

HOGGET TRADE UPDATE & DEMAND FOR LAMB

In recent weeks there have been small upward and downward shifts in the base quotes received from the three major NI lamb processors for R3 grading hoggets.

The quotes have accurately reflected the fluctuating deadweight hogget trade as outlined below.

Base quotes received from major NI processors for R3 grading hoggets:

w/c 06 February 500 - 510p/kg
w/c 13 February 510 - 525p/kg
w/c 20 February 525 - 530p/kg
w/c 27 February 510 - 530p/kg

Average reported price paid in NI for deadweight hoggets

w/e 11 February 513.2p/kg
w/e 18 February 521.8p/kg
w/e 25 February 521.1p/kg
w/e 04 March 518.9p/kg

Hogget availability in NI during 2023 to date has been running ahead of last year. During 2023 to date hogget throughput in local plants has totalled 78,594 head, equating to an increase of 13,280 head or 20.3 per cent year on year.

During the month of February alone throughput increased by 8,296 head or 28.7 per cent year on year as outlined in **Table 1**. This increase in supply will be one contributor to the pressure on

Table 1: Key performance indicators of the NI sheep industry during February 2023 vs February 2022. Source: DAERA/DAFM/AHDB.

	February 2022	February 2023	% Change
Sheep Prices (p/kg)			
Average Deadweight Price NI	536.7	520.1	-3.1%
Average Liveweight Price NI	499.1	472.9	-5.2%
Average Weekly Deadweight Price GB	583.1	506.3	-13.2%
Average Weekly Deadweight Price ROI	563.9	536.7	-4.8%
Slaughtering			
Total Hoggets & Lambs Slaughtering (Head)	28,864	37,160	+28.7%
Total Ewes & Rams Slaughtering (Head)	2,266	1,972	-13.0%
Average Hogget & Lambs Carcase Weight (kg)	23.3	22.3	-4.3%
Average Ewe & Rams Carcase Weight (kg)	26.7	26.5	-0.8%
Trade (Head)			
Live Imports for Direct Slaughter	-	-	-
Live Exports for Direct Slaughter	27,930	25,081	-10.2%
Euro / Stg Exchange Rate (€ / £)	83.8	88.6	5.7%
All NI Figures Unless Otherwise Stated			

trade year on year.

During February 2023 the average deadweight hogget price was 520.1p/kg, back 16.6p/kg from February 2022 levels accounting for a 3.1 per cent decline year on year.

The deadweight trade in both GB and ROI has followed a similar pattern with deadweight prices also back by 13.2

and 4.8 per cent respectively year on year which has given rise to concerns at producer level with production costs remaining at very high levels.

In ROI the average hogget deadweight price during February 2023 was the equivalent of 536.7p/kg. This is 27.2p/kg lower than the equivalent price in February 2022. Meanwhile in

GB the average hogget deadweight price reported during February 2023 was 506.3p/kg. This is 76.8p/kg lower than the equivalent price in February 2022.

The average hogget carcase weight in NI during February 2023 was 22.3kg, back by 1kg from February last year when the average hogget carcase weight reported was 23.3kg. This decline in average carcase weights, has been offset by the increased throughput which has resulted in a year on year increase in the volume of lamb handled by local processors.

During February 2023, 828 tonnes of prime sheep meat were handled in local plants, an increase of 156 tonnes from 672 tonnes handled during February 2022. This accounts for an increase of almost a quarter (23.2 per cent) year on year.

Ewe and ram slaughtering in local plants totalled 1,972 head during February 2023, back 13 per cent from the 2,266 ewes and rams processed in February last year. Meanwhile the average carcase weight of ewes and rams slaughtered recorded a slight decrease, of 0.2kg year on year to 26.5kg in February 2023.

Exports of sheep out of NI to ROI and GB for direct slaughter during February 2023 totalled 25,081 head, a decline of 2,849 head from the 27,930 sheep exported during February 2022. Lower

live export numbers may be attributed to the increased carryover of hoggets in these regions this year as is the case in NI.

