

NI BEEF PRODUCTION INCREASES IN 2019

DURING 2019 there were 344,671 prime cattle killed in local plants. This was a two per cent increase from 2018 levels as outlined in Table 1.

The number of steers killed in NI increased by two per cent to total 163,918 head during 2018 while the number of heifers slaughtered increased by three per cent to total 136,004 head. Steers and heifers accounted for 87 per cent of prime cattle throughput in NI plants during 2019 with the remaining 13 per cent made up by young bulls. These proportions were unchanged from the previous year.

Some of this increase in prime cattle throughput has been offset by a decline in cow throughput in NI during 2019. Cow throughput totalled 99,321 head during 2019, a four per cent decline from the 103,533 cows killed in local plants during 2018.

There were also 5,970 calves killed in local plants during 2019, a two per cent decline from 2018 levels. Meanwhile the number of mature bulls processed increased by 12 per cent to total 5,258 head.

The total number of cattle passing through the plants came in at 455,220 head during 2019, an increase of 3,881 head or one per cent from 2018 levels.

Increasing carcass weights

Increases in average carcass weights for all types of cattle have contributed to an increase in the volume of beef being handled by local processors.

During 2019 the average carcass weight of prime cattle killed in NI plants increased by 7.3kg to 343.5kg. This increase combined with the two per cent increase in prime cattle throughput has resulted in a four per cent increase in the volume of beef handled by local beef processing plants to total 118,423 tonnes during 2019.

The average cow carcass weight in NI increased by 7.7kg to 307.8kg during 2019. However this increase was offset by the decline in cow throughput with the volume of cow beef processed back two per cent during 2019 to 30,526 tonnes as outlined in Table 2.

While the volume of beef from calves and mature bulls provide only a small proportion of NI plant throughput the volumes processed increased by 6 per cent and 17 per cent respectively during 2019.

This takes the total volume of beef processed in NI plants to 152,538 tonnes during 2019, a three per cent increase from year earlier levels.

Table 1: Summary of NI cattle slaughtering during 2018 and 2019

NI CATTLE AND SHEEP SLAUGHTERINGS						
	December			(52 weeks ended 28/12/19)		
	Dec-18	Dec-19	% Change	2018	2019	Change
CATTLE - FOODCHAIN						
Steers	12,332	11,783	-4%	160,732	163,918	2%
Heifers	10,358	9,800	-5%	131,414	136,004	3%
Young Bulls	2,706	2,128	-21%	44,845	44,749	-0%
Total Prime Cattle	25,396	23,711	-7%	336,991	344,671	2%
Calves	440	441	0%	6,107	5,970	-2%
Cows	6,804	7,652	12%	103,533	99,321	-4%
Mature Bulls	386	319	-17%	4,708	5,258	12%
Total Cattle	33,026	32,123	-3%	451,339	455,220	1%

Table 2: Summary of NI beef production during 2018 and 2019

NI BEEF PRODUCTION						
	December			(52 weeks ended 28/12/19)		
	Dec-18	Dec-19	% Change	2018	2019	Change
CATTLE - FOODCHAIN						
Steers	4,379	4,274	-2%	56,683	59,131	4%
Heifers	3,335	3,096	-7%	41,596	43,866	5%
Young Bulls	893	723	-19%	15,100	15,426	2%
Total Prime Cattle	8,606	8,092	-6%	113,379	118,423	4%
Calves	85	87	2%	1,175	1,249	6%
Cows	2,045	2,355	15%	31,055	30,526	-2%
Mature Bulls	157	149	-4%	1,996	2,338	17%
Total Cattle	10,893	10,684	-2%	147,606	152,538	3%

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DAIRY HERD PROVIDES 43% OF PRIME CATTLE THROUGHPUT IN 2019

ONE of Northern Ireland's largest beef processors has teamed up with one of the region's largest dairy processors to launch a new initiative which aims to create a more sustainable market for beef cross calves.

Changes to the types of calves being registered in Northern Ireland is now being reflected in the type of cattle passing through our local processing plants. During 2019 28 per cent of the total prime cattle kill were beef cross animals (i.e. beef bull/dairy cow) while a further 15 per cent of prime cattle were dairy sired. This puts the total contribution from the dairy herd to the local prime kill during 2019 at 43 per cent.

While the suckler herd continues to be the largest source of finished beef animals in Northern Ireland the dairy herd is also an important supplier of raw material. The number of beef cross cattle available for beef production has been growing in particular in recent years due to the growing success of sexed semen in the dairy herd and an increasing number of dairy cows being served with a beef bull.

