

LOWER NI BEEF PRODUCTION DURING QUARTER 1 2021

Cattle

There has been a reduction in total cattle slaughterings in Northern Ireland during the first quarter of 2021 when compared to the corresponding period in 2020. Cattle slaughterings during this period totalled 110,742 head which is a 6,836 head decrease from the first quarter of 2020. This equates to a six per cent reduction year on year.

Prime cattle kill totalled 84,374 head during the first three months of 2021, accounting for 76 per cent of Northern Ireland cattle slaughterings. This is a reduction of 5,233 head from the same period in 2020 when 89,607 prime cattle were killed locally.

Prime cattle kill recorded a decline across all cattle categories during the first quarter of 2021 when compared to the same period in the previous year. The number of steers killed in NI during this period was back over four per cent from the 43,870 head in the corresponding period in 2020.

Meanwhile the heifer kill in NI declined by seven per cent and young bull kill declined by a proportionally larger 13 per cent.

Cow throughput in Northern Ireland decreased by six per cent or 1,391 head during the first quarter totalling 23,790. Similarly calf throughput decreased by 253 head or 15 per cent during this 2021 period. The only cattle category to increase year on year during the first quarter of 2021 was mature bulls which totalled 1,164 head from 2020 levels.

The decrease in cattle throughput during this the first quarter of 2021 outweighed the increase in average carcase weight recorded across most cattle categories and so beef production in Northern Ireland also recorded a decline when compared to the same period in the year previous as outlined in **Table 1**. The volume of beef processed in local plants totalled 37,448 tonnes during the first three

months of 2021 which is a six per cent decline when compared to 2020.

Sheep

While there has been a decline in cattle slaughterings in Northern Ireland, sheep kill has increased by 10 per cent during the first quarter of 2021 when compared to the same period in 2020. Lamb and hogget throughput during this period totalled 94,099 head which is an increase of almost 8,000 head or nine per cent from 2020 figures. Similarly ewe and ram kill increased by 16 per cent to total 8,085 head during the first quarter of 2021.

Although all sheep categories recorded a decline in average carcase weight, the strong increase in throughput has led to an increase in sheepmeat production. During the first quarter of 2021 sheepmeat volumes totalled 2,341 tonnes in NI. This is an 194 tonne or nine per cent increase from the corresponding period in the previous year.

Table 1: Tonnes of NI beef and sheepmeat produced during the first quarter of 2021 and 2020. Source: DAERA

NI Beef and Sheepmeat Production (tonnes)			
(13 weeks ended 03/04/21 compared to 13 weeks ended 28/03/20)			
	2020	2021	Change
Cattle			
Steers	15,900	15,339	-4%
Heifers	12,216	11,336	-7%
Young Bulls	2,866	2,533	-12%
Total Prime Cattle	30,981	29,207	-6%
Calves	330	276	-16%
Cows	7,859	7,430	-5%
Mature Bulls	502	535	+7%
Total Cattle	39,671	37,448	-6%
Sheep			
Lambs & Hoggets	1,954	2,119	+8%
Ewes & Rams	193	223	+15%
Total Sheep	2,147	2,341	+9%

INCREASE IN LOCAL PRIME CATTLE SUPPLIES EXPECTED

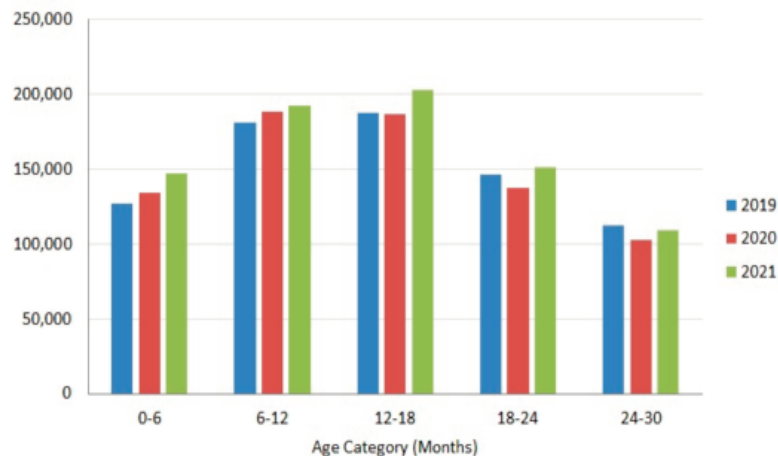
Throughput of prime cattle in Northern Ireland has recorded a decline during 2021 to date when compared to the previous year however the latest figures from APHIS indicate more slaughter ready cattle are to become available as we move into the second quarter of the year.

