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NI DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES WELL AHEAD OF 2020

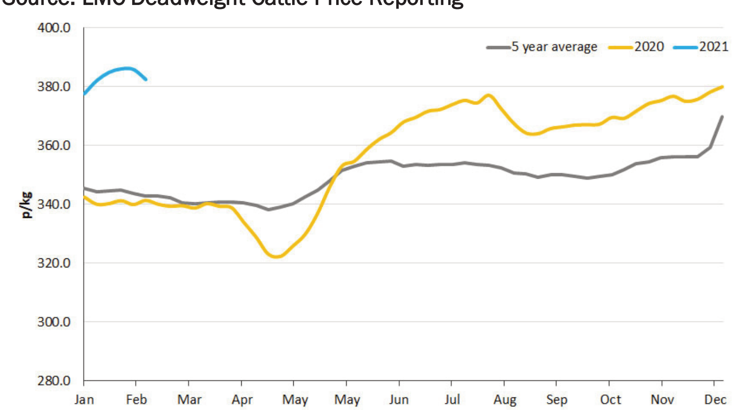
Base quotes from the local processing plants for in spec U-3 grading steers and heifers ranged from 362-370p/kg this week with similar quotes expected for next week.

While some cattle will be bought within the quoted base price, the range generally acts as a starting point for negotiation between producers and processors. Figures indicate higher prices are available than these base quotes suggest, particularly for cattle that meet current market specifications for weight, grade, age, farm quality assurance status, number of farm residences, UK origin and days on last farm.

Northern Ireland

The R3 steer price in Northern Ireland last week was 382.5p/kg which is down 3.4p/kg from the week before. **Figure 1** displays R3 steer deadweight prices in Northern Ireland during 2021 against 2020 and the 5 year average. As outlined in the graph below, although there has been a slight downward movement in the last couple of weeks, R3 steer deadweight prices during 2021 have been well ahead of both 2020 prices and the average prices across the last five years during the same period. In the week ending 15 February 2020 the R3 steer price in Northern Ireland was 340.1p/kg. This is 42.4p/kg behind current levels which is the equivalent of £148 on a 350kg carcase. Similarly, the current level of trade is 39.6p/kg ahead of the five year average price in Northern Ireland during the corresponding period which equates to £139 on a 350kg carcase.

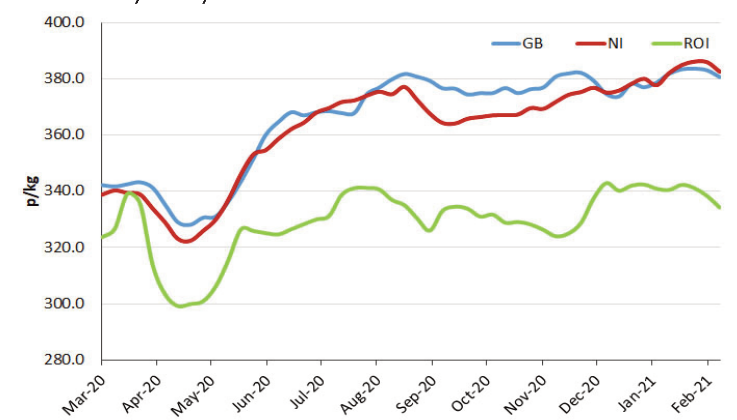
Figure 1: R3 steer price in NI during 2020, 2021 and the 5 year average
Source: LMC Deadweight Cattle Price Reporting



Great Britain

The deadweight cattle trade in Great Britain has been operating at similar levels to Northern Ireland in recent weeks as outlined in **Figure 2**. At several stages over the past 52 week period deadweight prices in Great Britain have been operating ahead of Northern Ireland prices however this differential has been significantly reduced in recent months. The R3 steer price in Great Britain last week was 380.6p/kg, almost 2p/kg behind the price paid in Northern Ireland.

Figure 2: R3 steer prices in NI, GB and ROI during the 52 w/e 13 February 2021
Source: LMC/DAFM/AHDB



Republic of Ireland

Prices in Ireland are significantly lower than equivalent prices in Northern Ireland as outlined in **Figure 2**. There has been a large differential between Northern Ireland and Ireland since early April last year with the largest differential in the last 52 week period recorded in November at 49.3p/kg.

