

## NI HOGGET TRADE REMAINS STRONG

Base quotes from the major sheep processors in Northern Ireland increased to 475-485p/kg for R3 hoggets this week with all plants paying up to 22kg. Quotes for early next week are expected to range from 475-490p/kg.

During the same week last year the local processors were quoting 415-420p/kg for R3 grading hoggets up to 22kg. In the corresponding week in 2018 the plants were quoting up to 460p/kg for R3 grading hoggets up to 22kg.

Reports have indicated that a general tightening in the supply of hoggets for slaughter combined with an improvement in the liveweight trade have all contributed to the upward movement in the hogget market during the last few weeks.

The higher prices have encouraged producers to present sheep for slaughter with hogget throughput in local plants last week totalling 6,667

head, up 1,007 head or an 18 per cent increase from the previous week. A further 5,647 hoggets were exported from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland for direct slaughter last week which was up from the previous week.

**Figure 1: In spec hoggets meet the widest range of retailer specifications**

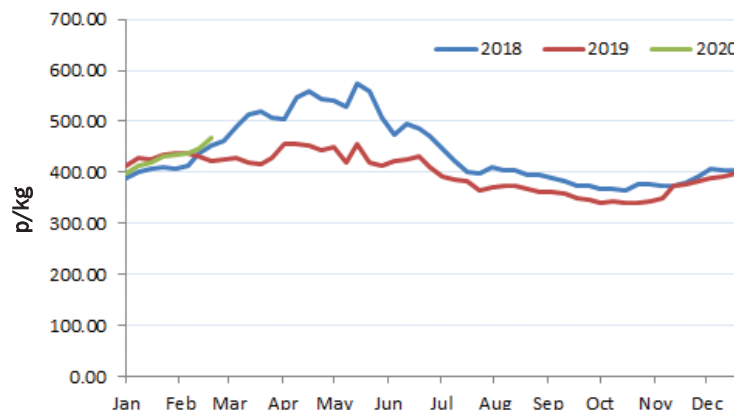


Local processors are still keen to source hoggets that meet current market specifications. Producers should aim to present hoggets for slaughter that fulfil specification requirements to help maximise returns.

The major processing plants have a preference for R and U grading hoggets with a carcase weight of 18-22kg, a fat class 2 or 3 and that are Farm Quality Assured (FQ). Carcasses from hoggets that meet these criteria fulfil the widest range of retailer specifications.

FQ status is a particularly important factor to consider when presenting hoggets for slaughter. Bonuses are paid for FQ hoggets with some of the major processors now only killing sheep that have FQ status. Sourcing FQAS approved hoggets is important for NI sheep processors as it allows them to service the high value retail and food service markets in the UK. For many of these customers FQ status is a key requirement of their specifications.

**Figure 2: Deadweight hogget/lamb prices in NI 2018-2020. Source DAERA**



**Figure 3: Producers receive no return for producing overweight carcasses.**



# RED MEAT INDUSTRY CONCERNED ABOUT NEW IMMIGRATION BLUEPRINT

Last week the UK government launched its immigration blueprint which is due to come into effect in January 2021

The policy aims to open up the UK to the brightest and the best from around the world while ending free movement of people with the EU, reasserting control of UK borders and restoring public trust. This new policy will bring the biggest changes to UK immigration rules since it joined the common market in 1973.

Under the free movement of people EU citizens have a right to work and reside in any country in the EU and as a member of the European Union the UK government could not limit immigration from other EU countries. It was however free to apply limits to immigrants from non-EU countries.

Now that the UK has left the EU it is free to set its own rules and limits on immigration and the UK Home office has stated that EU and non-EU citizens coming to the UK will be treated equally when UK-EU free movement ends on 31 December 2020.

Under the new proposal all workers from outside the UK will need to secure 70 points and for that they will require a job offer (20 points), have appropriate skills (20 points), be able to speak English (10 points) and – in most cases – be enjoying a salary of £25,600 or above (20 points).