At the end of March 2021 there were 108,755 cattle on local farms for beef production aged between 24-30 months. These numbers include all beef sired cattle and dairy sired males. This was an increase of almost six per

cent or over 6,000 head when compared to figures from the end of March 2020. However it should be noted that these figures have declined by three per cent from 2019 levels as outlined in **Figure 1**.

Cattle aged between 18-24 months on Northern Ireland farms for beef production totalled 150,754 head at the end of March 2021. This is a greater increase of 9.6 per cent from 2020 levels and three per cent from 2019 levels.

Figure 1: Cattle for beef production on NI farms at the end of March 2021 categorised by age. Source: APHIS



This takes the total number of cattle for beef production aged between 18-30 months of age on local farms to 259,509 head. The majority of these cattle are beef sired female cattle which account for 53 per cent of the total in this age group. Beef sired male cattle account for 40 per cent while the remaining seven per cent are dairy sired males. These proportions are unchanged when compared to cattle in this age group at the end of March 2020.

Cattle on local farms in the 12-18 month age category totalled just over 203,000 head at the end of March 2021. This is an 8.9 per cent increase in this category from the same period in 2020.

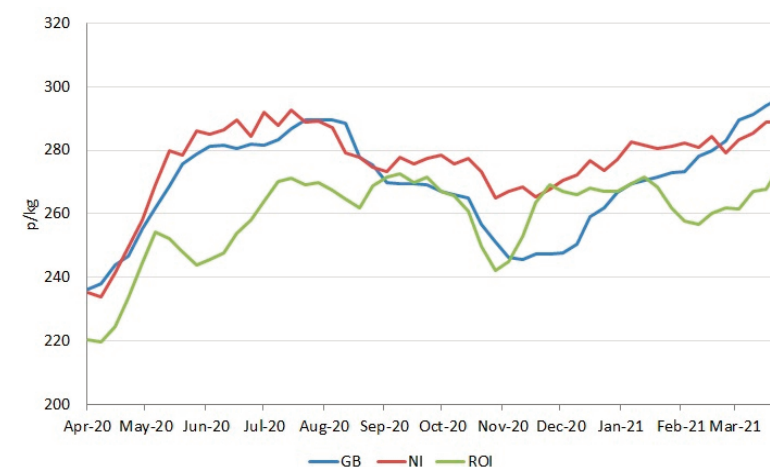
There has been an eight per cent increase in calf registrations during the last 12 months which has led to an increase in the number of cattle in the 6-12 month and 0-6 month age categories. At the end of March 2021 there were 192,522 cattle in the 6-12 month age category, up almost 4,000 head or 2.1 per cent from year earlier levels. Similarly cattle in the 0-6 month age bracket have increased 9.7 per cent when compared to figures from the end of March 2020.

COW TRADE UPDATE

Quotes from the major Northern Ireland processors for cows have held steady over recent weeks with quotes ranging from 265-290p/kg for good quality O+3 grading cows. The majority of plants are quoting in the range of 270-280p/kg.

The strong quotes are being reflected in the paid prices with an average price of 289p/kg last week for O3 grading cows which is slightly up from the previous week. This is the fourth successive week in which the O3 cow price in NI has increased and places it 56.1p/kg ahead of the corresponding week last year.

Figure 2: Average O3 grading cow price in NI, GB and ROI during the 52 weeks ending 10 April 2021. Source: LMC/AHDB/DAFM



The O3 cow trade in Northern Ireland has been running ahead of Great Britain since mid-September 2020 however Great Britain has overtaken Northern Ireland prices in recent weeks as outlined in **Figure 2**. Last week's O3 grading cow price in GB was 296.4p/kg which equates to £22 differential on a 300kg carcasse.

Meanwhile the cow trade in the Republic of Ireland remains well behind Northern Ireland with last week's paid price for an O3 grading cow of 275.1p/kg. This equates to a £42 differential between ROI and NI on a 300kg carcasse.

