

INCREASE IN LOCAL BEEF PRODUCTION

While there was a year on year reduction in beef production during the first quarter of 2021, recent processing figures have reported an increase in beef production in Northern Ireland during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021 when compared to both 2020 and 2019 figures during the same period.

Cattle Slaughtering

Cattle slaughtering during this six week period in 2021 totalled 50,964 head which is up 21 per cent from the corresponding period in 2020 and 3.2 per cent when compared to the relative period in 2019.

Prime cattle kill totalled 39,537 head during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021, accounting for 78 per cent of Northern Ireland cattle slaughtering. This is an increase of 6,009 head from the same period in 2020 and a marginal decrease from 2019 when 39,657 prime cattle were processed locally.

There was a mixed performance in the number of slaughtering across the prime cattle categories during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021 when compared to previous years. Steers recorded an increase in processing of 22 per cent relative to 2020 and a less

significant eight per cent relative to 2019.

The number of heifers processed in NI plants during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021 totalled 15,887 head which was a 2,354 head increase from the relative period in 2020. This equates to a 17 per cent increase year on year. Meanwhile, heifer processings have decreased by a marginal one per cent or 150 head when compared to 2019 figures.

Young bull processings in Northern Ireland during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021 totalled 3,896 which was a marginal increase from 2020 figures. Meanwhile this was a 1,480 head or 28 per cent reduction relative to the same period in 2019.

Cow throughput in NI during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021 increased by 2,673 head from 2020 to total 10,238 cows. This equates to a 35 per cent increase year on year. Compared with 2019 figures cow throughput increased by 22 per cent.

Calf slaughtering remained at low levels during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021. Meanwhile mature bull throughput increased by 20 per cent from 2020 levels and decreased by

almost 28 per cent relative to 2019. It should be noted that mature bull processings are very low in comparison to the number of prime cattle and cows being processed in Northern Irish plants.

Beef Production

The average carcass weight increased for all types of cattle during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021 when compared to both 2020 and 2019 with

the exception of calves. The average prime cattle carcass weight increased by 6.4kg relative to 2020 and 4.6kg compared with 2019. Meanwhile the average cow carcass weight has increased by more than 9kg when compared to both 2020 and 2019. The increase in carcass weights alongside the increase in throughput attributed to an overall increase in beef production in NI.

Overall beef production during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021 increased by 23 per cent compared to the corresponding period in 2020 and five per cent relative to 2019 as outlined in **Table 1**. Prime cattle accounted for the majority of beef production in Northern Ireland with 13,726 tonnes of beef coming from this source accounting for 79 per cent of total beef.

Table 1: Tonnes of NI beef produced during the six weeks ending 23 May 2021 compared to the relative period in 2020 and 2019. Source: DAERA

NI Beef Production (tonnes)					
(6 weeks ended 23/05/21 compared to 6 weeks ended 24/05/20 and 26/05/19)					
	2021	2020	2019	2021/2020 % Change	2021/2019 % Change
Steers	7,183	5,795	6,559	+24%	+10%
Heifers	5,199	4,373	5,175	+19%	+0.5%
Young Bulls	1,343	1,258	1,845	+7%	-27%
Total Prime Cattle	13,726	11,427	13,579	+20%	+1%
Cows	3,261	2,342	2,582	+39%	+26%
Calves	122	110	123	+12%	-1%
Mature Bulls	276	209	330	+32%	-16%
Total Cattle	17,385	14,087	16,614	+23%	+5%

NI CALF REGISTRATIONS UPDATE MAY 2021

The number of calf registrations during May 2021 have remained relatively steady when compared to last year's figures. Registrations in Northern Ireland during May of this year totalled 61,580 head which is up marginally from the previous year. However it should be noted that calf registrations have declined by just over seven per cent relative to May 2019 when registrations totalled 66,352 head.

