

DECLINE IN UK BEEF IMPORTS DURING 2020

During 2020 the UK imported 242,837 tonnes of beef according to the latest available data from HMRC. This is a three per cent reduction when compared to 2019 levels and a 16 per cent reduction when compared to 2018.

EU Imports

Imports from the EU continue to account for the majority of beef imports in to the UK with 237,928 tonnes imported during 2020. This accounts for 98 per cent of total beef imports in to the UK during this period and has declined by 2,055 tonnes or one per cent when compared to 2019 and 35,366 tonnes or 13 per cent when compared to 2018 as outlined in **Table 1**.

Most of the beef imports to the UK from the EU come from Ireland, Poland and the Netherlands with these three countries accounting for

93 per cent of beef imports from the EU in 2020.

Ireland continues to be the largest source of beef imports from the EU with 190,974 tonnes of beef imported during the 2020 period. This accounts for 80 per cent of the total UK beef imports from the EU. The amount of beef imported to the UK from Ireland has decreased by one per cent when compared to the 192,092 tonnes of beef imported from this region in 2019 and a greater nine per cent when compared to the 210,493 tonnes imported during 2018.

The second largest source of beef imports to the UK from the EU was Poland with 15,203 tonnes of beef imported during 2020. This is similar to 2019 levels and back 11 per cent when compared to 2018.

The Netherlands was the third

largest source of beef from the EU during 2020 with 14,947 tonnes of beef imported to the UK during 2020. This has decreased by 12 per cent when compared to 2019 and a more significant 23 per cent when compared to 2018.

Non-EU Imports

Beef imports to the UK from non-EU countries totalled 4,909 tonnes during 2020 which accounts for two per cent of total beef imports during this time. This has decreased by 55 per cent from 2019 and over 70 per cent from 2018 levels.

The majority of non-EU beef imports were sourced from South American countries with a total of 3,330 tonnes imported from Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina in 2020. This accounts for 68 per cent of the imports from non-EU countries and just over one per cent of total beef imports to the UK in 2020.

Table 1: UK beef imports during 2020, 2019 and 2018 from the EU (tonnes). Source HMRC/AHDB

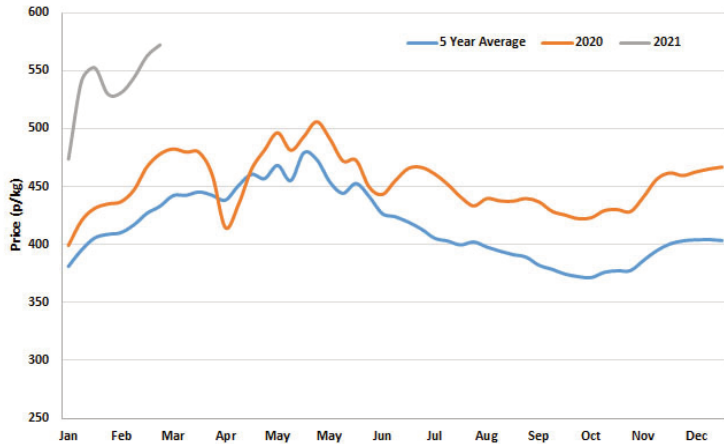
	2018	2019	2020	2020/2019 % change	2020/2018 % change
Ireland	210,493	192,092	190,974	-1%	-9%
Netherlands	19,331	17,015	14,947	-12%	-23%
Poland	17,159	15,284	15,203	-1%	-11%
Germany	8,927	5,032	5,399	+7%	-40%
Italy	4,513	2,698	2,238	-17%	-50%
Spain	2,333	2,068	2,718	+31%	+17%
Belgium	3,011	2,592	2,550	-2%	-15%
France	3,143	1,199	1,032	-14%	-67%
Denmark	681	614	292	-52%	-57%
Other	3,703	1,389	2,574	+85%	-30%
Total	273,294	239,983	237,928	-1%	-13%

NI HOGGET TRADE REMAINS STRONG

Base quotes from the major sheep processing plants in Northern Ireland increased this week to 570-580p/kg for R3 grading hoggets up to 22kg with one processor paying up to 23kg. This improvement in quotes brings the hogget trade well ahead of 2020 levels.

The average deadweight R3 hogget price in NI last week was 572.3p/kg which is up 94.2p/kg when compared to the same week in 2020 as outlined in **Figure 1**. This equates to a £21 increase on a 22kg hogget carcass year on year. Similarly, the

Figure 1: R3 lamb/hogget prices in NI during 2020, 2021 and the 5 year average. Source: DAERA



average R3 hogget price last week was 139.1p/kg above the five year average which equates to £31 differential on a 22kg carcass.

