

# STRONG DECLINE IN UK BEEF IMPORTS

**D**URING the first eleven months of 2019 the UK imported 224,467 tonnes of beef according to the latest available data from HMRC. This is a notable 15 per cent reduction from the 265,525 tonnes of beef imported during the same period in 2018.

The largest majority of beef imported by the UK during the 2019 period came from the EU market as outlined in **Figure 1**. A total of 217,354 tonnes of beef was imported from the EU between January and November 2019, back 13 per cent from year earlier levels. There

have been notable declines in imports from all major EU countries as outlined in **Table 1** below.

Ireland remains the biggest source for UK beef imports with 173,221 tonnes arriving in the UK between January and November 2019. This accounts for 80 per cent of all beef imports from the EU during this period. Due to the amalgamated nature of the UK and Irish beef processing industries some of this will have come to the UK for further processing and returned to Ireland.

The Netherlands is the second biggest source of beef for the UK with 15,734 tonnes arriving in the UK between January and November 2019. This was back 12 per cent from 2018 levels and accounted for just seven per cent of total imports from the EU.

Beef imports from Poland have followed a similar trend and were back by 1,959 tonnes or 12 per cent during the 2019 period and accounted for just six per cent of all imports from the EU. Imports of beef from non-EU countries totalled 7,113 tonnes during the 2019

period and accounted for three per cent of total UK beef imports. The volume of beef imported was back more than 50 per cent from 2018 levels with the majority originating from South American countries, Australia and New Zealand. It is worth noting that the volumes involved are extremely small in comparison to the UK's current trade with the EU.

The EU is the UK's most important and largest trading partner for beef and in the absence of a free trade arrangement between the two regions

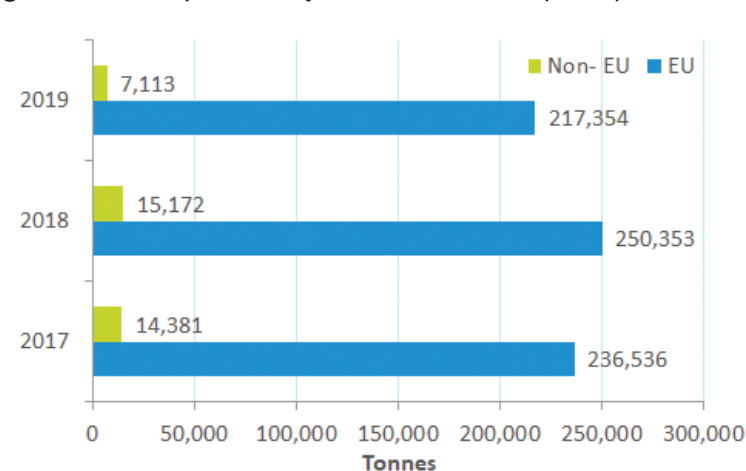
the UK has indicated a special tariff free quota for 230,000 tonnes of beef which will be open to all WTO members once the transition period between the UK and the EU ends in December 2020.

This has the potential to undermine and devalue the UK beef market by making it a target for some of the lower cost beef producing countries in the world. This could result in significant shifts in the volume of beef being imported from non-EU countries, provided that they could demonstrate compliance with UK production standards.

**Table 1: UK beef imports from other EU countries January-November 2018-2019 (tonnes) Source: HMRC**

	2018	2019	Change (tonnes)	Change %
Ireland	191,534	173,221	-18,313	-10%
Netherlands	17,967	15,734	-2,233	-12%
Poland	15,894	13,935	-1,959	-12%
Germany	8,508	4,770	-3,738	-44%
Italy	4,198	2,555	-1,642	-39%
Spain	2,137	1,935	-202	-9%
Belgium	2,796	2,323	-473	-17%
France	3,026	1,050	-1,975	-65%
Denmark	667	544	-123	-18%
Other	3,626	1,286	-2,341	-65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>250,353</b>	<b>217,354</b>	<b>-32,999</b>	<b>-13%</b>

