

# DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES REACH RECORD LEVEL

Base quotes from the Northern Ireland processing plants for in spec U-3 grading steers and heifers ranged from 368-380p/kg this week with similar quotes expected for next week. These quotes are well ahead of last year when local processors were quoting in the range of 308-318p/kg for steers and heifers.

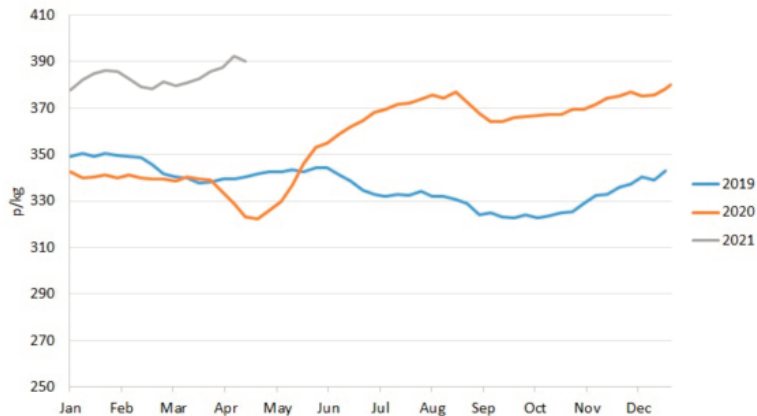
may be used by producers as a starting point for negotiation, with higher prices available, especially for cattle which meet current market specifications. The deadweight prices paid for prime cattle will be heavily influenced by relative supply and demand at the time of slaughter.

### Northern Ireland

The prices quoted by the major processing plants in Northern Ireland

The deadweight cattle trade in Northern Ireland during 2021 has

**Figure 1: Weekly R3 steer prices in NI during 2019, 2020 and 2021.**  
Source: LMC Deadweight Cattle Price Reporting.



remained well above previous years as outlined in **Figure 1** and due to a tightening in the supply of cattle has strengthened further in recent weeks. The R3 steer price in Northern Ireland last week was 392p/kg which is down marginally from the previous week when the highest R3 steer price ever was recorded in NI.

Last week the average R3 steer price in NI was 69.6p/kg greater than the same price in the corresponding week last year and equates to a £244 differential on a 350kg carcass. Although the R3 steer price in the corresponding week in 2019 was stronger than that in 2020, last week's R3 steer price remains 50.5p/kg above this figure.

Prime cattle throughput in local processing plants totalled 6,362 head last week which was a marginal 36 head increase from the previous week. This takes the total prime slaughterings during the last six weeks to 37,001 head which is 2,712 head decrease from the corresponding period in 2020.

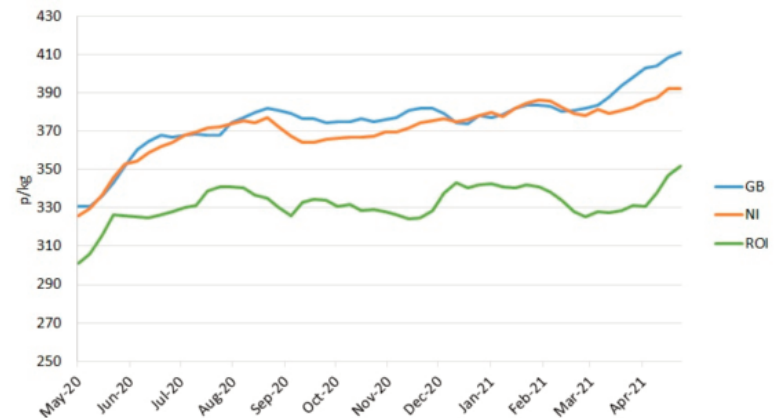
### Great Britain

The deadweight cattle trade in GB continues to strengthen and has remained ahead of NI from mid-February this year. The R3 steer price in GB last week increased for the tenth consecutive week to 411.1p/kg. The differential between GB and NI has widened in recent weeks and recorded a difference of 19.1p/kg last week between the two regions. This equates to £67 on a 350kg steer carcass.

