

## STRONG START TO SPRING LAMB TRADE

In line with seasonal trends, the number of spring lambs coming forward for processing has increased while the number of hoggets is on the decline. Last week there were very similar numbers of spring lambs and hoggets making up the NI deadweight price reported kill with spring lambs accounting for 49.6 per cent and

hoggets accounting for the remaining 50.4 per cent as outlined in **Figure 1**. This is a change to the corresponding week last year when spring lambs accounted for 59.1 per cent of NI processing's and hoggets accounted for 40.9 per cent.

Lamb/hogget throughput totalled

6,545 head last week in NI processing plants which is up 816 head from the previous week. This takes the total lamb/hogget throughput during 2021 to date to 116,260 head which is an increase of 13,847 head or 13.5 per cent when compared to the corresponding period in 2020.

The lamb and hogget trade has been strong throughout 2021 and remains well ahead of previous years. Base quotes from the local processing plants for R3 grading hoggets and spring lambs this week were 575-590p/kg up to 22/23kg and 620-630p/kg respectively.

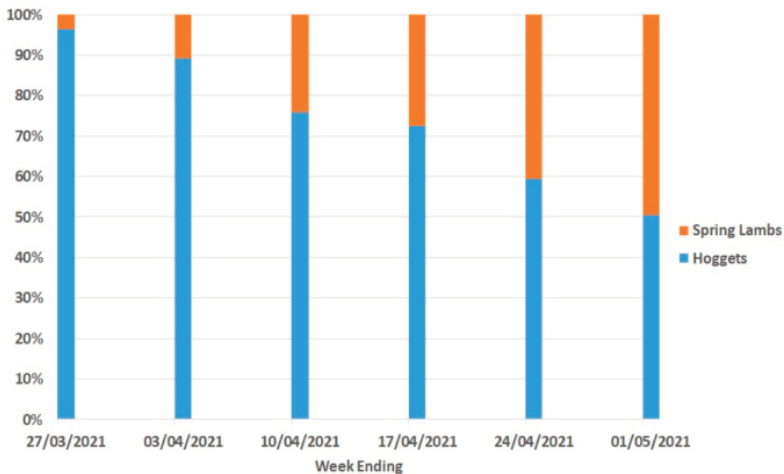
The higher quotes for lambs/hoggets in NI are being reflected in paid prices with last week's deadweight hogget and spring lamb price at 599.9p/kg and 612.7p/kg respectively. The deadweight hogget price is 137.9p/kg ahead of the same price last year which equates to a £30 differential on a 22kg carcase. Meanwhile the deadweight spring lamb price last week is 116.2p/kg ahead of 2020

when the price was 496.5p/kg. This equates to an additional £24 on a 21kg carcase year on year.

The local processing plants in NI have a preference for lambs and hoggets which meet an R or U grade, a carcase weight of 21/22kg, a fat class 2 or 3 and are farm quality assured. Producers which present lambs/hoggets that meet current market specification should be in a

better position to negotiate a stronger price with processors. Lambs/hoggets which are part of the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) are particularly important as it provides greater assurance on animal welfare, food safety, traceability and care for the environment all of which are sought after by retailers. If you wish to join the FQAS or require any FQAS documentations please call the **FQAS Helpline on: 028 9263 3024**.

**Figure 1: Proportion of hoggets and spring lambs in NI price reported kill during the last six weeks. Source: DAERA**



**Figure 2: NI deadweight spring lamb price during the week ending 01 May 2021 and the corresponding week in 2020. Source: DAERA**



# PRIME CATTLE GRADING UPDATE QUARTER 1 2021

There have been some slight shifts in the conformation scores and fat classes achieved by prime cattle at point of slaughter in Northern Ireland during the first quarter 2021. **Table 1** and **2** display the conformation scores and fat classes achieved by the price reported prime cattle during this period.