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
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Tel: 028 9263 3000

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 12/04/21	Next Week 19/04/21
Prime		
U-3	368 - 380p	368 - 380p
R-3	362 - 374p	362 - 374p
O+3	356 - 368p	356 - 368p
P+3	302 - 318p	302 - 318p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+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.

Deadweight Cattle Trade

The deadweight cattle quotes in NI have steadily improved over the past few weeks with base quotes from the major NI processors for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ending this week ranging from 368-380p/kg. This is up 6p/kg from last month when base quotes from the local processors were 362-374p/kg. The trade for good quality O+3 cows remained steady this week with base quotes ranging from 265-290p/kg. Similar quotes for all types of cattle are expected for Monday.

Prime cattle throughput in local plants last week totalled 5,866 head a similar throughput to the previous week. However this is back 778 head from the 6,644 head processed locally during the same week last year. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,446 head, back 162 cows from the previous week and 107 head above the 1,339 cows reported in the same week in 2020.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter increased last week to 316 prime cattle and 74 cows with no cattle imports from GB to NI for direct slaughter. Exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 14 prime cattle and 45 cows while no cattle made the journey to GB for direct slaughter.

The NI deadweight prime cattle trade continued to firm last week from the previous week. The average steer price last week was up 2p/kg to 379.2p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 1.7p/kg to 387.4p/kg. Meanwhile the average heifer price and R3 heifer price in NI last week both held steady at 378.7p/kg and 387.7p/kg respectively. The average young bull price in NI last week was up just over a penny to 363.5p/kg while the R3 young bull price increased by 0.7p/kg to 376.3p/kg. The NI cow trade strengthened last week with the average cow price up almost 6p/kg to 265.1p/kg while the O3 cow price increased slightly to 289p/kg.

In GB last week the deadweight cattle trade also strengthened across all of the reported grades from the previous week. The average steer and heifer prices in GB were both up by just over 3p/kg to 400.2p/kg and 399p/kg respectively. Meanwhile the R3 steer price increased by 1.3p/kg to 404.2p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 steer prices last week between NI and GB to 16.8p/kg. In the same week in 2020 the R3 steer differential was 6.3p/kg. The R3 heifer price in GB increased by just over 2p/kg to 404.5p/kg. This places the differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and GB at 16.8p/kg while in the corresponding week in 2020 it was 9.6p/kg. The average cow price in GB last week recorded an increase of 3.3p/kg to 273.9p/kg while the O3 cow price was up by 2.5p/kg to 296.4p/kg. This places it 7.4p/kg above the same price in NI.

In ROI the deadweight prime cattle prices reported an improving trade in euro terms from the previous week. This combined with a weaker sterling has meant prices notably increased in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI was the equivalent of 338p/kg, up by 7p/kg, which puts the differential between NI and ROI to 49.4p/kg. The R3 heifer price was up by 6.7p/kg to the equivalent of 341.6p/kg. This puts the differential between NI and ROI at just over 46p/kg last week.

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

W/E 10/04/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	390.3	348.2	419.9	409.3	409.3	412.0
	R3	387.4	338.0	418.0	401.7	402.0	404.2
	R4	387.0	339.6	418.2	406.3	401.9	409.0
	O3	374.8	324.5	401.0	384.9	379.6	383.5
	AVG	379.2	-	414.5	398.4	394.4	400.2
Heifers	U3	389.8	351.9	426.6	412.7	412.4	415.5
	R3	387.7	341.6	419.4	406.2	403.5	404.5
	R4	384.9	342.6	419.1	406.4	402.5	408.2
	O3	376.8	329.9	395.8	385.9	377.3	380.5
	AVG	378.7	-	417.0	398.9	393.3	399.0
Young Bulls	U3	379.3	332.0	416.5	405.2	405.3	409.5
	R3	376.3	323.0	409.7	399.9	397.1	400.6
	O3	358.4	309.7	381.2	368.5	373.3	372.8
	AVG	363.5	-	409.2	392.7	385.0	392.6
	Prime Cattle Price Reported	4556	-	6339	6162	7163	4297
Cows	O3	289.0	275.1	299.3	299.9	294.7	296.4
	O4	289.5	273.9	303.7	304.1	292.0	296.8
	P2	247.9	250.7	266.3	253.2	249.3	251.6
	P3	272.1	267.2	271.4	267.7	265.6	266.8
	AVG	265.1	-	296.1	289.6	265.8	273.9