### Republic of Ireland

As outlined in **Figure 2** the deadweight cattle trade in ROI has been running well below the trade in both NI and GB over the last 12 months. However the differential between NI and ROI has narrowed in recent weeks. The R3 steer price last week in the Republic of Ireland was 351.6p/kg which is 40.4p/kg below the price in Northern Ireland. This equates to a £141 differential on a 350kg carcass.

**Figure 2: Weekly R3 steer price in NI, GB and ROI during the 52 weeks ending 24 April 2021.** Source: LMC/DAFM/AHDB.

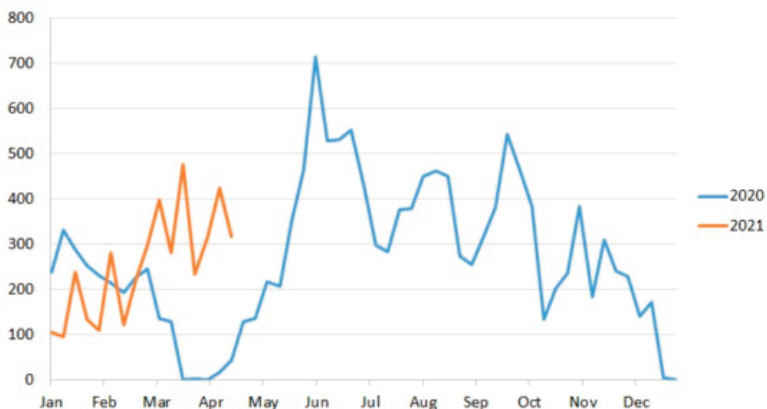


# NI CATTLE IMPORTS/EXPORTS FOR DIRECT SLAUGHTER UPDATE

The number of prime cattle imports can vary noticeably from week to week as outlined in **Figure 3**. Last week the number of prime cattle imported to NI was 318 head which is a reduction of 107 head from the previous week.

This brings the total prime cattle imports to NI for direct slaughter during 2021 to 4,052 head. It should be noted that no cattle have been imported to NI from GB during this

**Figure 3: Prime cattle imports for direct slaughter during 2021/2020**  
Source: DAERA



period and all imports for direct slaughter have come from ROI.

At the beginning of the year NI prime cattle imports were running behind both 2020 and 2019 levels during the corresponding period however prime cattle exports from ROI to NI have increased as we move in to the second quarter of 2021. Prime cattle imports for direct slaughter are running 56.9 per cent ahead of 2020 levels.

The number of cows imported for direct slaughter in to NI during 2021 is also ahead of 2020 figures with 94 cows imported last week. This takes the total cows imported for direct slaughter to 1,272 head which is 41.5 head above last year's levels.

## Exports

Meanwhile exports from Northern Ireland have been running behind last year's figures. Last week 37 prime cattle were exported out of NI to ROI and GB for direct slaughter. This takes the total number of prime cattle exported from NI for direct slaughter to 113 head during 2021. These levels are below last years figures when 179 prime cattle were exported out of NI for direct slaughter.

The number of cows exported for direct slaughter out of NI has also declined from the corresponding period in 2020. Last week 39 cows were exported from NI to ROI and GB for direct slaughter taking the total exports to 747 head during 2021 to date. This is a 157 head or 17.3 per cent decline from the same period in 2020.

# FQAS MEMBERSHIP FEES CHANGING IN MAY 2021

Fees for participation in the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) will be revised from **Tuesday 4th May 2021**. Initial application and annual renewal fees for producer members will increase by £15 to £75 (excluding VAT).

Application and membership renewal fees have remained relatively static for much of the past decade with a modest £5 increase in producer fees implemented in April 2019. This was the first increase in scheme fees since 2012.

Until 2019 FQAS had been operating at a managed loss as historic FQAS reserves were utilised. Since then the scheme has been breaking even. With no significant reserves to rely on and an increase in scheme operating costs, the Industry Board had to review and increase scheme income to ensure its long term sustainability.

This increase in producer membership fees has been accompanied by a 20 per cent increase in the FQAS processor throughput fee. FQAS'

funding model is unique in the UK in that income is derived from both farmer and processor contributions. This increase in scheme income will be utilised to meet ongoing scheme operational costs but will also help with essential supply chain development work where gathering of data is needed to help evidence and monitor the industry's strong sustainability credentials.



