

WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT COMMISSION

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NI AND GB DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES WELL AHEAD OF EU

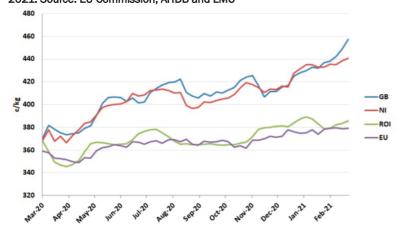
The EU and UK prices league table, published weekly by LMC, provides a useful comparison of the deadweight cattle trade by ranking countries based on their average R3 heifer price that week and comparing it to the corresponding week in the previous month.

There have been increases in reported deadweight prices in a number of EU countries and UK regions in the week ending 21 March 2021 as outlined in **Table 1.** The average R3 heifer price in

the EU during this week was 379.3c/kg which is an increase of 1c/kg from the previous month.

In Northern Ireland the average R3 heifer price in the week ending 21 March 2021 was the equivalent of 440.5c/kg. This is up 7.8c/kg from the previous month and moved NI up one position on the EU and UK league table in to third place. The increase in price in Northern Ireland widened the differential between the average R3 heifer price in the EU and NI to

Figure 1: R3 heifer price in GB, NI, ROI and the EU during the 52 w/e 21 March 2021. Source: EU Commission. AHDB and LMC



61.2c/kg in the week ending 21 March 2021 from the previous month. This equates to an additional €196 on a 320kg heifer carcase.

A similar increase in the deadweight price was recorded in the Republic of Ireland. The R3 heifer price in this region was 385.8c/kg, up 7.2c/kg from the previous month. The price in Ireland still remains well below the price in Northern Ireland with a 54.7c/kg differential recorded in the week ending 21 March 2021 which equates to €175 on a 320kg carcase.

The deadweight R3 heifer price in Great Britain increased by 20.5c/kg in the week ending 21 March 2021 when compared to the previous month. The R3 heifer price in this region was the equivalent of 457c/kg and placed GB in second position on the EU and UK league table.

The deadweight heifer price in GB has been running at very similar levels to NI since December 2020 however the differential between the two regions has widened in recent weeks as outlined in **Figure 1**. In the week ending 21 March 2021 the R3

Table 1: EU and UK Deadweight R3 Heifer Prices Table (c/kg). Source: EU Commission, AHDB and LMC

Position last Month	Position this Month	Country	Price (w/e 21.02.21)	Price (w/e 21.03.21)	Change on Month (cents)
2	1	Sweden	459.0	466.7	+7.7
3	2	Great Britain	436.5	457.0	+20.5
4	3	Northern Ireland	432.7	440.5	+7.8
1	4	Italy	460.1	433.0	-27.1
5	5	France	407.0	414.0	+7.0
6	6	Luxembourg	394.6	391.8	-2.8
8	7	Ireland	378.6	385.8	+7.2
7	8	Portugal	382.7	377.1	-5.6
9	9	Spain	374.2	365.6	-8.6
10	10	Austria	355.1	361.5	+6.4
11	11	Germany	352.0	349.8	-2.2
12	12	Netherlands	342.0	347.0	+5.0
16	13	Denmark	311.7	324.6	+12.9
15	14	Belgium	313.0	316.0	+3.0
13	15	Poland	322.7	312.3	-10.4
14	16	Slovenia	314.5	303.8	-10.7
19	17	Lithuania	255.9	281.9	+26.0
17	18	Romania	295.4	276.5	-18.9
18	19	Czech Republic	268.4	264.6	-3.8
		EU Average	378.3	379.3	+1.0
		Euro (€1=)	86.9	85.7	-1.2

heifer price in GB was 16.5c/kg above the same price in NI.

The most notable increase in price in the EU and UK league table during the week ending 21 March 2021 was recorded in Lithuania which increased by 26c/kg from the previous month.

Significant declines in the R3 heifer price were also recorded during this period. Italy and Romania reported price decreases of 27.1c/kg and 18.9c/kg respectively.

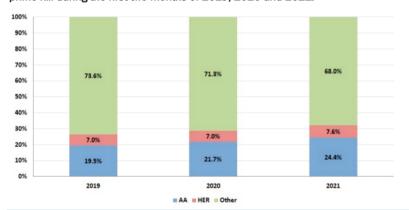
MORE ABERDEEN ANGUS CATTLE IN NI SLAUGHTER MIX

The number of Aberdeen Angus calves registered in Northern Ireland has notably increased in recent years. During 2020 358,334 beef sired calves were registered in Northern Ireland and Aberdeen Angus sired calves accounted for 91,081 of these registrations which equates to 25.4 per cent.