Beef Sired Calf Registrations

Beef sired calf registrations increased marginally from the relative period in 2020 totalling 52,177 head during May 2021, accounting for 85 per cent of total registrations in NI. This brings the total number of beef sired calf registrations to 190,656 head during 2021, up 2.6 per cent year on year. Beef calves registered during May 2021 to suckler cows accounted for 78

per cent of all beef sired calf registrations with the remaining 22 per cent of beef calves registered to dairy cows. These proportions are unchanged from May 2020 however they have changed slightly from May 2019 figures when 20 per cent of beef sired calves were registered to dairy cows and the remaining 80 per cent were registered to suckler cows.

The number of beef sired calves registered to suckler cows has remained relatively steady during May 2021 relative to the same period in 2020. However when compared to 2019 there has been a decline of almost 10 per cent. Meanwhile beef sired calves registered to dairy cows have increased by almost three per cent relative to 2020 and just over one per cent relative to 2019.

Aberdeen Angus remains the largest beef sire in NI during the first five months of 2021 accounting for 26 per cent of calves registered. This is similar to 2020 figures when Aberdeen Angus sire accounted for 25 per cent of calf registrations. Limousin and Charolais are the next most popular beef sires

accounting for 24 per cent and 21 per cent of calves registered in Northern Ireland respectively.

Dairy Sired Calf Registrations

While the number of beef sired calf registrations has increased slightly year on year, the number of dairy sired calf registrations have decreased to total 9,403 head during May 2021 on local farms. This equates to a three per

cent reduction year on year and a six per cent reduction compared to May 2019.

The proportion of dairy sired calf registered in May 2021 which are male was 40 per cent on NI farms. This is a marginal decline from May 2020 and 2019 when dairy sired male calf registrations accounted for 41 per cent and 44 per cent respectively.

Figure 1: Monthly beef sired calf registrations in NI during 2021, 2020 and 2019.
Source: APHIS

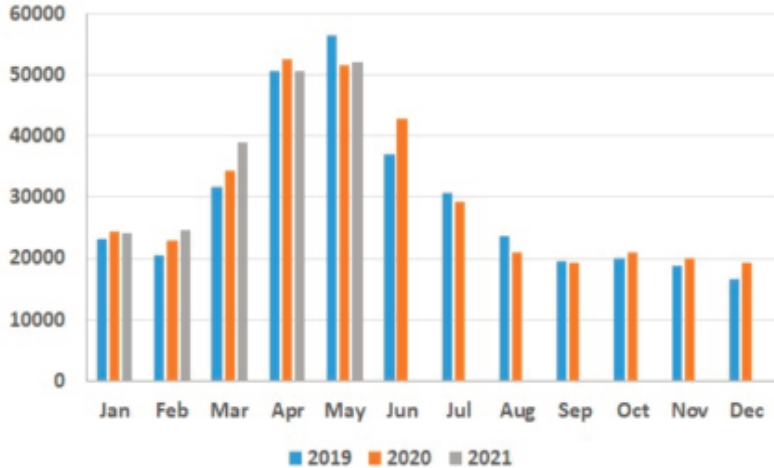
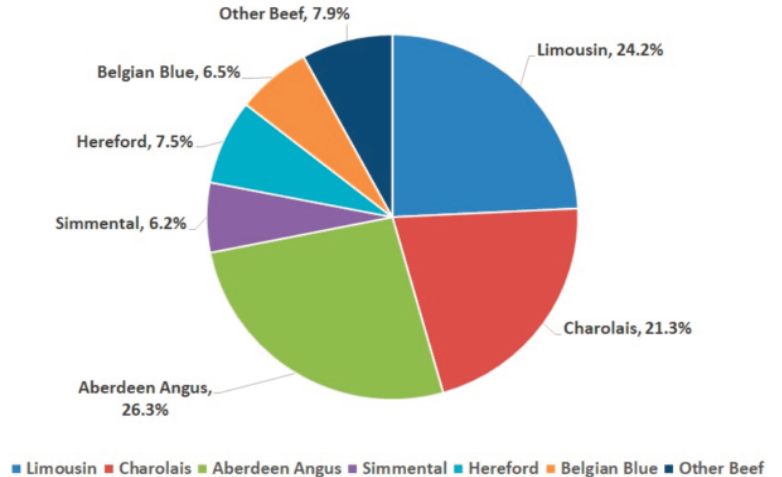