## Steers

There has been some small changes to the conformations scores achieved by steers during the first quarter of 2021 when compared to 2020 figures during the same period. The number of U grading steers decreased by two per cent to total 16 per cent during this period in 2021. Similarly the proportion of steers meeting an R grade decreased by two per cent to total 34 per cent. Meanwhile the proportion of O and P grading steers increased to 40 per cent and nine per cent respectively during the first quarter of 2021.

Similarly there have some shifts in the fat class achieved by steers in local plants. The proportion of steers meeting a fat class 1 and 2 marginally decreased to one per cent and 17 per cent respectively. Steers meeting a fat class 3 remained steady at 58 per cent while steers meeting a fat class 4 increased to 24 per cent during the first quarter of 2021 when compared to the corresponding period in 2020.

## Heifers

Price reported heifers recorded a similar shift in conformation scores with a decrease in the proportion of these animals meeting a U and R grade to total 15 per cent and 43 per cent respectively during the first three months of 2021. Meanwhile the proportion heifers meeting an O and P grade increased to 35 per cent and seven per cent respectively during this period in 2021.

A very small proportion of price reported heifers in Northern Ireland met a fat class one which was unchanged from 2020 during the same period. The proportion meeting a fat class 2 and 3 decreased to seven per cent and 39 per cent respectively when compared to the first quarter of 2020. While heifers awarded a fat class 4 and 5 increased to 48 per cent and five per cent respectively.

## Young Bulls

There has been some improvement in the conformation scores achieved by young bulls during the first quarter of 2021 when compared to the same period in 2020. The proportion of young bulls achieving an E grade remained steady while U and R grading young bulls increased to 19 per cent and 27 per cent respectively. The proportion of young bulls meeting an O grade was unchanged from the first quarter of 2020 with 41 per cent of

price reported young bulls meeting this grade. Meanwhile the proportion of young bulls meeting a P grade in the first quarter of 2021 declined slightly to 12 per cent.

The proportion of price reported young bulls meeting a fat class 1 and 2 decreased during the first quarter of 2020 to total four per cent and 40 per cent respectively. Meanwhile the proportion meeting a fat class 3 and 4

increased to 50 per cent and six per cent respectively.

## Source of prime kill

During quarter one 2021 suckler origin cattle accounted for 55 per cent of total prime cattle kill which is a decline of three per cent from the same period in 2020. While the proportion of prime cattle from a beef cross origin increased by three per cent to total 33 per cent and the remaining 12 per cent

were dairy sired origin which was unchanged from the first quarter of 2020. Price reporting data has shown that there has been a greater proportion of traditional breeds such as Aberdeen Angus in the slaughter mix in the first quarter of 2021 and this will have been one of the main driving factors in the shifts which have been observed in conformation and fat class results, particularly within the steer and heifer categories.

**Table 1: Conformation scores achieved by prime cattle in NI during quarter 1 2020 and 2021.**

Source: LMC Deadweight Cattle Price Reporting

		E	U	R	O	P
Steers	2020	0%	18%	36%	37%	7%
	2021	0%	16%	34%	40%	9%
Heifers	2020	0%	19%	44%	32%	5%
	2021	0%	15%	43%	35%	7%
Young Bulls	2020	2%	18%	26%	41%	13%
	2021	2%	19%	27%	41%	12%

**Table 2: Fat classes achieved by prime cattle in NI during quarter 1 2020 and 2021.**

Source: LMC Deadweight Cattle Price Reporting

		1	2	3	4	5
Steers	2020	2%	19%	58%	21%	0%
	2021	1%	17%	58%	24%	0%
Heifers	2020	1%	9%	43%	44%	3%
	2021	1%	7%	39%	48%	5%
Young Bulls	2020	5%	45%	45%	4%	0%
	2021	4%	40%	50%	6%	0%

## 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 03/05/21	Next Week 10/05/21
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	366 - 380p	366 - 378p
R-3	360 - 374p	360 - 372p
O+3	354 - 368p	354 - 366p
P+3	300 - 318p	300 - 316p
	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 U-3 grade prime cattle this week held steady at 368-380p/kg with quotes of 366-378p/kg expected for early next week. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows ranged from 265-290p/kg with similar quotes expected for Monday.