During 2019 there were 82,657 Aberdeen Angus sired calves registered in Northern Ireland which accounted for 23.7 per cent of beef sired calf registrations in the region. The number of Aberdeen Angus sired calves in 2020 has also increased from 2018 levels when there were 76,606 of these calves registered in Northern Ireland which accounted for 22.1 per cent of the total beef sired calves registered.

Strong prices available for Aberdeen Angus prime cattle at point of slaughter in a number of the local processing plants have produced a strong demand for these type of cattle

Figure 2: Proportion of Aberdeen Angus and Hereford cattle in NI price reported prime kill during the first two months of 2019, 2020 and 2021.



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and analysis of deadweight cattle price reporting has indicated that the rise in Aberdeen Angus sired calf registrations is being reflected in Northern Ireland's prime cattle slaughter mix.

During the first two months of 2021, Aberdeen Angus cattle accounted for 24.4 per cent of price reported prime kill in Northern Ireland. This proportion has been increasing over recent years as outlined in **Figure 2**. This proportion of Aberdeen Angus cattle in the prime slaughter mix during the first two months of 2021 has increased by 2.7 per cent from 2020 and 4.9 per cent from 2019 during the corresponding period.

There has also been a slight increase in the proportion of Hereford prime cattle passing through local processing plants during the first two months of this year. Hereford cattle have accounted for 7.6 per cent of the prime cattle slaughter mix in Northern Ireland which is a marginal increase from 2020 and 2019 when these cattle accounted for seven per cent of the price reported kill in both years.

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NI DEADWEIGHT HOGGET TRADE UPDATE

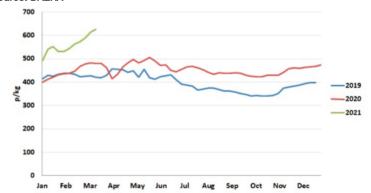
The deadweight hogget trade remains strong in Northern Ireland with quotes this week in local processing plants of 590-620p/kg for R3 grade hoggets up to 22kg with one processor paying up to 23kg. Similar quotes are expected for next week.

The strong quotes are being reflected in the paid prices with the average deadweight R3 hogget price this week of 625p/kg which is back slightly from the previous week when the price reached a record high in Northern Ireland during 2021 to date. The

deadweight R3 hogget price has increased by 131p/kg from the beginning of the year and remains well ahead of both 2019 and 2020 levels as outlined in **Figure 3**.

In the same week last year the R3 hogget price in Northern Ireland was 460p/kg which equates to a £36 differential on a 22kg carcase. While in 2019 the R3 hogget price was 195.8p/kg below the current price which equates to a more significant £43 differential on a 22kg carcase.

Figure 3: Deadweight lamb/hogget prices in NI during 2019, 2020 and 2021. Source: DAERA



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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE OUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 29/03/21	Next Week 05/04/21						
Prime								
U-3	362 - 374p	364 - 376p						
R-3	356 - 368p	358 - 370p						
0+3	350 - 362p	352 - 364p						
P+3	296 - 312p	298 - 314p						
	Including bonus where applicabl							
Cows								
0+3	265 - 290p	265 - 290p						

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.

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 27/03/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	384.6	388.7	375.5
R3	381.4	381.8	369.2
0+3	372.4	374.3	362.4

^{*}Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

			•					
W/E	Weight Bands							
27/03/21	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg				
P1	180.9	196.8	206.9	220.7				
P2	195.5	220.9	243.0	256.7				
Р3	201.4	253.7	262.0	270.7				
03	-	260.0	280.0	285.9				
04	-	-	287.7	287.2				
R3	-	-	282.0	308.2				

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the major NI processing plants for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ended this week ranging from 364-374p/kg with the majority of plants quoting in the region of 370-374p/kg for steers and heifers. The trade for good quality 0+3 grade cows remained steady ranging from 265-290p/kg with the majority of plants quoting in the region of 265-274p/kg.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 6,661 head, an increase of 763 head from the 5,898 head processed the previous week. In the same week last year 7,217 prime cattle were processed in local plants. Cow throughput in NI last week marginally decreased from the previous week to 1,614 head. In the corresponding week in 2020 1,848 cows were processed in local plants.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week increased to 478 prime cattle and 75 cows while exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter increased slightly from the previous week to nine prime cattle and 57 cows. There were no cattle imported from GB for direct slaughter in NI last week and no cattle exported out of NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle improved last week in NI with the majority of grades increasing in the region of 2-4p/kg from the previous week. The average steer price in NI last week marginally increased to 372.9p/kg, while the R3 steer price was up 1.7p/kg to 382.5p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2020 the R3 steer price was 338.9p/kg, an increase of 43.6p/kg year on year. The average heifer price in NI last week was 375p/kg, an increase of 4.6p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was up by 1.7p/kg to 381.6p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2020 the R3 heifer price was 339.6p/kg, an increase of 42p/kg year on year. The NI deadweight cow trade improved last week with the average cow price up by almost 3p/kg to 260.5p/kg and the 03 cow price up by 2.2p/kg to 285.4p/kg.

