

20<sup>th</sup> November 2019

## Response from Environmental Health Officers to the queries raised in the Jersey Farmers' Union submission

Good afternoon,

Many thanks for the opportunity to respond to the questions you raised to the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny. The following should assist in answering the questions put forward should the States Assembly pass the scheme without amendments;

### Is agricultural accommodation going to need a license ?

Yes, all rental properties will be required to have a licence.

If yes, will that mean that a typical new accommodation block of say, five units is charged for five applications and annual licenses or is this a 'hostel' block ? Where will the grower raise the fee? Will the offset be raised to cover this ?

The type of accommodation described would be considered a hostel. The licence fee for hostels is prescribed in Appendix D.

Are Government aware that staff accommodation forms part of the independent audit that growers have to have, to receive Government support locally and to supply any of the major retailers ? As the new regulations are targeted at arm's length landlords, some of the details, should they be required for farmers are superfluous, e.g. contact address, telephone number etc.; we see these people every day!

This information is required to understand who is legally responsible for compliance with the Public Health and Safety (Rented Dwellings) Jersey Law 2018 at the property.

A couple of other points, does a farmer who perhaps gives a key worker or longstanding employee free accommodation have to register ? Secondly, if the Scheme is going to cover all agricultural accommodation, should this not be at a discount as the vast majority of our accommodation has agricultural restrictions placed on it; it is not open market.

Yes, even if a property is offered without charge it should be licenced to ensure the property is known by Government and minimum standards are met. Whether a fee for the licence is charged in such circumstances is subject to consideration within the wider licencing debate.

I am pleased to say that in recent years the standard of agricultural accommodation has improved greatly but obviously when much of it is for seasonal staff, used only for part of the year, it can be difficult to justify reaching the five star rating, so getting the discount. Another reason that makes this difficult and expensive for our industry.

Many workers begin supporting the agricultural industry within winter months. The ability to regulate the heat within a property to an acceptable standard is required by the Public Health and Safety (Rented Dwellings) (Jersey) 2018. Discounts for the scheme begin with those premises on

Rent Safe that meet minimum standards. The fourth star (and subsequent additional discount) is achieved if legal paperwork is written in plain English. The fifth star is achieved by installing energy efficiency measures. If a farmer pays for the heating there may be value in considering such measures for his own bottom line.

General comments; A unit is considered a rental property if it is rented (for a charge or otherwise) for more than 30 days per year.

As discussed with Jersey Farmers Union, Rent Safe is free to join and, as identified in the proposed scheme, results in immediate reduction in the cost of a licence. Environmental Health are keen to support those within the agricultural sector that wish for their rental properties to join the scheme. To join Rent Safe a request can be made by emailing [environmentalhealth@gov.je](mailto:environmentalhealth@gov.je).

**Environmental Health  
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