Throughput of prime cattle in NI plants last week totalled 6,692 head. This brings total prime cattle throughput during 2021 to 109,620 head back five per cent when compared to the same period in 2020. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,713 head taking throughput for the year to date to 30,405 head. This is a similar throughput when compared to the corresponding period in 2020.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 338 head with 61 cows also imported. This brings total prime cattle imports from ROI during 2021 to date to 4,390 head, up 1,808 head from the same period in 2020. Meanwhile cattle exports from NI for slaughter in ROI plants consisted of four steers and 73 cows last week. This brings total cattle exports to ROI during 2021 to date to 914 head, back 135 head when compared to the same period in 2020.

The average NI steer price last week was back 2.6p/kg from the previous week to 381.9p/kg with the R3 steer price back 2p/kg to 390p/kg. In the corresponding week last year the R3 steer price in NI was 325.9p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week decreased by 0.4p/kg to 384.5p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 0.6p/kg to 392.6p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2020 the R3 heifer price in NI was 326.6p/kg. The average young bull price in NI was back a penny from the previous week to 366.5p/kg with the R3 young bull price increasing 1.3p/kg to 381.3p/kg. The NI O3 cow price decreased last week by a penny to 296.9p/kg, while the average cow price was up by 1.2p/kg to 275.4p/kg.

The GB deadweight trade for prime cattle generally improved from the previous week however there were variations reported across the GB regions. The average GB steer price was up 1.8p/kg last week to 408.2p/kg with R3 steer price up by 1.9p/kg to 413p/kg. The R3 steer price improved in all the GB regions with the strongest increase reported in Scotland where it was up by 6.6p/kg to 431.3p/kg. The average GB heifer price last week reported an increase of 0.7p/kg to 407.3p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was up 1.3p/kg to 412.6p/kg. The O3 cow price in GB came back last week by 1.8p/kg to 300.4p/kg while the average GB cow price increased by 0.8p/kg from the previous week to 280.3p/kg.

In ROI deadweight prime cattle prices continued to report an improving trade in euro terms along with a strengthening in the euro against sterling resulted in prices generally increasing in the region of 5-6p/kg from last week. The R3 steer price was the equivalent of 357.8p/kg last week, up 6.2p/kg from the previous week. This puts the ROI price 32.2p/kg below the NI R3 steer price. The R3 heifer price in ROI last week increased by 5.7p/kg to the equivalent of 360.7p/kg, almost 32p/kg below the equivalent price in NI.

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

W/E 01/05/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	392.2	367.0	431.6	417.5	415.4	413.8
	R3	390.0	357.8	431.3	413.2	409.8	413.0
	R4	387.4	358.9	432.2	415.8	408.4	418.3
	O3	379.9	345.1	414.2	396.5	386.8	390.7
	AVG	381.9	-	428.8	407.8	400.9	395.5
Heifers	U3	394.4	372.3	441.4	419.1	422.6	425.3
	R3	392.6	360.7	433.4	412.5	411.2	412.6
	R4	388.4	362.6	433.9	414.9	409.9	418.8
	O3	382.6	349.6	415.0	392.0	384.2	389.8
	AVG	384.5	-	430.6	405.9	398.8	407.3
Young Bulls	U3	385.9	354.1	430.9	411.4	413.2	419.6
	R3	381.3	342.7	424.9	402.4	404.6	408.7
	O3	363.1	327.8	383.9	380.0	372.9	376.9
	AVG	366.5	-	417.6	394.4	393.5	399.6
	Prime Cattle Price Reported	4319	-	6732	7169	8159	5384
Cows	O3	296.9	293.1	312.4	303.4	298.5	300.4
	O4	301.2	293.7	314.0	305.7	298.1	301.9
	P2	254.9	264.4	264.1	256.9	256.4	255.4
	P3	277.9	284.7	277.7	272.7	273.8	273.2
	AVG	275.4	-	305.0	289.9	272.6	280.3