The GB deadweight trade for prime cattle generally strengthened last week across the majority of grades. Last week both the average steer price and R3 steer price in GB increased by almost 4p/kg to 393.1p/kg and 397.9p/kg respectively. This puts the differential in R3 steer price in NI and GB at 15.4p/kg, just over 11p/kg ahead of the same week in 2020 when the differential was 4.3p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week increased by 3.4p/kg to 391.9p/kg with the R3 heifer price up by 4.2p/kg to 398.4p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and GB at 16.8p/kg an increase of 15p/kg when compared to a differential of 1.8p/kg in the same week in 2020. Meanwhile the cow trade improved in GB with the O3 cow price up 1.8p/kg to 291.3p/kg last week, almost 6p/kg ahead of the O3 cow price in NI.

In ROI last week the deadweight prime cattle prices also firmed with prices increasing in the region of 2-4p/kg from the previous week. The R3 steer price was the equivalent of 331.5p/kg, up just over 3p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was up 3.6p/kg to the equivalent of 336.3p/kg. This puts the differential last week with NI at 51p/kg for R3 steers and 45.3p/kg for R3 grade heifers.

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

	V/E 03/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
	U3	384.1	342.0	409.8	400.3	403.1	403.9	404.5
	R3	382.5	331.5	406.8	397.8	396.2	391.9	397.9
Steers	R4	381.7	332.5	407.8	397.8	395.8	393.0	400.9
	03	371.2	318.2	392.5	381.5	373.7	369.7	376.9
	AVG	372.9	-	405.0	391.6	388.7	384.6	393.1
	U3	387.6	347.1	418.7	403.6	407.8	403.6	408.9
	R3	381.6	336.3	411.2	397.2	397.5	391.5	398.4
Heifers	R4	379.6	336.8	409.8	398.2	397.7	390.0	401.3
	03	374.2	324.3	389.8	380.8	371.5	371.8	375.7
	AVG	375.0	-	408.1	392.3	386.0	378.3	391.9
	U3	374.7	327.4	403.0	400.4	394.2	384.8	398.4
Young	R3	370.2	316.5	389.5	391.1	391.0	383.6	389.9
Bulls	03	357.9	303.7	358.7	363.3	359.0	338.1	359.4
	AVG	358.3	-	384.6	372.1	372.0	371.7	374.8
	e Cattle Reported	5113	-	7264	6902	7520	5199	26885
	03	285.4	267.2	292.6	294.7	290.6	283.4	291.3
	04	287.2	267.3	294.9	298.0	290.3	281.8	291.5
Cows	P2	243.4	241.5	257.6	247.6	248.7	241.9	247.6
	Р3	267.0	259.1	272.8	265.8	261.3	260.5	262.2
	AVG	260.5	-	285.1	281.0	262.7	254.6	267.7

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.05p 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

LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E	18	t QUAL	ΙΤΥ	2 n	id QUAL	ITY
27/03/21	From	То	Avg	From	То	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	235	244	238	205	234	218
Friesians	172	181	176	153	169	164
Heifers	225	249	231	205	224	215
Beef Cows	170	233	177	135	169	150
Dairy Cows	124	144	132	105	123	114
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	250	297	275	200	249	228
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	230	266	248	205	229	220
Bullocks over 500kg	215	240	225	180	214	200
Heifers up to 450kg	230	265	248	205	229	220
Heifers over 450kg	220	240	230	195	219	208
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls up to 1 month	395	545	475	300	390	350
Continental Heifers up to 1 month	350	515	400	225	345	285
Friesian Bulls	185	255	220	100	180	140
Holstein Bulls	100	155	128	5	95	50

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 29/03/21	Next Week 05/04/21					
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg (with one processor paying up to 23kg)	590 - 620p	590 - 620p					
R3 Spring Lambs up to 21kg	-	680p					

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

ILLIO			
(P/KG)	W/E 13/03/21	W/E 20/03/21	W/E 27/03/21
NI L/W Hoggets	563.1	562.4	541.4
NI D/W Hoggets	612.7	625.9	625.0
GB D/W Hoggets	634.1	638.6	626.5
ROI D/W	592.3	623.5	623.2