Retail Market

The European market is a key export destination for both UK and ROI lamb and the market there has seen subdued demand. At a time when the NI, ROI and GB markets have plentiful supplies resulting from a large carryover of hoggets following 2022 production conditions which deterred producers from purchasing expensive concentrates to finish their lambs.

Consumer spend on lamb in the GB retail market during the 12 weeks ending 19 February was up year on year boosted by a strong demand for lamb during the Christmas period.

However, the volume of retail lamb sales in GB totalled 20.3 million kilo in the twelve weeks ending 19 February 2023, a six per cent decline on the corresponding period in 2022 according to the latest data available from Kantar. The decline in volume sales has been driven by an increase in the average retail price year on year, up 8.2 per cent to £10.41/kg during the 12 weeks ending 19 February 2023.

To conclude lamb sales in the GB retail market continue to remain challenging as consumers tighten their belts on the back of increased living costs.

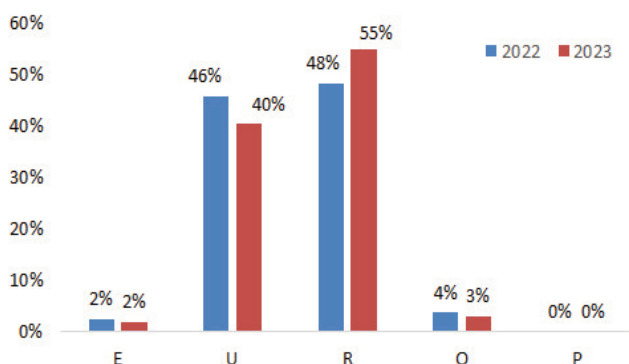
HOGGET GRADING ANALYSIS JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2023

Analysis of the deadweight hogget price reported statistics provided by DAERA has indicated some key changes in the conformation and fat scores of hoggets slaughtered during the first eight week period of 2023 when compared to the same period in 2022.

Conformation scores

Current market specifications are for R and U grading lambs/hoggets and during the first eight week period of 2023 ending 25 February, 95 per cent of deadweight price reported hoggets fulfilled this requirement.

Figure 1. Conformation scores of hoggets slaughtered in NI during the eight weeks ending 25 February 2023 and the same period of 2022. Source: DAERA



This was a one per cent increase from the corresponding period in 2022 when 94 per cent of hoggets were awarded a U or R grade for conformation. There has been some changes in the proportion of hoggets achieving each grade year on year as shown in **Figure 1**.

The proportion of U grade hoggets in the NI slaughter mix has declined from 46 per cent in the corresponding eight week period of 2022, to 40 per cent in the eight weeks ending 25 February 2023. While the proportion of U grading hoggets in the NI kill has decreased the proportion of hoggets awarded an R grade has increased. During the eight week period ending 25 February 2023, 55 per cent of price reported hoggets achieved an R grade, seven per cent more than during the corresponding period in 2022 when 48 per cent of hogget carcasses were awarded an R grade.

Fat scores

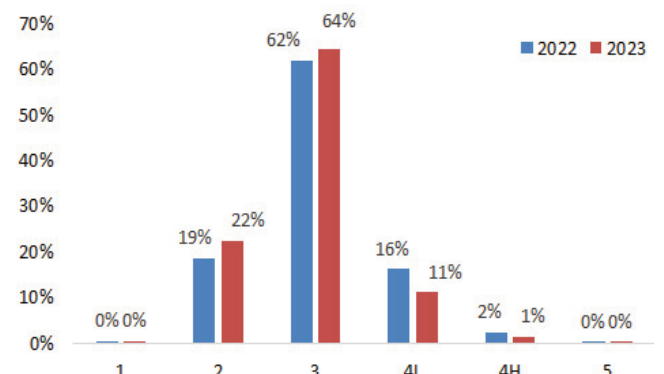
The current market specifications are for lamb/hogget carcasses with a fat score of 2 or 3 and during first eight weeks of 2023, 86 per cent of deadweight price reported hoggets fulfilled this requirement. This was a slight improvement on the corresponding period last year when 81 per cent of deadweight price reported hoggets met this specification as shown in **Figure 2**.