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.93p 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 01/05/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Steers	243	254	247	210	242	225
Friesians	171	190	180	140	170	155
Heifers	226	248	234	210	225	218
Beef Cows	181	215	193	140	180	158
Dairy Cows	127	156	136	108	126	118
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Bullocks up to 400kg	260	292	275	225	259	242
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	230	274	250	210	229	225
Bullocks over 500kg	210	243	225	185	209	200
Heifers up to 450kg	260	303	275	220	259	238
Heifers over 450kg	220	234	228	200	219	210
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>						
Continental Bulls up to 2 mths	450	585	490	340	445	385
Continental Heifers up to 2 mths	345	530	415	250	340	295
Friesian Bulls up to 2 mths	170	245	210	100	165	135
Holstein Bulls up to 3 mths	130	210	165	10	125	65

### REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 01/05/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	391.8	394.7	385.6
R3	388.9	392.2	380.1
O+3	380.8	386.6	367.0

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 01/05/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	188.0	204.1	212.8	231.1
P2	210.3	233.0	256.6	268.1
P3	265.0	251.7	272.5	279.9
O3	-	265.1	297.0	297.6
O4	-	-	300.6	301.3
R3	-	-	-	314.9

# SHEEP TRADE

## NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 03/05/21	Next Week 10/05/21
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg/23kg	565 - 580p	580p
R3 Spring Lambs up to 21kg	610 - 620p	620p

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 17/04/21	W/E 24/04/21	W/E 01/05/21
NI L/W Hoggets	578.7	546.6	513.5
NI L/W Spring Lambs	670.9	635.9	603.1
NI D/W Hoggets	654.2	641.2	599.9
NI D/W Spring Lambs	692.3	663.3	612.7
GB D/W Hoggets	679.5	674.2	644.3
GB D/W Spring Lambs	693.7	686.6	685.8
ROI D/W	675.9	663.6	635.2

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the plants for spring lambs ended this week ranging from 620-630p/kg with plants paying up to 21kg. Quotes of 620p/kg are expected for early next week. The number of spring lambs coming forward for slaughter has increased in recent weeks with spring lambs accounting for 50 per cent of the deadweight price reported kill last week. The number of hoggets has started to decline in line with normal seasonal trends with quotes ending this week ranging from 575-590p/kg up to 22kg/23kg across the plants. Hogget/lamb throughput in NI last week totalled 6,545 head this brings the year to date throughput to 116,260 head an increase of 13.5 per cent compared to the same period in 2020. The deadweight spring lamb price in NI last week was 612.7p/kg, back by 50.6p/kg while the NI hogget price decreased by 41.3p/kg to 599.9p/kg.

## Liveweight Sheep Trade

The trade for spring lambs remained firm across the marts this week with increasing numbers of lambs passing through the sale rings. In Massereene on Monday 263 spring lambs sold from 580-610p/kg, a similar trade to last week. In Saintfield this week 222 spring lambs sold from 567-625p/kg compared to 245 spring lambs last week selling from 556-620p/kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday 456 spring lambs sold from 590-659p/kg (avg 605p/kg) compared to 340 spring lambs last week selling from 580-650p/kg (avg 600p/kg). On Wednesday in Enniskillen 193 spring lambs sold from 568-612p/kg compared to 102 spring lambs selling from 572-624p/kg last week. The strong trade for cull ewes continued this week with top reported prices ranging from £159-£215.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 01/05/21		Hoggets				Spring Lambs			
To: 06/05/21		No	From	To	Avg	No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	80	489	597	-	32	584	629	-
	Swatragh	500	546	600	-	150	647	777	-
Monday	Kilrea	-	-	-	-	200	615	724	-
	Massereene	-	-	-	-	263	580	610	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	-	-	-	-	222	567	625	-
	Rathfriland	-	-	-	-	300	590	650	628
Wednesday	Ballymena	109	460	549	497	456	590	659	605
	Enniskillen	108	529	568	-	193	568	612	-
	Armoy	170	550	572	-	140	580	630	-
	Markethill	120	490	564	-	460	620	684	-

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

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