Figure 2: Beef sired calf registrations in NI during January - May 2021 categorised by breed. Source: DAERA



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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 31/05/21	Next Week 07/06/21
Prime		
U-3	362 - 376p	362 - 378p
R-3	356 - 370p	356 - 372p
O+3	350 - 364p	350 - 366p
P+3	296 - 314p	296 - 316p
	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

Base quotes for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle remained steady this week ranging from 362-376p/kg with quotes of 362-378p/kg expected for early next week. The cow trade also held steady this week with base quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows ranging from 265-290p/kg.

Prime cattle throughput last week totalled 6,982 head, an increase of 231 head from the previous week when 6,751 head were processed locally. This brings prime cattle throughput for May to 27,139 head, 27.5 per cent above the same period in 2020 when 21,283 prime cattle were processed locally. Meanwhile a total of 1,959 cows were processed in NI last week, this brings cow throughput for May to 7,028 head, a 27 per cent increase on the same period last year.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI last week increased to 455 head with 56 cows also imported. This brings prime cattle imports from ROI to NI to 5,357 head during 2021 to date, up 1,874 head from the same period last year. Exports of cattle for direct slaughter in ROI plants last week consisted of 14 prime cattle and 53 cows. This brings cattle exports for direct slaughter from NI to ROI to 1,165 head during 2021 to date, back six per cent from the same period in 2020.

Last week the NI deadweight prices for prime cattle continued to come under pressure with the majority of grades. The average steer price in NI last week decreased by a penny from the previous week to 378.9p/kg with the R3 steer price decreasing by 1.7p/kg to 387.4p/kg. In the same week in 2020 the R3 steer price reported in NI was 353.1p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week decreased by just over 2p/kg to 379.8p/kg with the R3 heifer price back by 1.7p/kg to 387.3p/kg. In the same week last year the R3 heifer price was 352.1p/kg. The O3 cow price in NI recorded a decline of 2.4p/kg to 298.6p/kg last week while the average cow price reported locally was up by 2p/kg to 279.5p/kg.

In GB last week the deadweight prime cattle trade also came under pressure with prices back from the previous week across all regions. The average steer price in GB was back by 3.8p/kg to 394.9p/kg while the average R3 steer price decreased by 4.6p/kg to 398.8p/kg. The R3 steer price in GB was 11.4p/kg higher than the R3 steer price in NI last week. The average heifer price in GB last week was back by just under 5p/kg to 393.6p/kg with the R3 heifer price decreasing by almost 4p/kg to 398.8p/kg, this is 11.5p/kg more than the reported R3 heifer price in NI last week. The O3 cow price in GB was up a penny last week to 302.3p/kg which was 3.7p/kg above the same price in NI.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price and the R3 heifer price both remained steady from the previous week at the equivalent of 357.8p/kg and 360.8p/kg respectively. This puts the R3 steer price in ROI 29.6p/kg lower than the same price in NI with the R3 heifer price 26.5p/kg below the equivalent price in NI. The O3 cow price in ROI came back by 4.8p/kg to 285.6p/kg last week which is 13p/kg behind the O3 cow price in NI.

