

4th April, 2024.

Ms. Aoife McMullan, Inspector,  
Office of Environmental Enforcement,  
Environmental Protection Agency  
PO Box 3000,  
Johnstown Castle Estate,  
Wexford.

Your Ref: 849 01 / SV29203

Re: Response to Report from site visit on 25/3/2024 as documented in Site Inspection Report Ref SV29203.

Dear Ms. McMullan,

I write in response to your Report resulting from the site visit to the Rushes Pig Unit, Ballickmoyler, Co. Laois as referenced above.

**1. Inspection Non-Compliance:**

*Loading area for slurry at the end of Loose Dry sow house - Condition 8.3*

This farm was stocked with high health (Minimal Disease) stock in 2023 and the maintenance of this high health status is critical to the profitability of this farm over the next few years. This loading area for slurry is new and is part of the increased efforts to improve bio-security (i.e. Reduce the risk of disease transmission to pigs on the site). There is work that will be done at the entrance and road down to this section of the site over the next twelve months to improve the access and ensure that nearly all slurry is extracted from this section of the farm. Historically it was taken from the other side of the site – but this new location will allow access and a turning point for the tractors and tankers while reducing the risk of these vehicles inadvertently bringing disease into the newly re-populated farm.

**Follow-Up Actions.**

Slurry extraction point at the end of the Loose dry sow house . Again this has been corrected and photographs are attached as part of this submission.

**2. Inspection Non-Compliance:**

*Storm water monitoring point SW-3 not labelled.*

It turns out that SW-3 was labelled and was just around the corner from the manhole that Alan showed you. Please see the photograph attached. The confusion is more related to Alans lack of familiarity with this monitoring point.

**Follow-Up Actions.**

Make Alan more familiar with the monitoring points and also allow responsibility for environmental management of the Licence to pass to Niamh O Shea in the future. This will become a reality as the Transfer of the Licence progresses from Mr Michael O Shea to Ruben Pigs Ltd. in the forthcoming months.

**3. Inspection Non-Compliance:**

*Groundwater monitoring point GW-2 damaged.*

The manhole cover over this well was damaged by a digger in the recent past. This well cover has now been securely fixed. See image attached. Training has been provided to staff as this well is still in use and an error was made by the staff member on the day of inspection.

*Slurry storage Monitoring*

No schedule of monitoring slurry storage as outlined in Schedule C4 of the licence was ever submitted or agreed with the Agency to date. It is proposed that a finisher house a weaner house and the loose dry sow house be used as the three monitoring points on the farm. A separate proposal has been submitted to the Agency yet to be agreed. Once a proposal is agreed and accepted by the Agency we will proceed to comply with this requirement of the Licence in the future.

Response to Observations:

A. A weekly storm water log has been re-established and weekly inspections have resumed.

B. GW2 – the groundwater sample received by the laboratory on the 12/4/2022 was taken from GW-2.

Yours sincerely,

*Michael O'Shea.*