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.09p 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 10/04/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	390.7	390.7	382.0
R3	385.6	384.5	377.5
O+3	376.6	377.1	365.7

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 10/04/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	182.6	201.3	211.4	225.2
P2	206.5	223.3	250.6	265.2
P3	216.0	251.6	265.6	275.2
O3	-	264.0	284.7	289.4
O4	178.0	-	294.9	289.9
R3	-	-	-	307.8

LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 10/04/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	238	252	242	210	237	220
Friesians	175	205	181	145	174	160
Heifers	232	254	241	210	231	220
Beef Cows	169	217	186	134	168	150
Dairy Cows	120	144	137	105	119	112
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	272	326	286	220	270	240
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	240	288	260	215	239	227
Bullocks over 500kg	220	250	230	190	219	205
Heifers up to 450kg	240	288	255	210	239	225
Heifers over 450kg	225	255	235	200	224	212
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls up to 1 month	425	530	470	320	420	365
Continental Heifers up to 1 month	350	480	400	245	345	295
Friesian Bulls	150	200	180	80	145	120
Holstein Bulls	100	155	130	10	95	60

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 12/04/21	Next Week 19/04/21
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg (one processor is paying up to 23kg)	610 - 650p	610 - 650p
R3 Spring Lambs up to 21kg	660 - 690p	660 - 700p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 27/03/21	W/E 03/04/21	W/E 10/04/21
NI L/W Hoggets	541.4	549.1	579.5
NI L/W Spring Lambs	621.6	657.8	646.6
NI D/W Hoggets	625.0	610.3	627.6
NI D/W Spring Lambs	654.9	666.4	683.1
GB D/W Hoggets	626.5	619.3	646.0
ROI D/W	623.2	616.7	652.4

Deadweight Sheep Trade

The deadweight sheep trade remained firm in NI this week with base quotes for R3 grade hoggets ranging from 610-650p/kg with plants paying up to 22kg/23kg. Quotes for R3 grade spring lambs ended this week ranging from 660-700p/kg paying up to 21kg. Throughput last week of hoggets/lambs totalled 3,751 head, back 2,211 head from the previous week when 5,962 hoggets/lambs were processed locally. Exports of lambs/hoggets from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week increased to 3,756 head, however this is a 14.3 per cent decrease on the 4,382 lambs/hoggets exported to ROI during the same week in 2020. Last week the average NI deadweight hogget price increased by 17.3p/kg from the previous week to 627.6p/kg while the average NI deadweight spring lamb price increased by 16.7p/kg to 683.1p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

Smaller numbers of hoggets continued to pass through the sale rings compared to previous weeks with trade remaining firm across the marts. In Swatragh last Saturday 400 hoggets sold from 403-662p/kg compared to 600 hoggets selling from 576-600p/kg the previous Saturday. In Massereene on Monday 309 hoggets sold from 570-618p/kg while in Kilrea 200 hoggets sold from 585-625p/kg. In Enniskillen on Wednesday 385 hoggets sold from 624-671p/kg compared to 258 hoggets last week selling from 540-604p/kg. Increasing numbers of spring lambs passed through the marts this week with reported prices generally ranging from 640-740p/kg. The ewe trade remained firm this week with top reported prices ranging from £150-£206.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 10/04/21		Hoggets				Spring Lambs			
To: 15/04/21		No	From	To	Avg	No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	308	571	639	-	37	637	753	-
	Swatragh	400	403	662	-	80	688	715	-
Monday	Kilrea	200	585	625	-	150	675	695	-
	Massereene	309	570	618	-	97	640	700	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	180	543	600	-	75	652	700	-
	Rathfriland	-	-	-	-	200	672	740	695
Wednesday	Ballymena	505	550	637	570	188	660	733	678
	Enniskillen	385	624	671	-	122	702	724	-
	Armoyle	312	650	700	-	44	700	720	-
	Markethill	535	580	671	-	280	670	728	-

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

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