The R3 steer price in Ireland last week was the equivalent of 334.2p/kg, 48.3p/kg behind the price in Northern Ireland. This equates to a £169 differential on a 350kg carcase.

The importance of the UK retail trade to the Northern Ireland beef industry value chain has been even more pronounced since the first period of Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 and cementing our position as a key supplier of UK origin beef within this domestic market remains a key priority for both industry operators and LMC.

LAMB GRADING OVERVIEW QUARTER 4 2020

Lamb throughput in Northern Ireland during the final quarter of 2020 was well ahead of the same period in 2019. Throughput totalled 121,679 head, up almost 15,000 head from 2019 levels which equates to a 14 per cent increase year on year.

Analysis of deadweight lamb price reporting statistics have shown fat class scores during quarter 4 2020 have remained fairly similar to 2019 levels during the same period. However, figures indicate there have been some changes to the conformation scores achieved during this period.

Fat Class

The proportion of lambs killed in local plants awarded fat class 1 or fat class 5 during quarter 4 of 2020 was very small. These levels remain similar to the same period in 2019.

During the period from October to December 2020, 20 per cent of lambs achieved a fat class 2, down two per cent from the same period in 2019.

During quarter 4 2020 the majority of lambs were killed out at fat class 3. The proportion of price reported lambs meeting this fat class totalled 70 per cent which is unchanged from the final quarter of 2019.

A small proportion of price reported lambs continue to be awarded fat class 4L and 4H. During the final quarter of 2020 nine per cent of lamb kill achieved a 4L fat cover while one per cent of lambs were awarded a 4H fat cover. These levels have marginally increased from the same period in 2019.

Conformation Scores

Current market specifications require lambs to meet U and R conformation scores. The proportion of lambs meeting these grades during the final quarter of 2020 was 96 per cent which is very similar to 2019 levels when 97 per cent of lambs met these conformation scores.

However while the overall proportion of lambs killed in Northern Ireland meeting market specification for grade has remained steady there has been some changes in the proportion of lambs achieving each grade year on year as outlined in **Table 1.**

The proportion of lambs achieving a U grade has increased to 42 per cent, up five per cent from quarter 4 2019. Meanwhile the proportion of R grading lambs totalled 54 per cent during the final quarter of 2020. This is a decline of six per cent from the same period in 2019.

Table 1: Conformation scores achieved by lambs killed in NI during quarter 4 2020 and 2019. Source: DAERA

	E	U	R	O	P
2019	1%	37%	60%	2%	0%
2020	2%	42%	54%	3%	0%

GB PRIME CATTLE KILL UPDATE

Prime cattle throughput in Great Britain totalled 137,206 head during January 2021. This was a decrease of over 3,000 head or two per cent from January 2020 levels according to the latest available data from DEFRA.

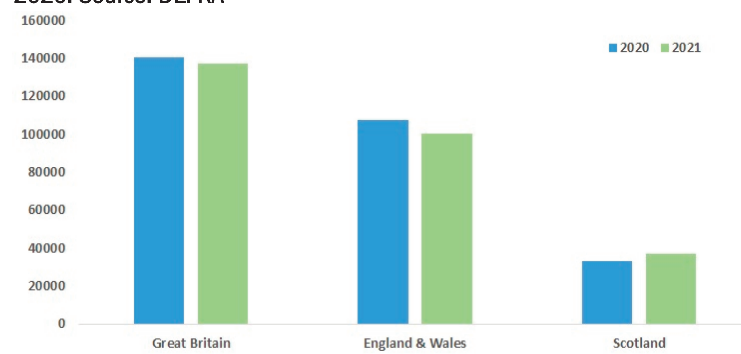
The number of prime cattle processed in England and Wales during January 2021 has decreased while Scotland has recorded an increase in throughput during this period year on year as outlined in **Figure 3.**

Prime cattle throughput in England and Wales totalled 100,412 head during January 2021. This equates to a six per cent decline in throughput during January 2021 compared to the previous year.

The number of prime cattle processed in Scotland during January 2021 totalled 36,794 head, up 3,833 head from January 2020 levels.