With many producers choosing to market lambs earlier at the end of 2020 due to the uncertainty around trading conditions there has been a tightening in availability of hoggets from the beginning of this year.

Firm demand alongside a tightening in supply of hoggets has contributed to the upward movement in the hogget market in recent weeks.

Local processors are keen to source hoggets which meet current market specifications. The major sheep processing plants in Northern Ireland prefer hoggets which meet an R or U grade, a fat class 2 or 3 and are Farm Quality Assured. Producers presenting hoggets which meet these specifications fulfil the largest range of retailer criteria.

Farm Quality Assured status is particularly important when presenting hoggets and lambs for slaughter. Producers with animals meeting this specification will find it easier to secure sales than those presenting non-Farm Quality Assured lambs and hoggets.

The Farm Quality Assurance Scheme provides additional assurances on animal welfare, food safety, traceability and care for the environment, all of which are commended by retailers.

Should you wish to apply to join the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme, increase your scope to cover sheep, or require any FQAS documentation please call the **FQAS Helpline on: 028 9263 3024**.

PRIME CATTLE IMPORTS FOR DIRECT SLAUGHTER UPDATE

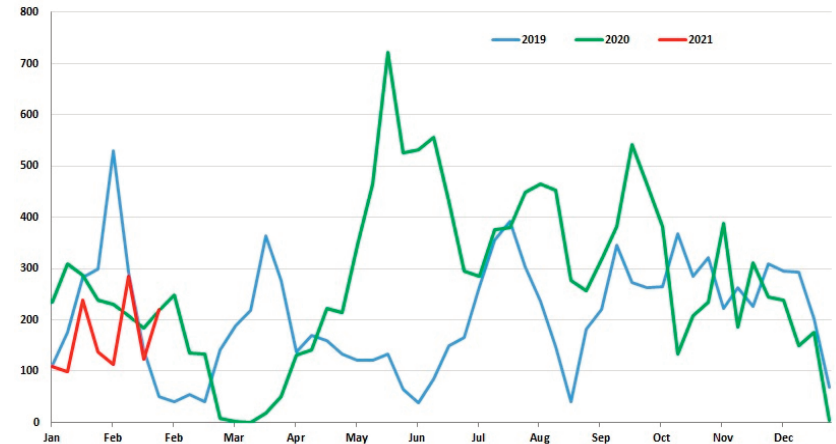
Imports of prime cattle from the Republic of Ireland for direct slaughter in local plants totalled 221 head last week. This is an increase of 97 head from the previous week however imports of prime cattle from Ireland for direct slaughter during 2021 have been running behind 2019 and 2020 levels.

As indicated in **Figure 2** the number of direct slaughter imports can vary considerably from week to week and during 2021 to date imports of prime

cattle from Ireland to NI plants have totalled 1,325 head. This accounts for 2.5 per cent of total prime cattle slaughterings in local plants. This is a decline of 600 head from 2020 and 487 head from the same period in 2019.

No prime cattle have been imported from Great Britain for direct slaughter during 2021. During the corresponding period in 2020, 85 prime cattle were imported in to Northern Ireland for direct slaughter from Great Britain.

Figure 2: Direct slaughter imports of prime cattle from ROI to NI during 2019, 2020 and 2021. Source: DAERA



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
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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 01/03/21	Next Week 08/03/21
Prime		
U-3	362 - 370p	362 - 370p
R-3	356 - 364p	356 - 364p
O+3	350 - 358p	350 - 358p
P+3	296 - 308p	296 - 308p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	265 - 280p	265 - 280p
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 major NI plants for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle remained steady at 362-370p/kg this week with the majority of plants quoting 366-370p/kg for steers and heifers. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows continued to range from 265-280p/kg across the plants. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week increased to 6,730 head. This takes the prime cattle throughput in February to 27,081 head, back 4.5 per cent when compared to February 2020. The average carcass weight of prime cattle in February was 347.4kg, up almost 2kg when compared to the same period last year. Meanwhile a total of 2,002 cows were killed in NI last week up by 94 cows from the previous week. This takes the throughput of cows in February to 7,447 head, back 381 head from the 7,828 cows processed in February 2020. The average cow carcass weight for February was 313.6kg, back 1.3kg when compared to the same period in 2020.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week consisted of 221 prime cattle and 66 cows, while no cattle were imported from GB for direct slaughter. Exports of cattle out of NI for direct slaughter to ROI last week consisted of seven heifers and 44 cows with no cattle making the journey from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The average NI steer price last week was back 1.4p/kg to 369.3p/kg from the previous week while the R3 steer price decreased by a penny to 378.3p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2020 the reported R3 steer price was 339.6p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was up 1.2p/kg to 371.3p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 0.4p/kg to 378.8p/kg. In the same week last year the R3 heifer price was 341.3p/kg. The average NI young bull price last week decreased by 2.8p/kg to 354.1p/kg while the R3 young bull price increased by a penny to 369.6p/kg. Meanwhile last week the average cow price in NI increased by just under a penny to 259.4p/kg, while the O3 cow price decreased by 1.2p/kg to 281p/kg from the previous week.