**Figure 1: UK beef imports January-November 2017-2019 (tonnes) Source: HMRC**

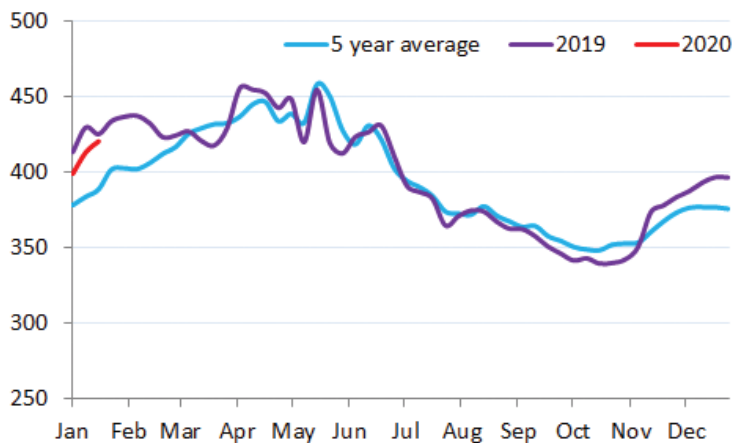


# HOGGET TRADE CONTINUES TO FIRM

THE deadweight hogget trade in NI has continued to improve with base quotes from the local processing plant for R3 grading animals increasing to 430-445p/kg up to 22kg. The processors have indicated that similar quotes are expected for early next week. These base quotes for R3 grading hoggets have increased from 400-405p/kg up to 22kg in the first week of the year.

Reports have highlighted a tightening in the availability of hoggets for slaughter

**Figure 2: Deadweight lamb/hogget prices in NI during 2019 and 2020 against the five year average deadweight price (p/kg) Source: DAERA**



## R3 hogget quotes

w/c 28/01/2019  
430-445p/kg to 22kg

w/c 27/01/2020  
430-445p/kg to 22kg

as a key driver behind the uplift in the local deadweight trade in recent weeks. Hogget throughput in NI plants totalled 8,330 head last week which brings

throughput for the first three weeks of the year to 23,974 head.

There has also been strong competition for available hoggets from processing plants in ROI. This has contributed to a strong uplift in the liveweight trade across the local marts, particularly for hoggets that meet current market specifications.

Last week 7,618 hoggets were exported to ROI for direct slaughter which was back by 931 head from the previous week. Hogget exports to ROI totalled 22,546 head during the first three weeks of 2020 and these accounted for 48.4 per cent of total output from the NI sheep flock.

The deadweight hogget price in NI last week increased by 7.4p/kg to 420.7p/kg. Despite the strong increase in the last few weeks this reported price is trending behind the corresponding week in 2019 when the average hogget price was particularly strong at 425.4p/kg. However the current deadweight trade is operating above of the five year average price of 388.8p/kg as indicated in **Figure 2**.

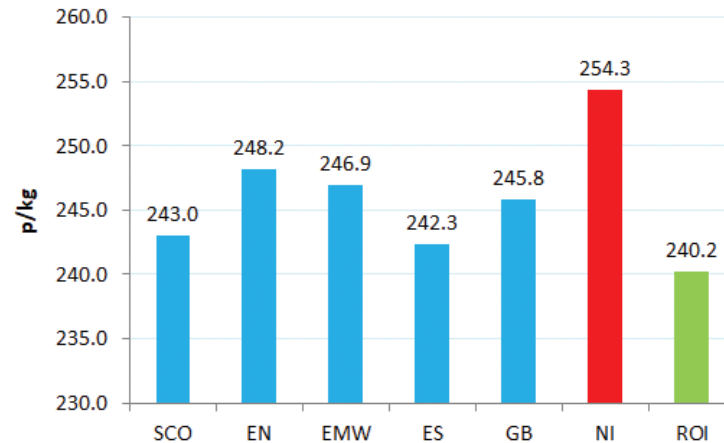
# COW TRADE UPDATE

QUOTES for cows from the local processors have held relatively steady in recent weeks with plants quoting 240-250p/kg for good quality O+3 grading cows.

The O3 cow price in NI last week was 254.3p/kg, up 2.1p/kg from the previous week. This brings the NI cow price to its highest recorded level since late August 2019.

The cow trade has also been improving in GB although prices in all regions

**Figure 3: O3 cow prices in GB, NI and ROI during the w/e 18 January 2020 Source: LMC Price Reporting, AHDB and DAFM.**



remain behind current NI prices. The average O3 cow price in GB last week was 245.8p/kg, 8.5p/kg behind the equivalent NI price.