While there are some exceptions to the criteria outlined above the UK government has indicated that it will not introduce a general low-skilled or temporary work route as it believes the UK needs to shift the focus of the economy away from a reliance on cheap labour from Europe and instead concentrate on investment in technology and automation.

Our local processing plants are already facing difficulties in accessing and maintaining labour all year round. This policy has the potential to greatly exacerbate these problems and severely impact the sector by failing to provide an entry route for potential workers

Ian Stevenson CEO

The introduction of this immigration policy has raised particular concerns for the agri-food sector locally, and across the UK, due to the large proportion of non UK nationals employed in low skilled roles at the processing end of the supply chain.

A study commissioned by LMC back in 2017 into the potential impacts of Brexit on trade in the beef and sheep meat industries concluded that almost two thirds of labour in the NI beef and sheep meat industry originates from EU 26 countries with the remainder sourced

from NI, ROI and the UK.

The new policy has been widely criticised by stakeholders across all levels of the beef and lamb supply chain since its publication last week. Given the difficulties for meat processors in attracting and retaining UK born workers in recent times it is important that every effort is made to ensure the local processing industry can continue to access non-UK labour moving forward.

## EU Settlement Scheme

Any EU citizens living in the UK by the 31 December 2020 will be entitled to live and work here under current rules however they should apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Since the scheme opened in March 2019 it has received 3.2 million applications from EU citizens who will be able to stay and work in the UK. The UK government has indicated that this pool of labour will provide employers with flexibility to meet labour market demands.

Irish citizens do not need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme as the UK and Ireland are both part of a Common Travel Area which gives Irish nationals a special status in UK law which is separate to and pre-dates their rights as EU citizens.

# FQAS MART CLINICS MARCH 2020

LMC's Farm Liaison Officer, Terry White, runs Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) mart clinics at a range of Livestock Marts across Northern Ireland. Terry is present to assist members of FQAS with non-conformances, general scheme queries and any issues prior to or following an inspection.

For further information call the FQAS helpline on (028) 9263 3024.



Any farmers who wish to join the scheme can also do so through their local FQAS mart clinic. Terry will be available at the livestock marts listed in the table below.

LOCATION	DAY	DATE
<b>Omagh</b>	Monday	02/03/2020
<b>Saintfield</b>	Wednesday	04/03/2020
<b>Markethill</b>	Tuesday	10/03/2020
<b>Enniskillen</b>	Thursday	12/03/2020
<b>Kilrea</b>	Wednesday	18/03/2020
<b>Ballymena</b>	Friday	20/03/2020

## FQAS Helpline

If you have had a recent inspection and need help and advice to rectify any non-conformances, contact the FQAS helpline:  
Tel: 028 9263 3024

## Answerphone Service

Factory Quotes & Mart Results  
Updated 5pm Daily  
Tel: 028 9263 3011

## Text Service

Free weekly price quotes sent to your mobile phone  
Email - bulletin@lmcni.com  
Tel: 028 9263 3000

# WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

## CATTLE TRADE

### NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 24/02/20	Next Week 02/03/20
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	324 - 334p	324 - 334p
R-3	318 - 328p	318 - 328p
O+3	312 - 322p	312 - 322p
P+3	264 - 276p	264 - 276p
	Including bonus where applicable	
<b>Cows</b>		
O+3 & better	240 - 250p	240 - 250p
Steakers	140 - 170p	140 - 170p
Blues	120 - 130p	120 - 130p

Cow quotes vary depending on weight and grade.  
Pricing policies vary from plant to plant. Producers are advised to check pricing policies before presenting cattle for slaughter.

### Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the plants this week for U-3 grading prime cattle range from 324-334p/kg with most of the plants quoting in the region of 330-334p/kg for both steers and heifers. Quotes for good quality O+3 grading cows continue to range from 240-250p/kg this week. With such a range in quotes for all types of cattle producers are encouraged to shop around for the best deal and to use these base quotes as a starting point for negotiation.

