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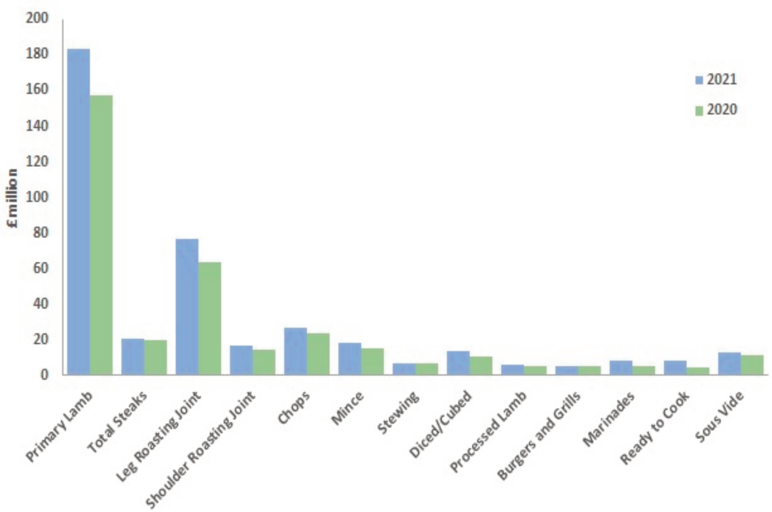
FIRM INCREASE IN GB RETAIL LAMB SALES

During the 12 weeks ending 18 April 2021 spend on lamb rose by 18.4 per cent year on year in Great Britain to total £252 million. An increase in volume sales of 13.8 per cent to 27,800 tonnes alongside a four per cent increase in average price to £9.05/kg led to the rise in spend during this period. These figures are in comparison to the beginning of the Covid-19 restrictions in place throughout March 2020.

All lamb cut categories recorded an increase in terms of both volume and value sales as outlined in **Figure 1**. Primary lamb value sales increased by 16.5 per cent to total £183.4 million during the 12 weeks ending 18 April 2021 relative to the same period in 2020. Within this category diced/cubed lamb, leg roasting joints and shoulder roasting joints recorded the greatest proportional increases year on year.

Diced/cubed lamb reported the greatest proportional increase in value sales across all primary lamb cut categories. Spend within this category totalled £13.7 million during the 12 weeks ending 18 April 2021 which is up almost 27 per cent when compared to the same period in 2020. Volume sales of diced/cubed lamb increased by 22.2 per cent during this period while the average price increased almost four per cent to £10.96/kg.

Figure 1: Lamb value sales in GB categorised by cut category during the 12 w/e 18 April 2021 and the corresponding period in 2020.



Leg roasting joints recorded a 20.3 per cent increase in spend year on year in GB during the 12 weeks ending 18 April 2021 totalling £76.4 million. Volume sales in this cut category increased by 17 per cent while the average price increased by around 25p to £9.44/kg.

Similarly shoulder roasting joints reported an increase in spend of 19.1 per cent to total £16.9 million during the 12 weeks ending 18 April 2021 when compared to the same period in 2020. Volume sales recorded a small rise of 2.9 per cent to total 1,500 tonnes during the 12 week period. Meanwhile the average price of shoulder roasting joints increased by a notable 15.8 per cent or £1.57/kg which attributed to the significant

Image 1: Retail lamb sales in GB totalled £252 million during the 12 w/e 18 April 2021, an increase of 18.4 per cent year on year.

increase in total spend in GB. The increase in the shoulder and leg roasting joint cut categories attributed to an overall increase of just over 20 per cent in spend on total lamb roasting joints in GB during the 12 weeks ending 18 April 2021.

Processed lamb, which includes burgers and grills, sliced cooked meats and lamb sausages, also recorded a strong increase of 15.3 per cent in terms of value sales in GB during the 12 weeks ending 18 April 2021.

Although the average price in this lamb cut category recorded a decline of 84p/kg, the strong increase in volume sales of 30.7 per cent drove the rise in spend in this category.