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

	W/E 29/05/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	389.7	368.5	414.7	405.0	401.7	398.1	405.9
	R3	387.4	357.8	415.4	401.3	392.8	388.9	398.8
	R4	384.6	361.1	416.5	404.5	393.6	392.2	405.8
	O3	375.3	346.6	402.0	381.0	373.7	371.0	379.1
	AVG	378.9	-	412.2	396.4	385.8	381.0	394.9
Heifers	U3	392.6	372.5	424.1	408.2	405.7	401.7	411.0
	R3	387.3	360.8	416.4	398.7	396.2	388.6	398.8
	R4	386.0	360.8	418.5	401.8	395.3	388.0	404.1
	O3	378.2	349.3	399.9	384.3	369.2	367.9	376.8
	AVG	379.8	-	414.2	395.4	384.9	377.7	393.6
Young Bulls	U3	386.1	357.6	412.7	398.3	398.4	391.5	404.2
	R3	378.1	345.4	406.1	390.9	390.4	385.4	394.7
	O3	358.6	327.7	377.4	367.8	364.2	361.3	367.9
	AVG	368.3	-	404.1	386.2	385.1	378.9	390.2
Prime Cattle Price Reported	5052	-	7199	6929	8135	4872	27135	
Cows	O3	298.6	285.6	308.4	303.6	300.9	299.5	302.3
	O4	302.8	284.2	310.0	305.1	299.3	297.5	302.3
	P2	260.4	252.7	261.8	252.7	255.8	256.2	255.9
	P3	279.1	275.4	277.4	270.8	273.4	275.8	274.1
	AVG	279.5	-	301.0	287.0	270.2	268.7	277.2

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.23p 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 29/05/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)							
Steers		234	246	238	205	233	219
Friesians		172	189	181	150	168	159
Heifers		220	242	232	205	219	212
Beef Cows		174	200	186	135	173	154
Dairy Cows		124	148	130	100	123	111
Store Cattle (p/kg)							
Bullocks up to 400kg		240	269	255	200	239	220
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		225	255	235	200	224	212
Bullocks over 500kg		205	227	218	175	204	190
Heifers up to 450kg		220	259	230	200	219	210
Heifers over 450kg		210	233	220	180	209	195
Dropped Calves (£/head)							
Continental Bulls up to 3 months		400	520	450	300	395	350
Continental Heifers up to 1 month		340	480	410	235	335	285
Friesian Bulls up to 2 months		160	260	200	100	155	130
Holstein Bulls up to 2 months		120	215	160	2	115	60

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 29/05/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	389.9	392.8	386.4
R3	385.8	386.3	379.3
O+3	378.2	379.0	369.1

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 29/05/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	182.3	204.1	218.5	239.8
P2	208.0	238.1	259.9	272.3
P3	228.7	248.5	271.6	283.1
O3	-	286.0	290.1	299.5
O4	-	300.0	306.0	302.7
R3	-	-	-	318.5

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 31/05/21	Next Week 07/06/21
R3 Lambs up to 21kg	600 - 610p	590 - 600p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 15/05/21	W/E 22/05/21	W/E 29/05/21
NI L/W Lambs	625.0	624.5	591.1
NI D/W Lambs	638.7	642.1	624.8
GB D/W Lambs	724.2	669.4	663.7
ROI D/W	652.1	660.5	654.4

Deadweight Sheep Trade

With supplies of lambs for processing increasing in NI there has been some downward pressure on the deadweight trade. Quotes from the major NI processors for R3 grade lambs ended this week ranging from 590-600p/kg paying up to 21kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. Throughput of lambs last week increased to 7,384 head. This brings total lamb/hogget throughput in 2021 to 142,528 head, a 13.8 per cent increase on the same period last year. The average deadweight lamb price in NI last week was back by 17.3p/kg to 624.8p/kg in the same week last year the deadweight lamb price reported was 491p/kg. Meanwhile the ROI deadweight lamb price decreased by the equivalent of 6.1p/kg to 654.4p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

