

NI BEEF PRODUCTION INCREASES IN 2020

NI cattle slaughterings

During 2020 cattle killed in local plants totalled 461,246 head. This is a marginal increase of one per cent or just over 6,000 head from 2019 levels as shown in **Table 1**. It should be noted that 2020 was a 53 week year for official reporting purposes while 2019 was a 52 week year.

Prime cattle kill totalled 345,640 head, accounting for 75 per cent of Northern Irish cattle slaughtered in 2020.

The number of steers killed in NI during 2020 was up six per cent from 2019 levels, totalling 174,392 head. The number of heifers slaughtered increased by a marginal one per cent or 767 head, totalling 136,771 in 2020. Steers and heifers made up 90 per cent of total prime cattle throughput in 2020, with the remaining 10 per cent coming from young bulls.

The number of young bulls killed in local plants was back over 10,000 head or 23 per cent. The increase in steer and heifer kill compensated for the decline in the young bull kill during 2020, resulting in total prime cattle kill levels predominantly

unchanged year on year.

Cow throughput in local plants increased by over 5,000 head or five per cent in 2020 when compared to 2019 levels, totalling 104,506 head. Similarly, mature bull throughput increased by 342 head or seven per cent from the previous year.

The number of calves killed in local plants during 2020 declined by eight per cent, totalling 5,500 head in 2020.

NI beef production

Total beef production in Northern Ireland during 2020 is up two per cent from year previous levels, totalling almost 156,000 tonnes.

The increase in beef production may be attributed to the increase in throughput in local plants combined with an increase in cattle carcass weights. Average carcass weights were up for most types of cattle in 2020, with carcass weight declines within the young bull and calf categories only.

During 2020 the average prime cattle carcass weight increased by 2.2kg. The increase in carcass weight alongside

similar levels of prime cattle throughput resulted in a marginal increase in beef volume from prime cattle, totalling 119,586 tonnes.

The average cow carcass weight also increased by 4.8kg during 2020 to 312.6kg. This increase combined with a five per cent increase in cow throughput resulted in cow beef volumes in local plants increasing by seven per cent from 2019 levels. The volume of cow beef totalled 32,655 tonnes in 2020, accounting for 21 per cent of total beef production in NI.

Due to the decline in calf throughput in 2020 alongside the decline in average carcass weight, beef volume from calves had reduced by 12 per cent from 2019 levels. However, this decline is very small with respect to total beef production, with calf beef accounting for less than one per cent of total beef production in NI.

Beef from mature bulls has increased by 10 per in 2020 from 2019 levels. However, similar to calf beef production, mature bull beef accounts for a very small proportion of overall beef production in NI.

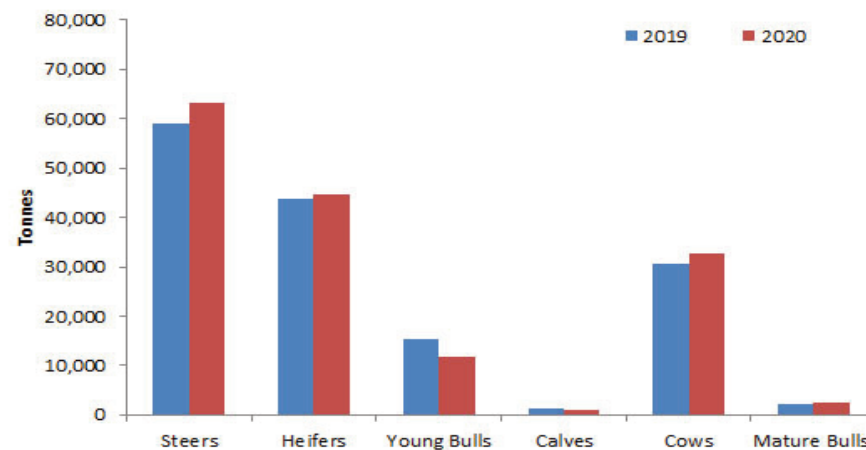
Table 1. Summary of Northern Ireland cattle slaughterings during 2019 and 2020

Source: DAERA

NI CATTLE SLAUGHTERINGS			
(53 weeks ended 02/01/2021 compared to 52 weeks ended 28/12/2019)			
	2019	2020	Change
CATTLE - FOODCHAIN			
Steers	163,918	174,392	+6%
Heifers	136,004	136,771	+1%
Young Bulls	44,749	34,477	-23%
Total Prime Cattle	344,671	345,640	+0%
Calves	5,970	5,500	-8%
Cows	99,321	104,506	+5%
Mature Bulls	5,258	5,600	+7%
Total Cattle	455,220	461,246	+1%

Figure 1. Summary of Northern Ireland beef production during 2019 and 2020

Source: DAERA



NI SHEEP MARKET SNAPSHOT DECEMBER 2020

Table 2. Northern Ireland Sheep Market Snapshot December 2020 (weeks 36-40)