In GB last week the average steer price was up by 2.5p/kg to 376.8p/kg while the R3 steer price was up just under a penny to 382p/kg. This has widened the differential in R3 steer prices last week between NI and GB to 3.7p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week increased by almost 2p/kg to 376p/kg while the R3 heifer price decreased by 0.8p/kg to 380.9p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and GB at just over 2p/kg. The cow trade in GB improved last week with the O3 cow price up by almost 5p/kg to 278.1p/kg, 2.9p/kg below the O3 cow price in NI.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price was back by the equivalent of 2.3p/kg when compared to the previous week to 325.6p/kg, widening the differential with NI to 52.7p/kg. Meanwhile the R3 heifer price decreased by 1.4p/kg to 329.6p/kg which puts it 49.2p/kg lower than the same price in NI. The O3 cow price in ROI was back by a penny to 256.8p/kg, 24.2p/kg behind the O3 cow price in NI.

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

W/E 27/02/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	381.2	335.6	385.9	385.1	388.2	386.8
	R3	378.3	325.6	386.3	383.6	380.1	378.4
	R4	376.9	327.1	388.2	386.2	379.6	379.3
	O3	368.2	312.0	370.6	364.3	360.0	354.3
	AVG	369.3	-	385.0	378.1	372.1	376.8
Heifers	U3	382.9	341.8	395.8	393.4	394.2	389.3
	R3	378.8	329.6	386.4	381.9	380.4	376.2
	R4	376.6	330.5	388.5	383.3	380.2	376.0
	O3	369.1	317.7	366.7	362.3	361.0	355.2
	AVG	371.3	-	386.9	376.8	371.7	366.6
Young Bulls	U3	372.9	321.0	376.6	375.6	382.4	355.0
	R3	369.6	309.8	370.1	367.2	377.0	377.1
	O3	354.9	296.5	342.5	335.3	352.8	347.5
	AVG	354.1	-	361.1	350.4	360.5	352.5
Prime Cattle Price Reported	5541	-	7287	6637	7899	4732	26555
Cows	O3	281.0	256.8	275.6	280.5	278.6	272.2
	O4	284.0	255.8	279.0	283.2	276.7	269.5
	P2	241.4	228.4	237.1	237.0	235.8	233.9
	P3	263.7	244.2	249.2	253.3	251.6	249.3
	AVG	259.4	-	271.4	268.7	252.1	246.8

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.47p 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 27/02/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	381.5	382.6	373.2
R3	376.0	376.4	368.5
O+3	368.1	370.9	362.0

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 27/02/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	173.7	185.7	197.1	201.9
P2	194.7	217.3	240.4	254.2
P3	203.5	238.7	254.9	266.5
O3	-	285.0	280.3	281.0
O4	242.1	270.0	273.6	284.8
R3	-	-	-	300.0

LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 27/02/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	224	244	232	200	223	212
Friesians	169	194	178	140	168	153
Heifers	218	243	224	200	217	208
Beef Cows	150	204	167	120	149	135
Dairy Cows	122	145	126	100	121	110
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	250	290	270	215	249	230
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	235	283	255	210	234	220
Bullocks over 500kg	215	236	225	185	214	205
Heifers up to 450kg	230	270	250	205	229	218
Heifers over 450kg	220	235	230	190	219	205
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	370	470	420	270	365	320
Continental Heifers	340	470	385	235	335	285
Friesian Bulls	200	285	235	140	195	165
Holstein Bulls	165	265	200	10	160	80

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 01/03/21	Next Week 08/03/21
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg (with one processor paying up to 23kg)	570 - 580p	570 - 600p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 13/02/21	W/E 20/02/21	W/E 27/02/21
NI L/W Hoggets	510.8	529.0	539.9
NI D/W Hoggets	543.9	562.6	572.3
GB D/W Hoggets	593.3	609.1	613.9
ROI D/W	538.8	544.1	567.1