The cow trade in ROI has also improved strongly in recent weeks in sterling terms with an O3 cow price of 240.2p/kg. This has increased by 12.3p/kg since the last week of December 2019 but remains well behind the NI price as outlined in **Figure 3** below.

## FQAS Helpline

If you have had a recent inspection and need help and advice to rectify any non-conformances, contact the FQAS helpline:  
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Updated 5pm Daily  
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# WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

## CATTLE TRADE

### NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 20/01/20	Next Week 27/01/20
<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

The deadweight cattle trade in NI came back at the lower end with base quotes from the plants ending this week ranging from 324-334p/kg for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle. The majority of plants are quoting 330-334p/kg for steers and heifers with similar quotes expected for early next week. With the range of quotes available producers are encouraged to shop around to get the best possible deal. Quotes for good quality O+3 grading cows this week ranged from 240-250p/kg with similar quotes expected for early next week.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 7,072 head, a 448 head increase from the previous week when prime cattle throughput totalled 6,624 head. In the same week in 2019 the prime cattle throughput in NI totalled 6,936 head. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 2,181 an increase of 132 cows from the previous week. In the corresponding week in 2019 cow throughput in local plants totalled 2,125 head.

Imports of cattle from ROI for direct slaughter last week included 286 prime cattle and 33 cows with a further two steers and 63 cows imported from GB. Meanwhile exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of four heifers and 49 cows. No cattle were exported from NI to GB for direct slaughter last week.

The average steer price in NI last week increased by 1.1p/kg to 332.2p/kg with the R3 steer price increasing marginally to 340.3p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2019 the R3 steer price was 349.1p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was up slightly to 335.3p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back marginally to 341.1p/kg. In the same week in 2019 the reported R3 heifer price was 349p/kg. The deadweight cow trade improved in NI last week with the average cow price increasing by 2.3p/kg to 233.7p/kg while the O3 cow price increased by a similar margin to 254.3p/kg.

In GB the average steer price came slightly back to 331.3p/kg while the R3 steer price was up 0.3p/kg to 339.4p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week reported an increase of half a penny to 333.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price in GB increased by 1.5p/kg to 339.7p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2019 the GB R3 steer price was 359p/kg with the R3 heifer price reported at 359.9p/kg. The O3 cow price last week in GB increased by 3.6p/kg to 245.8p/kg. This is 8.5p/kg below the NI O3 cow price.

In ROI last week the majority of prime cattle prices increased. The R3 steer price was the equivalent of 309.3p/kg, up 2.7p/kg from the previous week. The R3 heifer price in ROI last week was 315.4p/kg, up 3.1p/kg from the previous week and 25.7p/kg below the R3 heifer price in NI. In the same week in 2019 the reported ROI R3 steer price was the equivalent of 327.8p/kg with the R3 heifer price the equivalent of 338.2p/kg. The O3 cow price in ROI last week increased by the equivalent of 5.6p/kg to 240.2p/kg, 14.1p/kg lower than the O3 cow price in NI.

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

	W/E 18/01/20	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	341.5	317.5	348.4	338.4	343.0	340.6	342.8
	R3	340.3	309.3	350.3	337.8	337.1	332.2	339.4
	R4	340.1	310.5	350.1	344.4	338.0	332.9	342.9
	O3	328.5	295.7	334.0	316.4	313.2	310.2	318.4
	AVG	332.2	-	346.3	330.3	326.8	320.3	331.3
Heifers	U3	346.1	326.1	355.3	343.4	346.7	340.5	347.1
	R3	341.1	315.4	349.7	336.5	338.8	332.0	339.7
	R4	340.2	315.7	350.7	341.1	338.4	333.6	341.5
	O3	330.2	301.8	330.8	320.2	310.7	313.3	318.7
Young Bulls	AVG	335.3	-	348.6	332.3	328.7	320.6	333.1
	U3	327.4	298.1	331.3	328.9	335.2	316.0	331.3
	R3	326.8	288.7	330.9	324.2	326.2	316.0	325.5
	O3	311.4	275.6	303.3	297.6	297.4	295.0	298.5
Prime Cattle Price Reported	AVG	310.8	-	311.3	303.3	300.1	311.1	303.7
		5,947	-	7,103	6,791	7,749	4,890	26,533
Cows	O3	254.3	240.2	243.0	248.2	246.9	242.3	245.8
	O4	256.3	240.6	248.5	249.5	247.0	237.9	246.0
	P2	219.4	215.2	208.4	204.8	202.3	199.9	202.9
	P3	235.6	229.7	208.3	223.6	222.6	219.6	220.2
	AVG	233.7	-	239.5	229.8	221.0	211.7	223.4