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Base quotes from the major processors ended this week ranging from 590-620p/kg for R3 grade hoggets up to 22kg with one processor paying up to 23kg. Small numbers of spring lambs are starting to become available with base quotes of 680p/kg up to 21kg for R3 grading lambs expected on Monday. Throughput of hoggets/lambs in NI plants last week totalled 7,963 head an increase of 23 per cent from the previous week. This is also up 56 per cent when compared to the 5,096 hoggets/lambs processed locally in the same week last year. Exports of hoggets to R0I last week for direct slaughter totalled 2,200 head, well back from 4,912 head exported in the same week in 2020. The deadweight hogget price in NI was 625p/kg back almost a penny from the previous week. In R0I last week the lamb/hogget price was back marginally to 623.2p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

The marts have continued to report smaller numbers of hoggets passing through the sale rings this week with trade generally back from previous weeks. A similar trade this week in Massereene reported 305 hoggets selling from 550-610p/kg. On Tuesday in Rathfriland 264 hoggets sold from 429-617p/kg (avg 550p/kg) compared to 308 hoggets last week selling from 500-610p/kg (avg 570p/kg). In Markethill this week 400 hoggets sold from 550-591p/kg compared to 780 hoggets last week selling from 550-602p/kg. Small numbers of spring lambs are beginning to pass through the marts with prices ranging from 600-800p/kg. Top reported prices for cull ewes ranged from £136-£198.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 2	7/03/21	Hoggets				Spring Lambs			
To: 01/04/21		No	From	То	Avg	No	From	То	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	208	523	597	-	24	648	707	-
	Swatragh	600	433	573	-	70	688	727	-
Monday	Massereene	305	550	610	-	30	612	672	-
	Kilrea	270	605	688	-	-	-	-	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	160	500	580	-	55	625	700	-
	Rathfriland	264	429	617	550	66	630	800	727
Wednesday	Ballymena	509	550	631	565	159	640	776	675
	Enniskillen	386	450	600	-	38	600	720	-
	Armoy	364	535	590	-	28	660	700	-
	Markethill	400	550	591	-	110	650	730	-

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

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MONTHLY NEWS

Saturday 03 April 2021

Issue No. 0060

NI BEEF INDUSTRY WORKING TO SECURE PGI STATUS FOR 'GRASS FED' BEEF

Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) Chief Executive Ian Stevenson has confirmed that work is progressing apace in order to demonstrate that Northern Ireland's beef industry readily meets the grass fed criteria laid out by Bord Bia in the specification contained within the Republic of Ireland's submission to the European Commission, requesting Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status for Irish Grass Fed Beef.

He commented: "The first point to be made is that all industry stakeholder groups involved are totally supportive of NI being included within the scope of the PGI registration. And the same principle holds, where Bord Bia is concerned. A working group for Northern Ireland has now been set up, which is being chaired by the Commission's Industry Development Manager Colin Smith."

In addition to the involvement of the Commission, the group comprises representation from the Ulster Farmers Union (UFU), the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters' Association (NIMEA), the

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA); the Agri Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE).

The PGI specification requires a 90 per cent inclusion rate of grass and grass forage in all eligible cattle diets plus the adoption of a 220 day grazing season, relating to each full year of an animal's life. A 40 day window of flexibility is built into the grazing season, to reflect the changing weather conditions that can impact on Irish agriculture from year to year.

lan Stevenson continued: "We all know that these criteria are as valid locally as they are on the rest of the island. The verification process, now being developed for NI, will involve making use of existing databases where possible such as our APHIS traceability system and the Bovis database operated by AFBI. The agreed end point is to generate information on each animal slaughtered in Northern Ireland that is fully comparable with that made

available by Bord Bia for cattle processed in the Republic of Ireland. Once the grass fed verification system for Northern Ireland has been fully defined, LMC will take on the role of co ordinating the day to day management of the accreditation programme and will lead on the engagement with the PGI application from a Northern Ireland context. There is already unanimity within the various stakeholder groups that this would be the best way to move the project forward."

lan concluded: "LMC has owned, on behalf of the Northern Ireland beef and sheep industry, the community trademark for Greenfields for many years and the Irish Grass Fed origin of the product on sale throughout the Benelux Countries under this brand has long been served by supply chains with beef from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

"We also have many processing businesses operating in NI who for many years have marketed our beef to customers as Irish Grass Fed Beef and it is imperative that any registration of the name Irish Grass Fed Beef as a PGI must not lead to the exclusion of our locally produced beef which can readily meet the same robust specification and description."