This week the liveweight trade came under some pressure with good numbers passing through the local marts. In Omagh last Saturday 388 lambs sold from 559-598p/kg compared to 292 lambs the previous week selling from 564-622p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 458 lambs sold from 550-614p/kg compared to 417 lambs last week selling from 600-629p/kg. This week in Ballymena 1,008 lambs sold from 530-600p/kg (avg 548p/kg) compared to 890 lambs last week selling from 580-627p/kg (avg 595p/kg). On Wednesday in Armoy 322 lambs sold from 530-580p/kg compared to 234 lambs last week selling from 600-645p/kg. The trade for well fleshed cull ewes has remained firm with top reported prices ranging from £136-£201.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 29/05/21		Lambs			
To: 03/06/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	388	559	598	-
	Swatragh	705	545	696	-
Monday	Kilrea	280	548	591	-
	Massereene	458	550	614	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	606	545	625	-
	Rathfriland	518	510	585	540
Wednesday	Ballymena	1008	530	600	548
	Enniskillen	289	530	596	-
	Armoy	322	530	580	-
	Markethill	882	540	581	-

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

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM

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COMMUNICATING NORTHERN IRELAND'S VALUES ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE

LMC continues to play a critical role in communicating the values that underpin the beef and sheep sectors here in Northern Ireland on an international stage. The Commission's Chief Executive Ian Stevenson explained: "Given our grass based farming systems, climate and expertise in animal husbandry we know that NI's beef and lamb are produced in a sustainable manner. It is vitally important that international decision-making organisations and consumers around the world are made aware of this fundamental fact."

Ian recently took part in a Food Systems Dialogue, hosted by Meat and Livestock Australia, in conjunction with the Global Meat Alliance and the International Meat Secretariat. The purpose of the event was to allow the international meat sector inform the

first-ever United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit. This will take place in New York in September. Ian commented: "The purpose of the summit is to further clarify the role that farming and food will play in securing the UN's 17 sustainability goals. These have been drawn up to help deliver a more sustainable world by 2030."

"Separately, Glasgow will host the COP 26 event, in November of this year, which will seek to further refine the world's response to the climate change challenge. Both of these international initiatives will have a major impact on how the world's farming and food sectors are enabled and developed for future generations."

"It is, therefore, important that NI has the opportunity to highlight the work now taking place here to further

develop the journey of our sustainable grass-based farming sector; one which allows high quality beef and lamb to be produced in ways that meet the needs of domestic and international consumers in every way."

Ian went on to point out that the world's beef and sheep sectors have a very positive story to tell. "And it's not just about producing food," he stressed. "Twenty per cent of the world's cattle population is to be found in Sub Saharan Africa. Here, people's wealth is often tied up in the number of animals they own."

"If steps are taken to reduce cattle numbers globally, the impact such a policy may have in regions like this is to drive people and entire families further into poverty. Such a development is totally at odds with the UN's

sustainability objectives and the need to put coherent climate change policies in place."

The LMC representative confirmed that grass-based systems will remain at the heart of production agriculture here in NI. He continued: "This is a form of farming that fits in totally with our climate and soil types. Improving the efficiency of our beef and lamb production systems is important, moving forward."

According to Ian, meat industry representatives from around the world are committed to speaking with one voice when it comes to interacting with organisations such as the UN - both from a food sustainability and climate change perspective. He concluded: "This approach will also ensure that the steps taken here in NI to future-

proof the sustainability of our beef and lamb sectors are communicated internationally in a very clear and meaningful way."

Image 1: LMC's Chief Executive Ian Stevenson



LMC TO GIVE EVIDENCE TO AERA COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson has highlighted the concern that exists within the farming and food sectors regarding the potential impact of the proposed Private Members' Climate Change Bill that has now reached the committee stage at Stormont.



He explained: "Fundamentally, the proposed legislative framework has been tabled and promoted in the absence of an economic impact assessment or rural needs assessment. Farming and food industry leaders believe that the Bill's main tenet of committing Northern Ireland to attain Carbon Net Zero status by 2045 is not a balanced or evidence driven target. But this is only part of the story."