If you have any queries regarding the increase in renewal fees or would be interested in joining the FQAS, please contact the **Farm Liaison Officer at the LMC Helpline on 028 9263 3024** for advice or to request an application pack.

## 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  
Tel: 028 9263 3000

# WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



## CATTLE TRADE

### NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 26/04/21	Next Week 03/05/21
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	368 - 380p	366 - 380p
R-3	362 - 374p	360 - 374p
O+3	356 - 368p	354 - 368p
P+3	302 - 318p	300 - 318p
	Including bonus where applicable	
<b>Cows</b>		
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

Base quotes for in-spec U-3 grade prime cattle this week ranged from 368-380p/kg with the majority of plants quoting 374-380p/kg for steers and heifers. Quotes for next week are expected to range from 366-380p/kg. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows remained steady ranging from 265-290p/kg with the majority of plants quoting 270-280p/kg.

Throughput of prime cattle in NI plants last week totalled 6,362 head a marginal increase when compared to the previous week. This is also up 153 head from the 6,209 prime cattle processed in the same week in 2020. Cow throughput in NI last week decreased by 94 head to 1,681 head from the previous week. However this is an increase of 339 cows from the same week last year when 1,342 cows were processed locally.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 318 head with 94 cows also imported. Meanwhile there continues to be no cattle imports from GB for direct slaughter in NI. Cattle exports from NI for slaughter in ROI plants consisted of four steers and 34 cows and for the first time this year 33 prime cattle and five cows were exported last week from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The deadweight cattle trade in NI continued to firm last week with the average steer price up 2.4p/kg to 384.5p/kg and the average heifer price up 2p/kg to 384.9p/kg. The R3 steer and heifer price in NI reported a similar price of 392p/kg last week, both back marginally from the previous week. This is well ahead of the same week last year when the R3 steer and heifer prices reported were 322.4p/kg and 323p/kg respectively. The average young bull price increased by 2.7p/kg to 367.5p/kg with the R3 young bull price increasing by just over a penny to 380p/kg. Meanwhile the average cow price in NI last week was up by 2.6p/kg to 274.2p/kg with the O3 cow price up just over 5p/kg from the previous week to 297.9p/kg.

The deadweight prime cattle trade continued to strengthen in GB last week. The average steer price increased by 2.5p/kg from the previous week to 406.4p/kg with the average R3 steer price up 2.7p/kg to 411.1p/kg. All of the GB regions recorded increases in R3 steer prices last week with the strongest increase in Northern England of 4.8p/kg to 411.1p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week was up 2p/kg to 406.6p/kg while the average R3 heifer price increased by almost 2p/kg to 411.3p/kg. All of the regions recorded increases in the R3 heifer price from the previous week with the highest increase recorded in Northern England of 3.9p/kg to 410.6p/kg. The cow trade in GB also firmed last week with the O3 cow price up by 3.8p/kg to 302.2p/kg.

In ROI last week the deadweight cattle trade continued to report an improvement in all cattle prices. The R3 steer price last week was up by the equivalent of 4.8p/kg to 351.6p/kg with the R3 heifer price increasing by 5.8p/kg to 355p/kg from the previous week. Prime cattle throughput in ROI last week totalled 22,739 head. This brings the total number of prime cattle processed to date in ROI to 381,236 head, back just over 10 per cent on the same period in 2020.