The decline in number of prime cattle processed in England and Wales counterbalanced the increase recorded in Scotland leading to a decline in throughput for Great Britain as a whole.

Figure 3: Prime cattle throughput in GB by region during January 2021 and 2020. Source: DEFRA



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

LMC Livestock & Meat Commission

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 15/02/21	Next Week 22/02/21
Prime		
U-3	362 - 370p	364 - 370p
R-3	356 - 364p	358 - 364p
O+3	350 - 358p	352 - 358p
P+3	296 - 308p	298 - 308p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	265 - 280p	265 - 280p
Steakers	140 - 170p	140 - 170p
Blues	120 - 130p	120 - 130p

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 13/02/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	383.6	387.0	368.0
R3	380.3	380.2	366.3
O+3	372.4	373.4	367.7

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 13/02/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	172.3	186.4	192.4	207.9
P2	200.1	221.1	241.1	251.7
P3	204.6	235.3	254.2	264.3
O3	-	255.1	266.8	282.4
O4	230.0	280.0	296.7	280.9
R3	-	-	-	297.8

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the major beef processing plants in NI for in-spec U-3 grading steers and heifers have come under some pressure and ranged between 362-370p/kg this week. The majority of plants are quoting from 366-370p/kg. The deadweight cow trade has firmed with base quotes for O+3 grading cows of 265-280p/kg this week.

Prime cattle throughput in local plants last week totalled 6,839 head, back 126 head from the previous week. This is also back just over 100 head from the corresponding week in 2020 when 6,940 prime cattle were killed in local plants. Meanwhile cow throughput in local plants increased by 229 head last week to total 1,883 cows, a similar throughput compared to the same week in 2020.

Imports of cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants last week increased to 282 prime cattle and 71 cows, this is the highest level of imports from ROI to date in 2021. There were no cattle imported from GB last week for direct slaughter in local plants. Exports of cattle out of NI for direct slaughter have continued at relatively low levels with five prime cattle and 29 cows destined for processing plants in ROI last week with no cattle exported from NI to GB for direct slaughter during 2021 to date.

The NI deadweight trade for prime cattle has come under pressure last week with the majority of steer and heifer prices back in the region of 2-5p/kg. The average steer price in NI was back 2.4p/kg to 373.4p/kg with the R3 steer price back by 3.4p/kg to 382.5p/kg which puts it 42p/kg above the R3 steer price in the same week last year. The average NI heifer price was back just over 5p/kg to 372.8p/kg last week with the R3 heifer price back by almost 3p/kg to 382p/kg which puts it 40p/kg ahead of the R3 heifer price in same week in 2020. The average young bull price in NI last week was 360.3p/kg, back just over 2p/kg from the previous week. Meanwhile last week the average cow price in NI decreased by 2.2p/kg to 256.6p/kg with the O3 cow price up by 0.4p/kg to 281.1p/kg.

In GB last week the deadweight trade for prime cattle has also come under pressure with the average steer price back almost 3p/kg to 375.1p/kg. The R3 steer price in GB decreased by 2.4p/kg last week to 380.6p/kg when compared to the previous week. Last week the average heifer price in GB declined by 1.7p/kg to 375p/kg with the R3 heifer price back by a similar margin to 381.4p/kg. However the cow trade in GB has shown signs of improvement last week with average prices up in the majority of regions. The average GB cow price was up 2.6p/kg to 253p/kg which places it 3.6p/kg behind the equivalent price in NI.

Deadweight cattle prices also declined in ROI last week from the previous week. This along with a strengthening sterling has meant prices for all classes of prime cattle were back in the region of 4-6p/kg in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI was back just over 4p/kg to the equivalent of 334.2p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back by 4.7p/kg to 338p/kg. The O3 cow price in ROI last week decreased by 6.7p/kg to the equivalent of 261.7p/kg. This puts the O3 cow price at 19.4p/kg below the same price in NI.

