Regulator

Customer Charter

2024 – 2026

Promoting fairness and transparency in the agri-food supply chain

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Introduction

The Agri-Food Regulator is an independent statutory body established under the Agriculture and Food Supply Chain Act 2023 (Act 19 of 2023). The Agri-Food Regulator is concerned with promoting fairness and transparency in the agri-food supply chain. It's statutory remit and focus is on business-to-business relationships within the supply chain. In exercising this function, the Agri-Food Regulator shall have regard to the circumstances and needs of the agricultural and food sector, including, in particular farming, fishing and small food businesses.

What we do

The Agricultural and Food Supply Chain (Unfair Trading) Regulations 2023 outlines the functions assigned to the Agri-Food Regulator under the following headings:

- Fairness and transparency in the agri-food supply chain - in exercising this function, the Regulator will have regard to the circumstances and needs of the agricultural and food sector including, in particular farming, fishing and small food businesses
- Information and engagement – the Regulator will publish analysis of information about price and market data relating to the agri-food supply chain and on contingency issues
- Compliance with unfair trading law – the Regulator is responsible for enhancing understanding of and compliance with agri-food unfair trading law
- Enforcement of unfair trading law – the Regulator is responsible for enforcing agri-food unfair trading law and is the designated Enforcement Authority as required under Directive EU 2019/633 on unfair trading practices in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain
- Guidelines – the Regulator may, for the purpose of protecting supplier interests, publish guidelines for buyers about supplier protection and trading practices, whether generally or in a particular trade, business or professional sector

Customer Service Standards

The Agri-Food Regulator is committed to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all of our customers, providing and delivering the highest quality of service in accordance with the 12 Principles of Quality Customer Service for Customers and Clients of the Public Service. In order to achieve this, we will interact with our customers in a straightforward, polite, helpful, open and professional manner and treat our customers fairly and consistently.

This Customer Charter supports this aim. This Charter does not cover in detail all the functions and services we provide but outlines our commitment to you in respect of engaging with the Agri-Food Regulator.

Equally, we expect that our customers will treat our staff with courtesy and respect.

Equality/diversity

The Agri-Food Regulator is committed to diversity and will ensure that the right to equal treatment as established by equality legislation is upheld.

We will:

- Strive to communicate in Irish and Irish Sign Language, on request, taking account of the technical nature and language of our work;

- publish major documents, such as our annual report, in Irish and English at the same time;

- and publish a Language Scheme under the Official Languages Act 2003, once approved by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Also, we are happy to arrange supports for people with disabilities who access our information and services. You can get in touch by calling Ph: 00 353 1 6019900.

Telephone Enquiries

You can contact us by telephone during normal office hours at the number provided below.

For information and general enquiries, we are committed to:

- answering your calls promptly;
- returning calls within one working day, where practicable;
- identify ourselves and our area of work;
- being polite and helpful;
- providing you with the appropriate information you require;
- advising you where an enquiry does not fall within the remit of the Regulator and, if possible, referring you to the appropriate organisation.

Please note that the Agri-Food Regulator has no role in providing legal advice or interpreting legislation.

Written communication

You can contact us by email at info@agrifoodregulator.ie or by letter at the address provided below. If you send us an email or a letter, we will acknowledge receipt within five working days where appropriate. We aim to provide you with a full response to written communications (including emails), where appropriate, within fifteen working days of receiving them. In certain circumstances, where more time is required to deal with your query, we will advise you as to when you can expect a full reply.

Easy access to information

- We will produce printed material, which is well designed, readable and accessible;
- we will ensure that the information available on the Agri-Food Regulator website is clear, up to date and accurate;
- we will comply with our obligations under the Official Languages Act (2003), the objective of which is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish;

- we will ensure that the Agri-Food Regulator continues to adhere to its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act (1997) and the Data Protection Act, (2003).

Protocol for the Provision of Information to Members of the Oireachtas by State Bodies under the aegis of Government Departments/Offices

Ministers are accountable to Dáil Éireann for Government policy in respect of the State bodies under the aegis of his or her Department. Ministers are not directly accountable for the day-to-day operational matters of State bodies. It is in the public interest that bodies funded by the State have appropriate systems in place for the provision of information regarding their operations to Oireachtas members in their capacity as parliamentarians and public representatives.