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

	W/E 24/04/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	394.5	362.1	428.4	417.4	414.2	411.1	418.5
	R3	392.0	351.6	424.7	411.1	409.5	402.3	411.1
	R4	392.2	353.9	426.2	413.0	409.6	401.9	415.5
	O3	380.5	338.8	410.4	396.4	387.8	381.4	391.9
	AVG	384.5	-	422.2	405.7	402.3	393.9	406.4
Heifers	U3	395.4	367.2	431.0	422.6	422.9	414.7	422.8
	R3	392.0	355.0	426.9	410.6	410.0	401.3	411.3
	R4	389.1	356.0	427.7	411.5	410.2	401.3	415.6
	O3	383.0	343.3	419.0	395.1	386.7	382.3	392.2
	AVG	384.9	-	425.6	404.8	401.7	391.1	406.6
Young Bulls	U3	386.4	346.1	422.2	412.8	412.3	409.3	416.1
	R3	380.0	338.6	417.1	402.5	405.8	405.4	407.8
	O3	364.5	324.9	392.4	395.8	378.5	368.9	383.5
	AVG	367.5	-	412.1	398.6	396.8	389.1	401.1
	Prime Cattle Price Reported	4958	-	6760	7097	7417	5174	26448
Cows	O3	297.9	287.3	310.5	305.4	300.0	294.2	302.2
	O4	297.1	288.7	310.8	308.4	298.2	291.3	301.5
	P2	255.5	258.8	271.3	259.8	255.7	253.9	256.7
	P3	277.8	278.7	277.5	269.8	271.1	273.0	271.8
	AVG	274.2	-	306.4	293.1	271.0	267.2	279.5

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.53p 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 24/04/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	394.4	395.6	386.7
R3	390.5	390.9	379.6
O+3	382.5	384.6	369.4

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 24/04/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	186.4	202.8	211.8	219.4
P2	202.3	229.4	256.3	269.3
P3	241.7	240.5	278.4	281.5
O3	-	248.0	299.6	298.1
O4	-	250.0	299.2	297.3
R3	-	-	314.6	316.2

### LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

	W/E 24/04/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>							
Steers		243	253	246	212	242	223
Friesians		171	187	177	140	170	155
Heifers		230	252	237	210	229	220
Beef Cows		176	224	193	140	175	156
Dairy Cows		134	155	140	110	133	120
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>							
Bullocks up to 400kg		264	297	280	225	263	245
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		230	276	250	210	229	225
Bullocks over 500kg		212	243	224	185	211	198
Heifers up to 450kg		244	284	265	215	243	230
Heifers over 450kg		225	239	232	200	224	212
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>							
Continental Bulls up to 2 months		455	560	488	350	450	390
Continental Heifers up to 2 months		370	450	403	265	365	315
Friesian Bulls up to 2 months		185	260	225	110	180	145
Holstein Bulls up to 3 months		150	240	180	2	145	80

# SHEEP TRADE

## NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 26/04/21	Next Week 03/05/21
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg/23kg	580 - 610p	565 - 580p
R3 Spring Lambs up to 21kg	620 - 630p	610 - 620p

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 10/04/21	W/E 17/04/21	W/E 24/04/21
NI L/W Hoggets	579.5	578.7	546.6
NI L/W Spring Lambs	646.6	670.9	635.9
NI D/W Hoggets	627.6	654.2	641.2
NI D/W Spring Lambs	683.1	692.3	663.3
GB D/W Hoggets	646.0	679.5	674.2
GB D/W Spring Lambs	-	693.7	686.6
ROI D/W	652.4	675.9	663.6

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes for hoggets and spring lambs from the major processors started to come under pressure this week. Quotes for R3 grade hoggets ended this week ranging from 565-580p/kg up to 22kg/23kg with quotes for spring lambs ending this week ranging from 610-620p/kg up to 21kg. The proportion of spring lambs in the slaughter mix has continued to increase and accounted for 40 per cent of price reported sheep in NI last week. Hogget/lamb throughput in NI last week totalled 5,729 head a decrease of 407 head when compared to the previous week. A further 2,753 hoggets/lambs were exported to ROI for direct slaughter last week a similar level when compared to the previous week. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week decreased by 13p/kg to 641.2p/kg from the previous week with the NI spring lamb deadweight price decreasing by 29p/kg to 663.3p/kg.