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes for R3 grade hoggets firmed this week at 570-580p/kg up to 22kg with one plant paying up to 23kg with quotes of 570-600p/kg expected early next week. Hogget throughput in local plants last week increased by 356 head from the previous week to total 7,100 hoggets. This brings the total hogget throughput in February to 28,659 up 15.7 per cent when compared to February 2020. A further 4,852 hoggets were exported to ROI for direct slaughter last week, an increase of 495 hoggets from the previous week. The average NI deadweight hogget price last week increased by 9.7p/kg to 572.3p/kg. In the same week last year the hogget price was 478.1p/kg. The average ROI hogget price last week increased by the equivalent of 23p/kg to 567.1p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

Many of the marts have recorded steady numbers passing through the sale rings with a firm trade continuing to be reported. In Swatragh last Saturday 850 hoggets sold from 496-616p/kg compared to 750 hoggets the previous week selling from 517-567p/kg. On Monday in Massereene 626 hoggets sold from 530-580p/kg compared to 506 hoggets last week selling from 540-600p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 451 hoggets sold from 510-580p/kg (avg 548p/kg) compared to 417 hoggets last week selling from 510-595p/kg (avg 537p/kg). This week in Enniskillen 628 hoggets sold from 538-640p/kg compared to 582 hoggets last week selling from 508-578p/kg. The trade for cull ewes continued to remain strong this week with top prices ranging from £132-£188 across the marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 27/02/21		Hoggets			
To: 04/03/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	430	526	576	-
	Swatragh	850	496	616	-
Monday	Massereene	626	530	580	-
	Kilrea	290	542	600	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	333	536	600	-
	Rathfriland	451	510	580	548
Wednesday	Ballymena	930	540	638	561
	Enniskillen	628	538	640	-
	Armoyn	443	565	615	-
	Markethill	990	550	627	-

Strict Covid - 19 restrictions are in place
across all of the livestock marts

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM

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LOCKDOWN PROVIDES LMC WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO RE-FOCUS ITS PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The last 12 months have given the team at LMC a unique opportunity to look at different ways of telling consumers about the tremendous nutritional and taste benefits associated with NI Farm Quality Assured Beef and Lamb.

The Commission's Education and Consumer Promotions Manager Lauren Patterson takes up the story: "Lockdown brought with it the ending of all public events and the closure, to all intents and purposes, of the catering sectors. But every cloud has a silver lining and, from a beef and lamb perspective, this came in the form of people's re-acquaintance with the pleasure of cooking at home.

"This, in turn, provided LMC with a unique opportunity to use social media as an ongoing and real-time opportunity to promote the many ways by which NI Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb can be cooked and enjoyed. "What's more, social media is a two way communication medium. So by taking this approach we have been able to get direct feedback and commentary from consumers." Lauren has been ably assisted in this work by

Queen's University student Sarah Spence, currently on work placement with the Commission as part of her marketing degree course.

An absolute highlight of 2020 was the success of the LMC's Steakhouse Saturday promotion, which ran across Facebook and Instagram for a five-week period. According to Lauren, the initiative generated 2 million impressions across the two platforms. She continued: "The promotion also encouraged 170,000 people to visit our consumer website: BeefandLambNI.com."



Last October saw the launch of LMC's latest advertising campaign, themed: the truth about beef. It helps tell the real story of beef, from the perspective of renowned local chef James Devine as he chats to Dr Ruth Price, from Ulster University's School of

CAMPAIGN SHOWN ON



Biomedical Sciences; Agri-Food and Biosciences' Institute (AFBI) research scientist Dr Steven Morrison; Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef farmer Stuart Hamilton and fellow chef Pearson Morris.

Lauren Patterson commented: "Again, the campaign worked tremendously well on social media. To date it has generated 1.8 million impressions across the various platforms.

"Significantly, all of the filming work for the campaign was carried out while many of the lockdown measures were in place. This was only made possible by the total commitment to detail that was brought to bear by the production team at Genesis Advertising. I can also confirm that the second scheduling of the advertising campaign is now featuring on television, radio and public poster sites across NI right now."

Working successfully with schools remains another key objective for LMC. This is achieved in three ways: the hosting of in-class cookery demonstrations; providing teachers with continuing professional development opportunities and



providing the in-class resources that teachers need to tell the story of beef and lamb in the most comprehensive way possible.