"The proposed legislation also seeks to introduce a series of critically important commitments where water quality, soil quality, and biodiversity are concerned. Again, these proposals have not been impact assessed."

Ian confirmed that LMC will be submitting evidence to Stormont's Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (AERA) committee regarding the proposed climate change bill. He further

commented: "The formal views expressed by the committee will be critically important in determining the progress and future shaping of the Bill. Written evidence must be submitted to the AERA committee by July 15th. It is essential that industry stakeholders also take up any opportunity of submitting oral evidence to the committee members during the year." Ian also noted the intention of DAERA minister Edwin Poots to introduce his own climate change bill. It is likely that this bill will be based around the recommendations of the UK Climate Change Committee.

He added: "This approach if adopted would see the UK, as a whole, reach a Carbon Net Zero position by 2050 with NI expected to secure an 82 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by this date as an equitable contribution in a UK balanced pathway approach. The policies proposed by the Climate Change Committee take more recognition of the role played by farming and food within the NI economy."

The LMC representative made it very clear that the local farming and food sectors are very aware of their climate change commitments, as they look to the future. "Change is coming and it won't be a journey without it's challenges however there will be opportunities to be grasped" he stressed. "Improving efficiency at farm level will be the most significant response that production agriculture can make to the challenge ahead. Equally important will be positive recognition for farming's role in sequestering and storing carbon."

Ian concluded: "Making change happen will require significant investment in new technologies and management systems at farm level. And government must respond accordingly to enable business response and promote positive climate actions on the ground."

LMC TO TAKE PART IN AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF FARMING AND FOOD SECTORS

LMC has confirmed its intention to actively participate in the review of the farming and food industry, recently announced by Agriculture Minister Edwin Poots MLA and Economy Minister Diane Dodds MLA.

The independent review body is chaired by former NFU president Sir Peter Kendall. Over the coming months his team will consider the challenges facing both the food processing and primary agriculture industries as well as making recommendations on how to take full advantage of new opportunities.

LMC's Ian Stevenson commented: "Written evidence must be submitted to the review body by June 15th. So the clock is ticking. Beef and lamb account for over 25 per cent of total farming and food output in Northern Ireland so it is vitally important that the views of both sectors are taken full account of within the review process."

Ian went on to point out that the current review process follows-on from the work of the Agri-Food Strategy Board, which reported in 2013. "A lot has changed in the intervening eight years. Brexit is now a reality. The farming and food industries have been coping with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic over the past 15 months and the need to develop a sustainable response to climate change is a priority, not just here but in every country around the world."

The LMC representative foresees the Kendall team having an opportunity to look at every aspect of farming and food in NI. He believes that such an approach will allow the group to come forward with a range of conclusions that will help inform the strategic development of production agriculture and food processing

across the board. He said: "The review body's final recommendations will hopefully provide Ministers' with a template on how government can best support the farming and food sectors moving forward. Delivering long term sustainability for both industries is the all-important objective." Where production agriculture is concerned, Ian believes that one of the most significant developments coming out of the review process could be on those recommendations relating to land tenure. He explained: "The practice of conacre letting is viewed by many as having out lived its day."

"It will be interesting to see how the Kendall team view this matter and what suggestions they have when it comes to moving this important issue forward." Ian is very aware that the review team will also assess NI's current food marketing arrangements. "LMC is more than happy to take part in this debate. Our activities allow us to interact with consumers both here and on international markets." He continued: "NI is more dependent on food exports than any other region of the UK and this will remain the case."

"But getting access to the best paying customers in domestic and export markets is about more than just promotion. Ensuring that our produce fully complies with an importing country's food production, traceability and other compliance-related matters are the critically important factors when it comes to securing market access. Moving forward, issues such as Antimicrobial Resistance, Sustainability and other supply chain proof points will rise in prominence in this regard. It also takes time for all relevant standards and processes to be verified. A case in point is NI's ongoing commitment to secure direct Chinese market access for locally produced beef."



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