## Liveweight Sheep Trade

Smaller numbers of hoggets passed through most of the sale rings this week while the numbers of spring lambs on offer generally increased across the marts. In Massereene on Monday 123 hoggets sold from 510-538p/kg while 155 spring lambs sold from 580-610p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday, 200 spring lambs sold from 568-640p/kg (avg 600p/kg) compared to 250 spring lambs last week selling from 609-642p/kg (avg 636p/kg). In Enniskillen on Wednesday 89 hoggets sold from 470-536p/kg with 102 spring lambs selling from 572-624p/kg. The cull ewe trade has remained firm across the marts with a top reported prices ranging from £148-£195.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 24/04/21		Hoggets				Spring Lambs			
To: 29/04/21		No	From	To	Avg	No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	109	529	568	-	33	550	643	-
	Swatragh	500	472	546	-	140	643	659	-
Monday	Kilrea	-	-	-	-	220	600	627	-
	Massereene	123	510	538	-	155	580	610	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	-	-	-	-	245	556	620	-
	Rathfriland	-	-	-	-	200	568	640	600
Wednesday	Ballymena	176	470	584	490	340	580	650	600
	Enniskillen	89	470	536	-	102	572	624	-
	Armoy	130	500	565	-	38	620	660	-
	Markethill	240	520	574	-	420	615	645	-

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

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM

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## IMS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS NEW WAYS OF COMMUNICATING THE UNIQUE BENEFITS OF RED MEAT

Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) Chief Executive Ian Stevenson recently participated in an International Meat Secretariat (IMS) marketing and communication meeting. The global membership event provided the delegates taking part with an opportunity to reflect on the impact of Covid-19 and the many other developments that have impacted on the international red meat sector over the past number of months.

IMS acts as a global forum for the exchange of ideas and experience on issues influencing the meat and livestock sector. "One of the key take home messages from the meeting was the very beneficial impact that Covid

**Image 1: The recent IMS meeting highlighted the impact covid-19 restrictions have had on encouraging the re-acquaintance with cooking red meat at home.**



has had, from the specific point of view that its associated lockdowns have encouraged people around the world to re-acquaint themselves with the very high quality food that is grown on their doorsteps." Ian added: "We have found this to be the case here in NI with NI Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb benefitting accordingly.

"The overall tone of the meeting was extremely positive with the need identified for marketing and promotional bodies around the world to go on the offensive in telling the good news about beef and lamb, which sets them apart from all other foods. "A case in point is the fact that red meat and milk both represent uniquely

valuable sources of Vitamin B12 which is hugely important for the functioning of the human body and health of the nervous system."

Ian went on to specifically highlight the presentation made to the meeting by officials from the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB) which profiled work currently underway to use technology to deliver the strongest positive message to groups discussing the complete gamut of issues pertaining to beef production and consumption on social media.

He explained: "This work is showing tremendous promise. Its aim is to deliver a consistently positive narrative, where red meat is concerned, and to actively participate in conversations, whether they take place on Twitter or any other social media platform. Over 8,000 conversations a month were reported to be taking place on Twitter in the UK alone with regard to red meat with 47 per cent specifically relating to beef.

"These interactions which are being worked on will be very positive in nature and will seek to educate and inform those taking part on the very positive role that red meat can play in the diet and the sustainability of the production practises followed by livestock farmers throughout the UK." Ian further explained: "AHDB is working

on the development of IT systems that will allow the organisation to participate in these conversations on both an automated and real time basis. This active involvement will have the sole aim of feeding into these conversations the positive attributes concerning beef and lamb. No attempt will be made to counter specific claims made by those pressure groups using social media to actively develop so called fake debates, regarding the production of beef and lamb, rather it will be about presenting factual evidence and bringing some balance to these often one sided and misleading conversations."

Turning to the specifics of beef and lamb produced in NI, the LMC representative confirmed that grazed grass is both our greatest production asset and our strongest consumer selling point. "There is nothing more natural than suckler cows out at grass with their calves at foot," he stressed. "The same principle holds, when it

comes to finishing cattle at grass. NI is uniquely positioned in being able to tell this story to consumers around the world."

Another of the main themes emanating from the IMS meeting was the need for marketing campaigns behind beef and lamb to be targeted in the right way. "Promotional campaigns must highlight the specific health and consumer benefits that beef and lamb can deliver. Getting down to the level of the individual consumer is also vitally important."

He concluded: "One of the most interesting themes discussed over the three nights of the IMS meeting was the image that has been created of beef from a gender point of view. There is now strong evidence to suggest that beef is a masculine meat eaten in greater volumes by men. So the question becomes: how do we make beef more feminine and more appealing to consumption by women?"