The dedicated email address for Oireachtas members to contact the Agri-Food Regulator is Oireachtas@agrifoodregulator.ie

Searches and inspections

As part of the Agri-Food Regulator's enforcement role, our staff may visit workplaces to conduct a search or inspection. When doing so, our staff will:

- act in a professional and courteous manner;
- show their identification card or warrant of appointment as an authorised officer of the Agri-Food Regulator;
- give clear, helpful information on the purpose of the search/inspection;
- give contact details for any queries following the search/inspection and
- enforce legislation in a targeted, fair, consistent, open and accountable manner.

Complaints and Appeals

We have a transparent and simple-to-use system for dealing with complaints and appeals.

We will provide training to staff on handling customer complaints and appeals and ensure that feedback from the operation of the systems is kept under review.

Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint or the way it was handled, you may pursue the matter further with the Ombudsman or, in the case of children under 18 years of age, with the Ombudsman for Children. Contact details are as follows:

Address:

Office of the Ombudsman,

18 Lower Leeson Street,

Dublin 2.

Phone: (01) 639 5600 or Lo-call 1890 22 30 30

Contact: Contact the Office of the Ombudsman | Ombudsman.ie

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

Internal Customer

We will ensure that standards applied to external customers will apply equally to internal customers by

- ensuring that all processes and services involving the internal customer comply with the provisions of equality legislation and we will promote a culture of respect for diversity among all internal customers
- providing for and actively encourage continuing professional development and training for staff
- providing clear job descriptions, in partnership with individual staff members and their staff representatives, with clear goals and responsibilities and ensure that these are understood by all staff members.

Data Protection

Subject access requests directed to An Rialálaí Agraibhia should be addressed as follows:

An Rialálaí Agraibhia

Backweston Campus,

Celbridge,

Co Kildare,

Ireland,

W23 X3PH or

Email: dataprotection@agrifoodregulator.ie

Freedom of Information

An Rialálaí Agraibhia is a public body for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

Freedom of Information requests to An Rialálaí Agraibhia should be addressed as follows:

Freedom of Information Requests

An Rialálaí Agraibhia

Backweston Campus,

Celbridge,

Co Kildare,

Ireland,

W23 X3PH

or

Email: foi@agrifoodregulator.ie

Visitors to An Rialálaí Agraibhia Office

An Rialálaí Agraibhia does not provide a public office service or facility.

Where a meeting is necessary, we are available to meet with you by appointment during normal office hours. We will provide suitable facilities for meetings and will make sure that our offices are clean and safe.

Making a complaint about us

An Rialálaí Agraibhia aims to deal with customers who are in some way dissatisfied with the service we provide in an objective, consistent, open and fair manner. You have a right to complain if the standard of service we provide is not up to the standard set out in this Charter.

Complaints will be addressed as quickly as possible, and complainants will be kept informed of the progress of their complaint.

If you have a general complaint, please contact the Head of Corporate Services, An Rialálaí Agraibhia, Backweston Campus, Celbridge, Co Kildare. If your complaint is upheld or if we have made a mistake, we will correct it as quickly as possible and offer you an explanation or an apology, as appropriate.

Customers still dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint may escalate their complaint to the CEO of An Rialálaí Agraibhia, Backweston Campus, Celbridge, Co Kildare.

How you can help us to help you

We request that our customers approach us with courtesy and respect. Staff of An Rialálaí Agraibhia are not obliged to deal with people who are offensive or abusive towards them and we reserve the right to decline enquiries which are of a frivolous, vexatious or repetitive nature.

To assist us in providing a quality service to you, we request that you:

- Provide your full contact details if you require a response (unless you want to remain anonymous).

- Clearly state the assistance you need and give us accurate and relevant information, including supporting documents, where necessary.

- Respond to requests for additional information as promptly as possible or if following up on correspondence, you have been given a reference number, please use it when contacting us.

- If you wish to meet with us, we ask you to make an appointment prior to visiting so we can make the necessary arrangements. To make an appointment please call (01) 5058607 or email info@agrifoodregulator.ie

- Provide feedback on your experience of dealing with us. You can do so by emailing info@agrifoodregulator.ie

Contact Details

An Rialálaí Agraibhia
Backweston Campus,

Celbridge,

Co Kildare,

W23 X3PH

Telephone: 00 353 1 6019900

Website: www.agrifoodregulator.ie

Email: info@agrifoodregulator.ie