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=85.53p 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 18/01/20	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	339.7	345.2	328.9
R3	336.1	339.6	326.1
O+3	328.3	330.5	320.5

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 18/01/20	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	147.1	161.8	171.6	194.7
P2	171.9	193.2	216.5	230.4
P3	179.7	214.2	228.7	238.4
O3	-	256.7	253.4	254.3
O4	-	-	246.3	256.7
R3	-	-	-	277.8

### LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 18/01/20	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Steers	207	223	212	175	205	195
Friesians	150	166	156	134	149	145
Heifers	204	217	210	175	203	190
Beef Cows	155	195	167	125	154	135
Dairy Cows	108	130	116	70	107	90
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Bullocks up to 400kg	225	260	235	190	224	210
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	210	246	220	180	209	195
Bullocks over 500kg	200	211	205	165	199	180
Heifers up to 450kg	220	254	230	175	219	192
Heifers over 450kg	200	220	210	165	199	185
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>						
Continental Bulls	315	350	335	230	310	270
Continental Heifers	235	335	280	125	230	180
Friesian Bulls	140	220	170	75	135	100
Holstein Bulls	100	175	125	2	90	45

# SHEEP TRADE

## NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 20/01/20	Next Week 27/01/20
Hoggets up to 22kgs	425-435p	430-445p

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 04/01/20	W/E 11/01/20	W/E 18/01/20
NI L/W Hoggets	389.3	393.0	400.1
NI D/W Hoggets	399.3	413.3	420.7
GB D/W Hoggets	450.1	450.3	454.7
ROI D/W	418.5	428.6	429.4

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

Base quotes from the major NI processing plants strengthened as the week progressed and ended this week ranging from 430- 445p/kg up to 22kg. Similar quotes are expected early next week. Throughput decreased last week with 8,330 hoggets killed across local plants, back 335 head from the previous week. In the corresponding week in 2019 hogget throughput totalled 6,273 head in local plants. Hogget exports to ROI last week for direct slaughter totalled 7,618 head, back 931 head from the previous week. The deadweight NI hogget price was up by 7.4p/kg last week to 420.7p/kg while the liveweight NI hogget price increased 7.1p/kg to 400.1p/kg. In the same week in 2019 the NI deadweight hogget price was 425.4p/kg, with the liveweight hogget price reported at 403.2p/kg.

## This week's marts

The liveweight trade has continued to firm with steady numbers of sheep passing through the sale rings during the week. In Massereene on Monday 636 hoggets sold from 410-454p/kg compared to 936 hoggets last week selling from 385-420p/kg. In Saintfield this week 688 hoggets sold from 400-473p/kg compared to 477 hoggets last week selling from 380-420p/kg. On Wednesday in Ballymena 1,906 hoggets sold from 380-439p/kg (avg 410p/kg) compared to 1,909 hoggets last week selling from 380-436p/kg (avg 398p/kg). In Enniskillen this week 802 hoggets sold from 382-444p/kg compared to 658 hoggets last week selling from 370-422p/kg. A firm trade for well fleshed ewes has been reported across the marts with top recorded prices ranging from £100-£149.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 17/01/20		Hoggets			
To: 23/01/20		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	300	346	425	-
Saturday	Swatragh	785	385	432	-
	Omagh	801	404	463	-
Monday	Massereene	636	410	454	-
	Kilrea	330	383	429	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	688	400	473	-
	Rathfriland	600	405	470	417
Wednesday	Ballymena	1906	380	439	410
	Enniskillen	802	382	444	-
	Armoy	494	388	427	-
	Markethill	1320	400	450	-

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