Prime cattle throughput in local plants last week totalled 7,143 head an increase of 203 head from the previous week and similar to the 7,111 prime cattle killed in the same week last year. Cow throughput last week reported similar levels to the previous week at 1,896 head. In the same week last year 1,686 cows were killed in local plants.

Imports of cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI have continued at similar levels with 217 prime cattle and 105 cows imported last week. A further 10 prime cattle and 107 cows were imported from GB for direct slaughter. Cattle exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 12 prime cattle and 44 cows with a further 35 prime cattle and three cows making the journey to GB. This was the first time cattle have been exported to GB for direct slaughter during 2020 to date.

The average steer price in NI last week was back by just over a penny to 331.6p/kg with the R3 steer price was back by 0.7p/kg to 339.4p/kg. In the same week last year the R3 steer price was 345.7p/kg. The average NI heifer price came back by 0.4p/kg to 335.3p/kg last week while the R3 heifer price was up marginally to 341.8p/kg. In the same week in 2019 the R3 heifer price was 345.5p/kg. The average young bull price in NI last week was back 1.5p/kg to 311.5p/kg while the R3 young bull price was back 4.2p/kg to 324.6p/kg. The average NI cow price paid increased by half a penny to 240.5p/kg last week with the O3 cow price up by a penny to 260.4p/kg. This was the highest recorded price since June 2019.

In GB last week the average steer price was up 2.3p/kg to 335.7p/kg with the R3 steer price up by a similar margin to 342.6p/kg. R3 steer prices reported increases in all of the GB regions last week with the strongest increase in Northern England (+3.7p/kg). The average GB heifer price was up 1.3p/kg to 336.8p/kg with the R3 heifer price up half a penny to 341.5p/kg. R3 heifer prices came back in Scotland (-1.9p/kg) and Northern England (-1.4p/kg) with increases reported in Southern England (+2.8p/kg) and the Midlands (+1.2p/kg). The O3 cow price in GB increased 1.8p/kg last week to 256.9p/kg. This placed it 3.5p/kg below the equivalent price in NI.

The deadweight trade for the majority of cattle improved in ROI last week in euro terms however a weakening in euro against sterling has meant many of the reported prices were back in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 308p/kg, back 1.4p/kg from the previous week. Meanwhile the R3 heifer price was back marginally to the equivalent of 313.3p/kg.

### LAST WEEK'S DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES (UK / ROI)

	W/E 22/02/20	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	339.2	317.0	351.2	345.4	345.4	347.7	347.7
	R3	339.4	308.0	353.1	344.6	339.7	337.6	342.6
	R4	337.6	309.0	350.6	349.6	339.5	335.0	346.7
	O3	330.2	295.0	334.5	322.0	319.1	312.7	319.4
	AVG	331.6	-	348.0	336.5	331.2	324.9	335.7
Heifers	U3	347.9	324.2	357.2	348.4	351.0	345.2	351.4
	R3	341.8	313.3	349.4	341.0	339.3	340.0	341.5
	R4	338.6	313.4	350.2	342.8	340.4	336.7	344.9
	O3	331.2	299.3	332.9	320.3	315.9	312.9	317.8
	AVG	335.3	-	348.3	335.5	331.4	326.5	336.8
Young Bulls	U3	323.6	299.0	342.3	340.3	340.8	343.8	341.7
	R3	324.6	288.0	334.9	321.8	329.7	332.1	328.6
	O3	310.9	277.2	304.0	295.8	296.6	305.7	299.7
	AVG	311.5	-	322.2	300.8	309.9	310.8	310.3
Prime Cattle Price Reported	5,886	-	7,523	7,046	7,917	4,933	27,419	
Cows	O3	260.4	246.8	255.6	259.7	256.3	254.0	256.9
	O4	259.6	246.5	258.7	259.5	256.8	250.9	256.9
	P2	221.8	221.7	207.1	217.7	212.0	215.9	214.0
	P3	238.7	237.3	224.4	238.7	230.7	229.6	231.7
	AVG	240.5	-	253.7	241.3	229.6	224.6	234.0