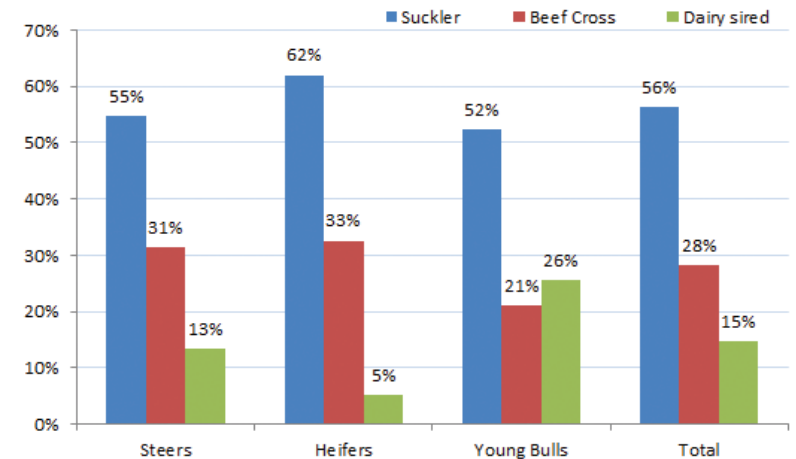
In 2014 there were 84,966 beef cross calves registered to dairy cows in Northern Ireland and these accounted for 31 per cent of all calf registrations to dairy cows. In 2019 the number of beef cross calves registered increased to 124,651 head and these accounted for 47 per cent of all calf registrations to dairy cows in the region.

During 2019 beef cross steers accounted for 31 per cent of all steers killed in NI plants as outlined in Figure 1 below. This

is up from 19 per cent in 2014. Similar trends have been observed in the heifer kill with beef cross heifers accounting for 33 per cent of heifers slaughtered in local plants during 2019, up from 20 per cent in 2014.

Meanwhile beef cross young bulls accounted for 21 per cent of total young bull throughput in Northern Ireland during 2019, up from 12 per cent in 2014.

Figure 1: Source of prime cattle for slaughter in Northern Ireland 2019 by category



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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 13/01/20	Next Week 20/01/20
Prime		
U-3	326 - 334p	328 - 334p
R-3	320 - 328p	322 - 328p
O+3	314 - 322p	316 - 322p
P+3	266 - 276p	268 - 276p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
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 for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle continue to hold steady this week at 326-334p/kg. With the range of quotes available producers are encouraged to shop around to get the best possible deal. Quotes for cows this week improved at the lower end to 240-250p/kg. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

The plants have reported steady supplies of all types of cattle coming forward for slaughter to meet demand for beef. Prime cattle throughput last week totalled 6,624 head, an increase of 1,149 head from the previous week. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 2,049, an increase of 595 head from the previous week.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter included 309 prime cattle and 106 cows last week, a notable increase in ROI imports when compared to the 176 prime cattle and 53 cows in the corresponding week in 2019. A further 29 prime cattle and 61 cows were imported from GB for direct slaughter last week a decrease from the 53 prime cattle and 125 cows imported in the corresponding week last year. Exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 12 prime cattle and 68 cows while no cattle made the journey from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The average steer price in NI last week was 331.1p/kg, back 2.8p/kg from the previous week with the R3 steer price back by 2.4p/kg to 340.1p/kg. In the corresponding week last year the R3 steer price was 350.3p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 335.2p/kg, back 2.6p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price decreased by a penny to 341.2p/kg. In the same week in 2019 the R3 heifer price was 349.7p/kg. The average young bull price in NI last week increased by 2.9p/kg to 313.1p/kg with the R3 young bull price increasing by 1.4p/kg to 324p/kg. Meanwhile the average cow price was up slightly to 231.4p/kg, though the O3 cow price was back by half a penny to 252.2p/kg.

In GB the average steer price increased by 0.4p/kg to 331.5p/kg while the R3 steer price was up by 1.4p/kg to 339.1p/kg. In the corresponding week last year the GB R3 steer price was 358.5p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week was slightly up to 332.6p/kg from the previous week with the R3 heifer price up by 0.7p/kg to 338.2p/kg. In the same week in 2019 the GB R3 heifer price was 358.3p/kg. The average cow price in GB last week decreased by 1.4p/kg to 218.3p/kg while the O3 cow price was up by 0.7p/kg to 242.2p/kg. This was 10p/kg below the O3 cow price in NI.

The deadweight prime cattle trade improved in ROI last week. The R3 steer price was up 2.5p/kg to the equivalent of 306.6p/kg with the R3 heifer price increasing by 1.4p/kg to 312.3p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2019 the R3 steer and R3 heifer prices in ROI were 331.7p/kg and 343.3p/kg respectively. The cow trade in ROI also improved with the O3 cow price up by 2.7p/kg to the equivalent of 234.6p/kg. This was 17.6p/kg lower than the same price in NI.