"Prior to the closure of the schools, we were on track to record the highest number ever of in-class cookery demonstrations in a single academic year," said Lauren. "Hopefully, all our schools will be getting back to normal teaching routines over the coming weeks and months, at which stage LMC staff can continue-on with the invaluable work they have been doing with young people over many years."

WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE WITHIN THE LMC

Monday of next week (March 8th) will mark International Women's Day 2021. The key role played by women within the farming and food sectors is often overlooked and, sometimes, even taken for granted. However, as Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) Chief Executive Ian Stevenson points out, women have always played a pivotal role throughout the 53 year history of the organisation.

He explained: "And this remains the case. An excellent example is the work currently carried out by LMC's Market Information Team of Lynda Kelly and Amy McNeill who collate and analyse the market intelligence data, which LMC makes available to the entire beef and lamb sectors on an almost daily basis. Farmers and processors will be very aware of the deadweight cattle price reporting and market trend data that is available to them from LMC, when they need it."

Ian continued: "But price reporting is only the tip of the iceberg, in terms of market intelligence. Courtesy of our ability to aggregate cattle price reporting data with data from APHIS, NI's unique animal traceability system,



it is also possible for LMC to assess a number of critically important trends, which are of direct benefit to red meat industry stakeholders, individual farmers and the media. The reports, developed on the back of this work, can help industry leaders make policy decisions that can help farmers and red meat processors in many ways.

"The work carried out by LMC in quantifying the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the beef and lamb industry during the March/April period of last year is an excellent example of the value added by LMC's Market Information activity. "The report commissioned by LMC on this matter formed the basis of the evidence upon which the £7.2 million support package for beef and lamb farmers was agreed."

Ian went on to make the point that accurate market intelligence is important in allowing any industry to

plan for the future. "Beef and lamb are no different in this regard," he stressed. "It's also important that this information is made available to the people who need it most on an ongoing basis.

"It is in this context that the LMC Bulletin plays such an important role. It is the vehicle through which we publish our weekly price reporting information and various market intelligence insights. "But a publication, such as the Bulletin, is only valuable if its target audience reads it in large enough numbers. "The good news is that the Bulletin, and our accompanying Market Information outputs, enjoy a 90 per cent readership rate amongst farmers and those involved in the various red meat stakeholder groups. This is an exceptionally high level of acknowledgement and has been made possible by the continuing commitment of the LMC's Market Information team."

LMC IS DEVELOPING A NEW 'THREE-YEAR' STRATEGIC PLAN

The coming months will see LMC develop and publish its new three-year strategic plan, covering the period 2021 up to 2024. "Our current plan takes us through to the end of this month," LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson confirmed. "I can confirm that all of the strategic targets contained within the current plan have been achieved. However, it required more than a little tweaking along the way, particularly given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic."

"In order to help us plan ahead LMC representatives have met with colleagues from a range of stakeholder bodies within the red meat sectors, in order to gauge their priorities for the future and the role LMC can play in helping these to be obtained." The organisations canvassed by the Commission have included the Ulster Farmers' Union, the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters' Association, the National Beef Association, the National Sheep Association and the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers' Association.

Ian continued: "One of the most significant outcomes from these meetings was the high level of confidence expressed by the various stakeholder organisations in the role being played by the Commission within the beef and sheep sectors at the present time and how this can be developed for the future.

Referring to some of the issues that will become priorities for beef and lamb over the coming years, Ian said that both the farming and processing industries must be assured of a level

playing field when it comes to the development of future infrastructure. He added: "Extensive grant support of this nature is already planned for Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland is already well down the road in this regard.

"Last year saw all of NI's red meat processors invest millions of pounds in Covid-19 mitigation measures. "All of this money had to be found from each company's own resources. No support was made available by government to underpin these strategically important commitments. "Looking ahead, NI's red meat companies will have no option but to invest significantly in their facilities to embrace new technologies and innovations, in order to remain competitive on an international stage. "Government must commit to supporting these critically important infrastructure-related developments.

"And the same principle holds at farm level. For example, farmers must be fully supported as they invest in the technologies required to reduce the levels of ammonia produced on their farms, to improve productivity and to meet the challenges presented by climate change. We are already starting to see the adoption of low emission spreading systems, where slurry is concerned. Again it is important that farmers are fully supported, as they invest in these new systems.

Ian concluded: "The enhanced uptake of improved genetics is another priority for both the beef and lamb sectors, as both industries look to the future."



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