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=83.34p Stg  
(ii) Shading indicates a lower price than the previous week.  
(iii) AVG is the average of all grades in the category, not just those listed

### REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 22/02/20	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	338.3	347.3	324.9
R3	337.0	340.3	326.5
O+3	329.9	331.4	323.4

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 22/02/20	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	156.0	163.0	172.6	187.1
P2	168.1	197.0	221.8	231.6
P3	187.6	222.6	233.1	242.3
O3	-	239.7	252.0	261.0
O4	180.0	240.0	253.4	260.2
R3	-	-	270.0	275.7

### LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 22/02/20	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Steers	201	209	205	170	200	185
Friesians	155	168	162	140	153	147
Heifers	201	213	207	170	200	185
Beef Cows	150	192	166	120	149	135
Dairy Cows	105	132	114	65	104	88
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Bullocks up to 400kg	230	268	245	200	229	215
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	215	252	230	190	214	200
Bullocks over 500kg	200	212	206	165	199	180
Heifers up to 450kg	220	253	235	170	219	188
Heifers over 450kg	200	213	205	170	199	185
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>						
Continental Bulls	315	440	370	200	310	260
Continental Heifers	270	385	310	160	265	200
Friesian Bulls	130	240	160	60	125	80
Holstein Bulls	75	105	85	10	60	35

# SHEEP TRADE

## NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 24/02/20	Next Week 02/03/20
Hoggets up to 22kgs	475-480p	475-490p

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 08/02/20	W/E 15/02/20	W/E 22/02/20
NI L/W Hoggets	416.9	428.0	438.8
NI D/W Hoggets	436.9	447.0	467.0
GB D/W Hoggets	496.6	522.8	532.0
ROI D/W	446.5	454.0	463.3

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes started this week at 475-480p/kg up to 22kg for R3 grading hoggets and improved slightly to 475-485p/kg as the week progressed. Throughput of hoggets last week increased by 18 per cent to total 6,667 head. This is also considerably higher than the 4,006 hoggets killed in the same week last year. Exports to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 5,647 hoggets and 1,113 ewes an increase from the previous week when 5,363 hoggets and 796 ewes were exported for direct slaughter. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week reported a notable increase of 20p/kg to 467p/kg when compared the previous week. In the same week in 2019 the deadweight hogget price in NI was 423.4p/kg.

### This week's marts

The number of hoggets passing through the sale rings this week was similar to previous weeks with trade remaining firm. Last Saturday in Swatragh 1,100 hoggets sold from 395-458p/kg compared to 800 hoggets the previous week selling from 395-466p/kg. On Monday in Kilrea 280 hoggets sold from 422-435p/kg compared to 320 hoggets last week selling from 416-454p/kg (avg 438p/kg) compared to 514 hoggets last week selling from 403-473p/kg (avg 422p/kg). In Rathfriland this week 300 hoggets sold from 410-467p/kg (avg 438p/kg) compared to 514 hoggets last week selling from 427-483p/kg compared to 602 hoggets last week selling from 439-488p/kg. A strong trade was reported for cull ewes across the marts this week with top prices ranging from £114-£168.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 21/02/20		Hoggets			
To: 27/02/20		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	125	417	485	-
Saturday	Swatragh	1100	395	458	-
	Omagh	842	447	473	-
Monday	Massereene	646	430	478	-
	Kilrea	280	422	435	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	530	429	480	-
	Rathfriland	300	410	467	438
Wednesday	Ballymena	1237	418	490	432
	Enniskillen	514	427	483	-
	Armoy	394	416	485	-
	Markethill	1100	420	475	-

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM

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