Ready to cook lamb also reported a strong increase in spend of 87.2 per cent to total £8.1 million during the 12 weeks ending 18 April 2021. This category also recorded a decline in average price however the strong increase in value sales led to an overall increase in spend year on year.

NI DEADWEIGHT COW TRADE CONTINUES WELL AHEAD OF 2020

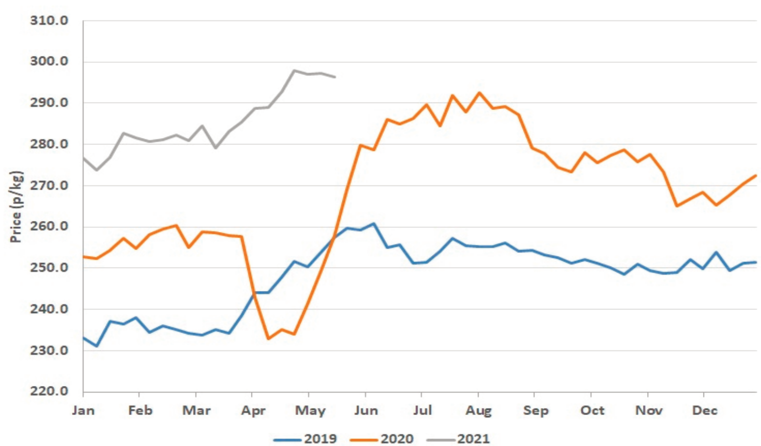
The deadweight cow trade in Northern Ireland remains strong with prices continuing well ahead of previous years. Quotes from the Northern Ireland processing plants have remained steady in recent weeks at 265-290p/kg for 0+3 grading cows with the majority of processors quoting in the range of 270-280p/kg. Producers should use these quotes as a starting point for negotiation with higher prices available.

Figure 2 displays the O3 cow prices in Northern Ireland during 2019, 2020 and 2021. As indicated in the graph, the cow prices in Northern Ireland have stabilised in recent weeks. Last week's O3 cow price of 296.4p/kg, down slightly from the previous week when the price was 297.3p/kg. This price remains well ahead of 2020 levels when the O3 cow price was 257.9p/kg which equates to £116 on a 300kg carcase. Meanwhile last week's O3 cow price was a slightly greater 38.9p/kg ahead of 2019 levels which equates to an additional £117 for the producer on a 300kg carcase.

2020 was a very turbulent year for cow prices in Northern Ireland particularly in the spring as Covid-19 struck but they rebounded quickly in May 2020 and have remained at levels much firmer than 2019 and the first quarter of 2020 prior to Covid-19.

Cow throughput in local processing plants during recent weeks has remained ahead of last year's levels. Last week's cow throughput in Northern Ireland processing plants totalled 1,592 head which is up 2.6 per cent from the previous week. This takes the total cows processed in Northern Ireland during the last six weeks to 9,758 head. This is an increase of 2,364 head or 32 per cent relative to the same period in 2020.

Figure 2: The weekly O3 cow price in NI during 2019, 2020 and 2021. Source: LMC Deadweight Cattle Price Reporting.



Great Britain

The cow trade in Great Britain remains strong with prices firming in recent weeks. The O3 cow prices in this region overtook the trade in Northern Ireland in mid-March of this year and remain ahead with last week's O3 paid price in Great Britain at 302.4p/kg as outlined in **Figure 3**. This is 6p/kg ahead of Northern Ireland and equates to an additional £18 on a 300kg carcase.

Republic of Ireland

The cow trade in the Republic of Ireland continues to run behind Northern Ireland however the differential between the two regions has narrowed in recent weeks. Last week's O3 cow price in the Republic of Ireland was the equivalent of 293.1p/kg, down from 295p/kg in the previous week. This takes the differential between ROI and NI to 3.3p/kg which equates to an additional £10 on a 300kg carcase.

Figure 3: The weekly O3 cow price in NI, GB and ROI during the last 52 weeks. Source: AHDB/DAFM/LMC.