### ENCOURAGING SIGNS AS DEMAND FOR LAMB ON THE RISE

There are strong indications that demand for Farm Quality Assured lamb is on the rise here in NI and in GB. LMC's Education and Consumer Promotions' Manager Lauren Patterson commented: "Lamb is a meat that has traditionally been enjoyed by the 50-75 year old demographic. However, there is now evidence that younger people are starting to discover lamb. With this in mind LMC has commissioned research, which will verify actual lamb awareness and consumption levels across NI.

Lauren commented that the recent promotional campaigns undertaken by LMC will contribute to any increase in lamb consumption. Many of these were digital in nature and social media driven. She further explained: "A case in point was our most recent lamb activity, which launched around St Patrick's Day and continued through the Easter period.

The initiative combined elements of outdoor advertising and a digital campaign on social media channels. "Lamb is a meat that is traditionally associated with the spring months of the year. And, in this regard, the promotion was perfectly timed. The campaign had a strong 'Spring into Action' theme with well-known chef James Devine featured in a number of videos showing consumers the best ways to try out new flavour

combinations with lamb. These exciting lamb recipes featured prominently throughout the period of the campaign."

Lauren confirmed that 'going digital' also provides LMC with an opportunity to prominently profile its work on the likes of YouTube, and target a younger demographic. She said: "We are now in a position to further develop our recent Good Honest Food campaign. The extensions of The Truth About Beef Campaign allows us to tweak specific messages as the campaign unfolds. These productions can then be targeted at all the various social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and YouTube. A key benefit of taking this approach is the fact that it allows us to gauge consumer responses very accurately and very quickly."

Lauren concluded: "It also ensures that we can deliver best value-for-money on behalf of all LMC levy payers. The Covid-19 lockdowns have ruled out the opportunity of developing traditional marketing campaigns based around physical events, attendance at the likes of Balmoral Show and providing consumers with actual tasting opportunities. However, lockdown has confirmed the public's tremendous appetite to pick up on information that is supplied to them in a digital format. LMC intends to maximise these opportunities during the period ahead."

## NORTHERN IRELAND BEEF WEEK 2021 A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS

LMC is confirming the success of NI Beef Week 2021. The initiative, which ran from April 23rd to 30th with a tremendous opportunity to highlight the sustainability, taste and nutritional value of NI Farm Quality Assured (NIFQA) Beef.

courtesy of the campaigns developed across all social media platforms plus the radio outlet U105 and Belfast Live has been nothing short of staggering."

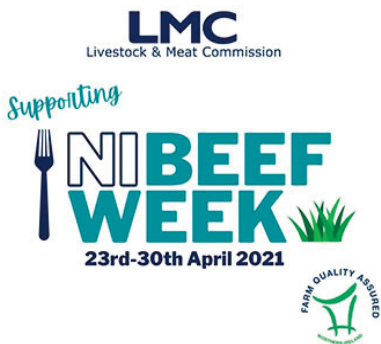
She continued: "Actively involved throughout the week was well known chef, Truth about Beef presenter and MasterChef semi-finalist James Devine. A key focus of this year's campaign was that of profiling the sustainability attributes of NIFQA beef, as well as the different cuts of beef that can be availed of by consumers in their own homes."

So has digital come of age when it comes to communicating the benefits of NIFQA to local consumers? Lauren is in no doubt that it has. She explained: "Over the past few days the LMC Facebook page has featured James' journey as he sets out to discover the attributes of the beef produced here in NI. This includes feature interviews with Dr Ruth Price, from the Ulster University, who

confirmed the very positive health benefits associated with beef consumption.

"Another highlight of the Facebook campaign was the discussion between James and renowned chef Pearson Morris on the various cuts of beef that are available and how they can best be utilised. These videos were featured in tandem with a selection of exciting beef recipes. James also helped out with a number of radio opportunities that were developed during Beef Week."

Lauren concluded: "Due to the digital nature of the campaigns developed for Beef Week, it is possible to gauge their impact in real time, reaching thousands of consumers across NI. This is why it is possible to confirm at this stage that the activities of the last seven days have had an extremely positive impact on consumers right across NI."



LMC's Education and Consumer Promotions' Manager Lauren Patterson takes up the story: "Lockdown prevented those involved from hosting physical consumer events. However, the impact generated

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