Source: DAERA/DAFM/AHDB

	December 2019	December 2020	Change
Sheep Prices (p/kg)			
Average Deadweight Price NI	394.8	465.6	+18.0%
Average Liveweight Price NI	373.5	444.1	+18.9%
Average Weekly Price GB (D/W)	435.4	479.8	+10.2%
Average Weekly Price ROI (D/W)	407.1	486.9	+19.6%
NI Throughput			
Total Hoggets & Lambs Processed (Head)	34,473	41,353	+20.0%
Total Ewes & Rams Processed (Head)	2,594	1,690	-34.8%
Average Hogget & Lambs Carcase Weight (kg)	22.6	22.4	-1.1%
Average Ewe & Rams Carcase Weight (kg)	26.2	27.9	+6.4%
Trade (Head)			
Live Imports for Direct Slaughter	168	306	+82.1%
Live Exports for Direct Slaughter	38,074	39,420	+3.5%
Euro / Stg Exchange Rate (€ / £)	84.7	90.6	+7.0%
All NI Figures Unless Otherwise Stated			

The sheep and lamb trade in Northern Ireland during December 2020 is well ahead of December 2019 levels as outlined in **Table 2**.

Deadweight prices

The average deadweight lamb price in Northern Ireland during December 2020 was 465.6p/kg, an increase of over 70p/kg from December 2019 when the average deadweight price was 394.8p/kg. This equates to an 18 per cent increase year on year or £15.40 increase in the value of a 22kg lamb carcase.

The average deadweight lamb price in GB during December 2020 was 479.8p/kg which is up 44.4p/kg from December 2019 when the price was 435.4p/kg.

ROI also saw an increase in average deadweight lamb price, up the equivalent of 79.8p/kg to 486.9p/kg from 407.1p/kg in December 2019. This equates to an increase of almost 20 per cent year on year.

Throughput

Total NI lamb throughput during December 2020 totalled 41,353 head, up 6,880 head or 20 per

cent from the 34,473 head in December 2019. Meanwhile total ewe and ram throughput decreased by 34.8 per cent to 1,690 head from December 2019 levels.

Carcase weights

The average lamb carcase weight decreased by a marginal 1.1 per cent or 0.2kg to 22.4kg while the average ewe and ram carcase weight increased by 1.7kg to 27.9kg during December 2020.

Imports/Exports

Both imports and exports of sheep have increased in Northern Ireland during December 2020. Sheep imports to NI for direct slaughter totalled 306 head in December 2020, up 138 head, with the entirety of these imports coming from GB.

Sheep exports from Northern Ireland during December 2020 totalled 39,420 head, up 1,346 head or 3.5 per cent from 38,074 head exported during the same period in 2019. With 95 per cent of these exports going to ROI and the remaining five per cent to GB.

FQAS Helpline

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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 11/01/21	Next Week 18/01/21
Prime		
U-3	360 - 372p	366 - 376p
R-3	354 - 366p	360 - 370p
O+3	348 - 360p	354 - 364p
P+3	294 - 310p	300 - 314p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	240 - 268p	260 - 270p
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 strengthened and ended this week ranging from 366-372p/kg with quotes for next week expected to range from 366-376p/kg. Producers should use these quotes as a starting point for negotiation with higher prices available, particularly for cattle that meet current market specifications. The deadweight cow trade improved at the upper end this week with quotes from 240-268p/kg. Quotes for early next week are expected to range from 260-270p/kg.

The majority of NI processing plants have indicated a tightening in the supply of all types of cattle for processing. Prime cattle throughput last week increased from the previous week to 6,040 head. This was 584 head behind the same week last year when 6,624 prime cattle were processed locally. Cow throughput in NI last week increased from the previous week to 1,980 head. This is back slightly when compared to the same week in 2020 when 2,049 cows were processed locally.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants consisted of 108 prime cattle and 41 cows with no cattle imported from GB for direct slaughter last week. Exports of cattle from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of three steers and 56 cows while no cattle made the journey from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The average steer price in NI last week was 368p/kg, back 3.3p/kg from the previous week with the R3 steer price back by 2.3p/kg to 377.7p/kg. In the corresponding week last year the R3 steer price was 340.1p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 370.5p/kg, back 1.2p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price decreased by a similar margin to 377.3p/kg. In the same week in 2020 the R3 heifer price was 341.2p/kg. The average young bull price in NI last week increased by just over 3p/kg to 355.8p/kg with the R3 young bull price increasing by 3.5p/kg to 370.2p/kg. Meanwhile the average cow price was back 11.5p/kg to 246.4p/kg, with the O3 cow price back by almost 3p/kg to 273.7p/kg.

In GB the average steer price increased by 1.6p/kg to 372.6p/kg while the R3 steer price was up by 1.7p/kg to 378.7p/kg. In the corresponding week last year the R3 steer price in GB was 339.1p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week was slightly back to 372.3p/kg from the previous week with the R3 heifer price up by a penny to 378.5p/kg. In the same week in 2020 the R3 heifer price in GB was 338.2p/kg. The average cow price in GB last week increased by half a penny to 237p/kg while the O3 cow price was up almost 3p/kg to 262p/kg. This was 11.7p/kg below the O3 cow price in NI.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price was back 1.5p/kg to the equivalent of 340.9p/kg with the R3 heifer price decreasing by 1.3p/kg to 345.5p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2020 the R3 steer and R3 heifer prices in ROI were 306.6p/kg and 312.3p/kg respectively. Meanwhile last week the O3 cow price in ROI was back a penny to the equivalent of 267.2p/kg. This was 6.5p/kg lower than the same price in NI.