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC Livestock & Meat Commission

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 17/05/21	Next Week 24/05/21
Prime		
U-3	362 - 376p	362 - 376p
R-3	356 - 370p	356 - 370p
O+3	350 - 364p	350 - 364p
P+3	296 - 314p	296 - 314p
	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.

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 15/05/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	392.9	395.6	385.3
R3	388.9	389.6	379.5
O+3	380.4	380.3	364.3

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 15/05/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	189.1	198.8	213.0	209.2
P2	209.7	234.1	256.6	266.8
P3	226.9	249.6	271.8	277.0
O3	180.0	294.0	294.6	297.0
O4	-	300.0	297.4	301.4
R3	-	-	316.0	311.4

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the major NI processing plants for in spec U-3 grade steers and heifers came back at the beginning of this week in the region of 2-4p/kg to 362-376p/kg. The majority of plants are quoting at the upper end of this range and producers are encouraged to shop around to get the best deal possible particularly for cattle that meet current market specifications. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows this week remained steady ranging from 265-290p/kg across the plants.

Throughput of prime cattle in the local plants improved last week with 7,078 head processed, an increase of 750 head compared to the previous week when 6,328 head were processed. This was 1,755 head more than the 5,323 prime cattle processed in local plants during the same week last year. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,592 head up slightly from the previous week and up 428 cows when compared to the same week in 2020.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 222 head with 19 cows also imported. Meanwhile cattle exports from NI for slaughter in ROI plants consisted of seven prime cattle and 69 cows last week. A further 38 prime cattle and five cows were exported to GB for direct slaughter last week.

Deadweight prime cattle prices in NI last week were generally back from the previous week. The average steer price decreased by 0.8p/kg to 381.3p/kg with the R3 steer price back by 1.2p/kg to 389.9p/kg. In the same week in 2020 the R3 steer price was 336.9p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week held steady at 383.3p/kg with the R3 heifer price back by 2.2p/kg to 390p/kg. In the same week last year the R3 heifer price was 340.2p/kg. The average young bull price in NI last week recorded an increase of 2.4p/kg to 369p/kg with the R3 young bull price up by 1.4p/kg to 380.4p/kg. In the same week in 2020 the R3 young bull price was 333p/kg. Meanwhile the average NI cow price last week was up 1.8p/kg from the previous week to 274.7p/kg, with the O3 cow price back almost a penny to 296.4p/kg.

The deadweight cattle trade in GB has come under pressure last week with prices back in the region of 2-4p/kg from the previous week. The average steer price was 403.6p/kg, back 3.5p/kg while the average GB R3 steer price decreased by 3.2p/kg to 408.4p/kg. The average heifer price and R3 heifer price in GB were both back last week by 3.4p/kg to 402.5p/kg and 407.5p/kg respectively. The average cow price in GB last week decreased by almost a penny to 278.5p/kg with the O3 cow price up last week by 0.7p/kg from the previous week to 302.4p/kg.

In ROI last week deadweight cattle prices generally strengthened in euro terms however a weakening in the euro against sterling has resulted in prices back in sterling terms from the previous week. The R3 steer price decreased by 0.7p/kg to the equivalent of 358p/kg with the R3 heifer price back by 1.8p/kg to 360.6p/kg. Prime cattle throughput in ROI last week totalled 21,824 head which was an increase of 1,252 head from the previous week.