Image 1. LMC has taken the lead on establishing a working group in NI to develop a grass fed verification system to enable NI's participation in the registration of a PGI for Irish Grass Fed Beef



CLIMATE CHANGE BILL OVERLOOKS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN NI

LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson feels that the Private Members' Climate Change Bill, introduced at Stormont a fortnight ago, does not take full account of the role played by livestock production at the heart of Northern Ireland's economy.

He commented: "The Bill calls for NI to achieve a 'Net Zero Carbon' status by 2045. However, all the research carried out to this point would indicate that such a target could not be achieved without drastically impacting on production agriculture. The reality is that it will be a very significant challenge to reduce carbon emissions in NI by up to 82 per cent come 2050, a figure proposed by the UK Climate Change Committee chaired by Lord Deben.

"This target, which recognises the importance of livestock production to NI, has been highlighted in recent times by Stormont Agriculture Minister Edwin Poots. Moreover, there has been a general acceptance that NI's attainment of an 82 per cent reduction in carbon related emissions over the next 29 years will allow the UK, as a whole, to secure its stated aim of achieving a Net Zero Carbon status by 2050.

To meet this overall 82 per cent reduction target, Lord Deben's committee concluded that agriculture in NI should reduce emissions by 57 per cent by 2050. "This is a challenging objective, but is one that

can aim to be met while still retaining livestock production as a key driver for the farming and food economy in NI.

The LMC representative is confident that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) will introduce its own Climate Change Bill at Stormont in the very near future. He said: "This Bill will no doubt take account of the views generated courtesy of the climate change public consultation process undertaken at the end of 2020. "Agriculture Minister Edwin Poots has already highlighted the 82 per cent reduction target, referenced within Lord Deben's recommendations, and it is very likely that the Climate Change Committee advice will be a strong influencing factor in the DAERA draft legislation.

"LMC fully supports an approach being taken that involves active consultation with relevant parties and policies being designed that are balanced and bring people on the journey to UK Net Zero by 2050 in a realistic and fair manner." But whatever the final emissions' reduction target will be in NI, the LMC chief executive is quick to confirm that agriculture will need meaningful investment and support very soon to ensure that the industry can, and will, achieve its climate change commitments. He explained: "Improving efficiency at farm level will be very important in this context. But the good news is that research is already pointing the way in terms of how this can be achieved.

REGIONAL FARM QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEMES WORK IN TOTAL HARMONY

LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson has confirmed that all the regional beef and Iamb farm quality assurance schemes now operating throughout the UK combine to deliver the reassurances required by retailers, wholesalers and consumers in the most comprehensive manner possible. Where red meat is concerned, this entails the highest levels of co operation between The NI Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS); Quality Meat Scotland (QMS); Farm Assured Welsh Livestock (FAWL) and Red Tractor Assurance.

lan commented: "As a result of this co operative approach, farm quality assured beef and lamb, produced in NI, can be sold with the accredited Red Tractor logo in GB retail outlets. The UK is one of the world's most lucrative markets for beef and lamb. Having access to this market in such a meaningful way, as a result of NIBL FQAS, is delivering very positive results for local cattle and sheep producers."

But lan went on to point out, not every farm quality assured standard implemented across the UK is an exact replica of the others. He explained: "Regional adaptation is essential to cater for industry structures, regional legislation and industry priorities. For

example, in NI we place tremendous emphasis on the role of APHIS in delivering a best in class animal traceability system. We also have the world leading Food Fortress animal feed surveillance programme fully embedded in the feed sourcing standards within NIBL FQAS. We also place a high degree of significance on the environmental and welfare standards expected of local farmers."

lan continued: "The flexibility allowed across the UK can, on occasions, lead to some minor differences in the specific criteria built into the various quality assurance schemes but the schemes all operate to a core set of requirements built on common outcomes and certification processes. Occasionally some of the schemes which operate across the UK will go further than others depending on local needs in the region.

"A case in point was a recent consultation by Red Tractor which sought to include significantly enhanced aspects relating to worker welfare in the quality assurance codes. However, the LMC's perspective on this matter was that issues of this nature are better dealt with from a legislative point of view under employment law and health and safety

legislation rather than farm assurance."

NIBL FQAS is owned by LMC on behalf of NI's beef and sheep industries and all farm inspections are carried out under contract by staff from NI Food Chain Certification. Ian Stevenson again: "This ensures total independence when it comes to assessing the validity of the farm inspection process."



He concluded: "The various farm quality assurance schemes across the UK combine effectively to deliver the certainty that food retailers, wholesalers and consumers want while also reflecting the specific strengths of the beef and lamb produced in all the regions of the UK."



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