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

W/E 09/01/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	378.6	349.7	380.9	379.7	384.5	381.4	381.9
	R3	377.7	340.9	384.2	378.4	378.0	375.5	378.7
	R4	371.5	342.9	383.5	382.7	375.4	372.2	380.7
	O3	367.4	327.6	366.3	366.0	357.0	353.6	359.7
AVG	368.0	-	379.7	374.8	369.1	365.4	372.6	
Heifers	U3	381.6	357.3	389.6	382.9	392.7	384.0	387.9
	R3	377.3	345.5	385.5	377.9	378.0	375.1	378.5
	R4	375.6	347.1	382.7	380.8	378.8	375.3	380.2
	O3	371.4	335.6	357.6	366.9	355.4	353.2	358.5
AVG	370.5	-	380.3	374.9	367.3	365.7	372.3	
Young Bulls	U3	370.7	334.8	380.4	354.7	385.0	372.8	376.1
	R3	370.2	324.3	373.1	360.0	372.0	355.9	368.8
	O3	353.4	312.2	332.3	342.8	347.5	329.1	339.7
	AVG	355.8	-	359.2	344.9	359.6	339.1	354.0
Prime Cattle Price Reported	5162	-	5950	7005	7329	4422	24706	
Cows	O3	273.7	267.2	262.3	263.5	260.7	261.8	262.0
	O4	274.2	267.3	264.4	267.9	259.2	258.7	262.5
	P2	236.2	243.6	215.0	219.0	215.6	224.7	218.6
	P3	255.6	255.9	232.7	238.5	232.1	242.1	235.3
AVG	246.4	-	253.2	247.0	231.1	232.0	237.0	

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=90.29p 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 09/01/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	377.9	380.8	370.9
R3	373.4	376.3	370.2
O+3	366.4	369.5	360.7

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 09/01/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	167.0	175.7	184.6	202.0
P2	194.4	219.3	231.8	246.8
P3	206.0	234.8	252.2	257.6
O3	-	261.3	268.7	274.3
O4	-	238.0	265.0	274.6
R3	-	-	-	291.0

LATEST LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 09/01/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	220	237	228	210	219	214
Friesians	191	207	199	169	190	179
Heifers	218	234	226	200	217	208
Beef Cows	170	191	180	145	169	157
Dairy Cows	120	142	131	110	119	114
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	290	333	311	250	289	269
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	214	237	225	200	213	206
Bullocks over 500kg	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heifers up to 450kg	285	332	308	250	284	267
Heifers over 450kg	-	-	-	-	-	-

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 11/01/21	Next Week 18/01/21
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg	485-495p	530p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 26/12/20	W/E 02/01/21	W/E 09/01/21
NI L/W Hoggets/Lambs	-	457.0	481.7
NI D/W Hoggets/Lambs	466.9	473.7	493.6
GB D/W Hoggets/Lambs	471.9	487.0	518.6
ROI D/W	492.5	499.8	506.8

Deadweight Sheep Trade

There was a strong uplift in the quotes mid-week for R3 grading hoggets with the major NI processing plants quoting in the region of 530p/kg up to 22kg. Similar quotes are expected for early next week. Throughput increased last week with 8,019 hoggets processed across the NI plants. In the corresponding week in 2020 hogget throughput totalled 8,665 head in local plants. Exports of hoggets to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 6,262 head, an increase of 595 head from the previous week. The average liveweight hogget price in NI last week was 481.7p/kg, up 24.7p/kg from the previous week. Meanwhile the average deadweight hogget price in NI last week was 493.6p/kg, an increase of almost 20p/kg from the previous week.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

Many of the marts have reported an exceptionally sharper trade this week with liveweight prices for hoggets amongst the highest ever reported. In Swatragh last Saturday 720 hoggets sold from 490-523p/kg compared to the previous week when 440 hoggets sold from 425-461p/kg. In Kilrea on Monday 660 hoggets sold from 490-564p/kg compared to 500 hoggets last week selling from 448-497p/kg. In Saintfield this week 405 hoggets sold from 480-558p/kg compared to last week when 412 hoggets sold from 440-502p/kg. On Wednesday a good show of 1,250 hoggets in Markethill sold from 530-577p/kg compared to 800 hoggets last week selling from 470-531p/kg. A strong trade has also been recorded for cull ewes with top reported prices ranging from £132-£188 across the marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 09/01/21		Hoggets			
To: 14/01/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	235	479	536	-
	Swatragh	720	490	523	-
Monday	Massereene	726	510	551	-
	Kilrea	660	490	564	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	405	480	558	-
	Rathfriland	338	500	556	523
Wednesday	Ballymena	2417	500	583	520
	Enniskillen	569	498	568	-
	Armoyn	680	510	580	-
	Markethill	1250	530	577	-

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

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM

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