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

W/E 13/02/21		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	384.2	342.2	387.3	383.1	384.6	384.3	384.9
	R3	382.5	334.2	386.7	382.9	378.6	376.9	380.6
	R4	378.5	335.4	387.7	385.1	376.9	374.3	383.6
	O3	370.7	320.4	370.8	364.4	358.7	355.0	360.2
	AVG	373.4	-	383.2	377.6	370.5	367.4	375.1
Heifers	U3	387.0	350.6	396.2	388.6	389.9	387.0	390.6
	R3	382.0	338.0	389.0	383.5	380.6	376.9	381.4
	R4	378.9	338.9	387.8	381.2	378.0	375.2	382.1
	O3	371.6	326.1	373.5	362.5	357.0	355.8	360.0
	AVG	372.8	-	386.0	375.4	370.0	367.0	375.0
Young Bulls	U3	367.9	327.1	378.7	357.0	370.4	375.6	370.7
	R3	364.4	316.2	373.0	369.4	373.4	373.8	372.2
	O3	354.7	303.6	364.8	374.2	344.9	338.7	355.5
	AVG	360.3	-	362.5	351.9	356.2	346.7	355.4
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5583	-	6788	6993	7974	4868	26623
Cows	O3	281.1	261.7	273.4	275.7	272.2	268.3	272.9
	O4	281.1	261.3	275.9	274.5	272.1	271.0	273.3
	P2	240.7	234.1	223.1	231.4	224.1	235.1	227.9
	P3	260.6	249.1	231.9	246.3	246.7	251.0	246.8
	AVG	256.6	-	268.6	261.2	246.7	247.4	253.0

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=87.76p 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 13/02/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	227	241	230	200	226	214
Friesians	174	179	177	160	174	169
Heifers	224	250	228	205	223	214
Beef Cows	165	208	180	125	164	145
Dairy Cows	118	153	125	100	117	108
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	245	294	265	215	244	227
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	235	274	250	210	234	220
Bullocks over 500kg	215	227	220	180	214	200
Heifers up to 450kg	235	275	250	200	234	218
Heifers over 450kg	220	248	234	190	219	205
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	375	475	415	270	370	320
Continental Heifers	350	510	385	250	345	285
Friesian Bulls	200	240	220	150	195	175
Holstein Bulls	150	240	180	2	145	80

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 15/02/21	Next Week 22/02/21
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg (with one processor paying up to 23kg)	540 - 550p	565p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 30/01/21	W/E 06/02/21	W/E 13/02/21
NI L/W Hoggets	485.5	495.1	510.8
NI D/W Hoggets	530.0	530.8	543.9
GB D/W Hoggets	558.4	580.6	593.3
ROI D/W	513.9	530.8	538.8

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the local processing plants for R3 grading hoggets continued to strengthen with quotes towards the end of this week of 550-560p/kg up to 22kg with one processor continuing to pay up to 23kg. Last week the number of hoggets processed through the local plants totalled 7,433 head. This was marginally up from the previous week and well above the 5,660 hoggets processed in the same week last year. Exports of hoggets to ROI for direct slaughter decreased by 637 head last week to total 3,657 head. This accounted for a third of the total output from the NI sheep flock. The average deadweight price in NI increased by just over 13p/kg last week to 543.9p/kg, while the average liveweight price increased by 15.7p/kg to 510.8p/kg. In the same week in 2020 the average NI deadweight and liveweight hogget prices reported were 447p/kg and 428p/kg respectively.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

The marts are continuing to report a firmer trade for hoggets than last week with smaller numbers passing through the sale rings this week. In Massereene on Monday 328 hoggets sold from 520-543p/kg compared to last week when 506 hoggets sold from 500-533p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 387 hoggets sold from 500-550p/kg (avg 518p/kg) compared to 400 hoggets last week selling from 495-557p/kg (avg 513p/kg). In Enniskillen on Wednesday 618 hoggets sold from 520-558p/kg, compared to 632 hoggets last week selling from 486-533p/kg. The trade for well fleshed ewes has remained firm with top reported prices ranging from £122-£187.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 13/02/21		Hoggets			
To: 18/02/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Swatragh	450	435	530	-
Monday	Massereene	328	520	543	-
	Kilrea	360	530	605	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	288	500	550	-
	Rathfriland	387	500	550	518
Wednesday	Ballymena	1803	500	604	525
	Enniskillen	618	520	558	-
	Armoy	586	535	600	-
	Markethill	750	520	557	-

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

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