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

W/E 11/01/20	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	338.8	313.1	350.3	336.3	341.1	336.6	341.2
	R3	340.1	306.6	351.5	338.2	335.4	331.8	339.1
	R4	337.0	308.5	350.5	342.3	335.7	334.5	341.5
	O3	328.1	294.4	334.1	314.9	312.3	313.6	318.7
	AVG	331.1	-	347.6	329.1	324.9	323.7	331.5
Heifers	U3	345.9	322.8	353.1	344.8	347.7	337.7	346.2
	R3	341.2	312.3	347.4	337.1	335.8	332.4	338.2
	R4	341.1	312.7	347.5	339.2	336.7	333.0	339.6
	O3	333.4	299.8	332.6	320.9	312.6	316.5	320.7
Young Bulls	AVG	335.2	-	345.7	332.5	326.3	324.3	332.6
	U3	327.5	295.7	340.5	330.6	333.9	335.5	334.1
	R3	324.0	285.5	332.7	326.8	327.2	325.4	328.0
Prime Cattle Price Reported	O3	310.4	271.8	297.7	301.5	301.7	313.2	302.1
	AVG	313.1	-	319.6	307.0	310.6	312.1	311.6
Cows	U3	252.2	234.6	240.4	245.4	243.1	237.1	242.2
	O4	256.5	235.2	243.0	244.8	244.4	232.4	241.8
	P2	211.8	208.5	199.2	196.9	196.6	194.4	196.4
	P3	234.2	223.4	211.4	215.5	219.0	218.7	217.6
	AVG	231.4	-	231.7	228.5	216.1	206.4	218.3

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=85.07p 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 11/01/20	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	338.4	345.9	328.5
R3	335.8	339.0	328.2
O+3	327.5	330.9	320.4

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 11/01/20	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	145.5	157.6	169.1	182.6
P2	170.4	191.0	211.3	222.1
P3	220.0	211.0	228.3	236.4
O3	215.0	229.9	245.7	253.1
O4	200.0	216.0	252.5	257.4
R3	-	-	-	274.6

LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 11/01/20	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	205	213	208	175	204	190
Friesians	150	170	159	139	149	144
Heifers	204	212	207	170	202	185
Beef Cows	147	189	160	120	146	130
Dairy Cows	110	133	115	70	109	90
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	220	245	230	185	219	205
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	200	233	215	170	199	185
Bullocks over 500kg	191	204	197	160	190	175
Heifers up to 450kg	210	235	220	170	209	188
Heifers over 450kg	190	210	200	160	189	180
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	310	410	360	200	305	260
Continental Heifers	260	360	300	140	255	200
Friesian Bulls	120	200	150	50	95	75
Holstein Bulls	100	180	128	5	95	45

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 13/01/20	Next Week 20/01/20
Hoggets up to 22kgs	415-425p	425-435p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 28/12/19	W/E 04/01/20	W/E 11/01/20
NI L/W Lambs/Hoggets	-	389.3	393.0
NI D/W Lambs/Hoggets	396.7	399.3	413.3
GB D/W Lambs/Hoggets	438.0	450.1	450.3
ROI D/W	415.0	418.5	428.6

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the NI major processing plants ended this week ranging from 415-430p/kg for R3 grading hoggets up to 22kg with 425-435p/kg expected early next week. Hogget throughput in the local plants last week totalled 8,665 head which was an increase of 1,686 hoggets from the previous week. The average liveweight price in NI last week was 393p/kg, up 3.7p/kg from the previous week. Meanwhile the average deadweight hogget price in NI last week was 413.3p/kg, an increase of 14p/kg from the previous week. In ROI last week the average hogget price was the equivalent of 428.6p/kg which was up 10.1p/kg from the previous week.

This week's marts

Many of the marts have reported a sharper trade this week. In Omagh last Saturday 1,222 hoggets sold from 391-423p/kg compared to the previous week when 814 hoggets sold from 394-418p/kg. In Kilrea on Monday 490 hoggets sold from 378-420p/kg this week compared to 600 hoggets last week selling from 368-446p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 334 hoggets sold from 380-441p/kg (avg 400p/kg) compared to last week when 525 hoggets sold from 360-408p/kg (avg 384p/kg). On Wednesday a good show of 1,350 hoggets in Markethill sold from 400-450p/kg compared to 1,250 hoggets last week selling from 380-445p/kg. In Armoys this week 484 hoggets sold from 385-428p/kg compared to 412 hoggets selling from 387-433p/kg last week. Top reported prices for cull ewes are generally ranging from £100-£145.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 11/01/20		Hoggets			
To: 16/01/20		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Swatragh	790	365	429	-
	Omagh	1222	391	423	-
Monday	Massereene	936	385	420	-
	Kilrea	490	378	420	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	477	380	420	-
	Rathfriland	334	380	441	400
Wednesday	Ballymena	1909	380	436	398
	Enniskillen	658	370	422	-
	Armoys	484	385	428	-
	Markethill	1350	400	450	-

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