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

W/E 15/05/21		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	392.6	366.6	424.9	413.9	410.8	411.1	414.9
	R3	389.9	358.0	424.8	409.8	404.7	399.9	408.4
	R4	387.4	359.1	425.3	413.4	402.8	398.8	414.4
	O3	376.5	344.7	410.4	392.1	380.7	377.6	387.0
	AVG	381.3	-	421.3	405.2	395.2	391.0	403.6
Heifers	U3	394.2	371.9	432.3	420.4	420.3	411.9	420.9
	R3	390.0	360.6	425.1	410.0	405.5	399.0	407.5
	R4	386.9	361.2	426.2	411.2	405.5	398.8	412.9
	O3	379.1	349.1	401.0	393.8	378.8	380.4	384.9
	AVG	383.3	-	421.8	406.2	393.0	390.6	402.5
Young Bulls	U3	383.8	355.4	423.4	411.5	408.3	405.2	415.8
	R3	380.4	343.4	417.0	405.5	401.0	396.3	405.3
	O3	362.1	328.0	388.0	371.8	372.8	368.5	375.5
	AVG	369.0	-	414.4	396.3	392.4	384.5	398.2
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5557	-	6391	6438	7918	5072	25819
Cows	O3	296.4	293.1	311.1	304.6	300.1	296.5	302.4
	O4	301.2	292.4	310.1	306.7	298.1	296.1	301.6
	P2	254.0	261.8	262.7	255.4	252.9	252.2	253.7
	P3	273.3	283.1	282.5	271.7	272.1	269.1	272.3
	AVG	274.7	-	303.0	289.6	270.1	268.9	278.5

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.03p 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 15/05/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	238	266	243	210	237	222
Friesians	171	198	179	136	169	152
Heifers	230	255	237	215	229	222
Beef Cows	185	230	195	145	184	163
Dairy Cows	125	141	131	100	124	112
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	260	303	275	220	259	240
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	230	263	245	205	229	220
Bullocks over 500kg	210	226	218	180	209	195
Heifers up to 450kg	230	254	240	205	229	220
Heifers over 450kg	225	242	232	200	224	212
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls up to 2 months	445	555	480	325	440	375
Continental Heifers up to 2 months	385	500	420	260	380	300
Friesian Bulls up to 2 months	170	270	205	100	165	135
Holstein Bulls	130	205	165	2	125	70

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 17/05/21	Next Week 24/05/21
R3 Lambs up to 21kg	620 - 640p	630 - 640p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 01/05/21	W/E 08/05/21	W/E 15/05/21
NI L/W Hoggets	513.5	495.0	-
NI L/W Lambs	603.1	610.5	625.0
NI D/W Hoggets	599.9	597.6	-
NI D/W Lambs	612.7	618.5	638.7
GB D/W Hoggets	644.3	652.9	663.3
GB D/W Lambs	685.8	690.1	724.2
ROI D/W	635.2	646.4	652.1

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the major processors for R3 grade lambs remained steady this week at 620-640p/kg up to 21kg with quotes of 630-640p/kg expected early next week. Last week the throughput of lambs/hoggets in the local plants increased by 46 per cent from the previous week to 7,033 head. Exports of sheep to ROI for direct slaughter last week decreased to 3,624 head compared to 4,185 head the previous week. The NI average deadweight lamb price last week was 638.7p/kg, up 20.2p/kg from the previous week. In the same week in 2020 the NI deadweight lamb price was 493.1p/kg. The deadweight lamb price in ROI also reported an increase of 5.7p/kg last week to the equivalent of 652.1p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

This week across the marts the number of lambs are continuing to increase along with a firm trade reported. On Saturday in Omagh 212 lambs sold from 597-675p/kg compared to the previous Saturday when 63 lambs sold from 628-664p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 346 lambs sold from 615-650p/kg compared to 249 lambs selling from 610-652p/kg last week. In Saintfield this week 386 lambs sold from 596-650p/kg compared to 404 lambs last week selling from 600-645p/kg. On Wednesday in Ballymena a good entry of 866 lambs sold from 620-707p/kg (avg 636p/kg) compared to 612 lambs last week selling from 615-686p/kg (avg 625p/kg). The strong trade for cull ewes continues with top reported prices ranging from £140-£183 across the marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 15/05/21		Lambs			
To: 20/05/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	212	597	675	-
	Swatragh	700	609	658	-
Monday	Kilrea	190	616	653	-
	Massereene	346	615	650	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	386	596	650	-
	Rathfriland	440	600	683	634
Wednesday	Ballymena	866	620	707	636
	Enniskillen	308	600	663	-
	Armoy	175	635	738	-
	Markethill	760	620	667	-

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

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