During the first eight weeks of 2023, 22 per cent of price reported hoggets achieved a fat score of 2, which was an increase from 2022 when 19 per cent of hoggets were scored 2. The number of hoggets awarded a fat class 3 during the eight weeks ending 25 February

was 64 per cent an increase of two per cent from the corresponding period in 2022.

A small number of hoggets continue to kill out at a fat class 4L and 4H. During 2023, 11 per cent of the price reported hogget kill have been awarded a 4L for fat cover and a further one per cent were awarded a 4H. In comparison to the same period in 2022, 16 per cent of the price reported hogget kill was graded 4L, and two per cent awarded fat class 4H.

Figure 2. Fat scores of hoggets slaughtered in NI during the eight weeks ending 25 February 2023 and the same period of 2022. Source: DAERA



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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 06/03/23	Next Week 13/03/23
Prime		
U-3	450 - 466p	450 - 466p
R-3	444 - 460p	444 - 460p
O+3	438 - 454p	438 - 454p
P+3	382 - 398p	382 - 398p
Including bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3	360 - 374p	360 - 374p

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 from the major NI plants for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle remained steady at 450-466p/kg this week. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows continued to range from 360-374p/kg across the plants. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week increased by 170 head from the previous week to total 7,446 head. This takes the prime cattle throughput during 2023 to date to 63,555 head, back 2,326 head when compared to the same period of 2022. The average carcass weight of prime cattle during the year to date is 341.2kg, back almost 10kg from the same period last year. Meanwhile a total of 2,126 cows were killed locally last week back 99 head from the previous week. This takes the throughput of cows in 2023 to 20,377 head, up 365 head from the 20,012 cows processed in the same period in 2022. The average cow carcass weight this year to date is 301kg, back 8.8kg from the same period in 2022.

Imports of cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week consisted of 199 prime cattle and 126 cows, while no cattle were imported from GB for direct slaughter. Exports of cattle out of NI for direct slaughter to ROI last week consisted of eight heifers and 82 cull cattle with no cattle making the journey from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The deadweight cattle trade remained strong in NI last week. The average steer price was up 0.4p/kg to 467.3p/kg from the previous week while the R3 steer price increased by 3p/kg to 479.6p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2022 the reported R3 steer price was 410.9p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was up 2.5p/kg to 470.2p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 2.7p/kg to 479.4p/kg. In the same week last year the R3 heifer price was 411.3p/kg. The average NI young bull price last week increased by 6p/kg from the previous week to 452.3p/kg while the R3 young bull price increased by 5.1p/kg to 466p/kg. Last week the average cow price in NI was up by 4.3p/kg to 359.1p/kg, while the O3 cow price increased by 3.2p/kg from the previous week to 387.7p/kg.

In GB last week the average steer price was up by 3p/kg from the previous week to 482.5p/kg while the R3 steer price was up by 2.8p/kg to 489.4p/kg. This brings the differential in R3 steer prices last week between NI and GB to 9.8p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week increased by 4.1p/kg to 482p/kg while the R3 heifer price was up 2.5p/kg to 489.5p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and GB at just over 10p/kg. The cow trade in GB improved last week with the O3 cow price up by almost 6p/kg to 407.5p/kg, 19.8p/kg ahead of the O3 cow price in NI.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price was back by the equivalent of 0.4p/kg when compared to the previous week to 466.4p/kg, widening the differential with NI to 13.2p/kg. Meanwhile the R3 heifer price was back by the same margin to 469.3p/kg which puts it 10.1p/kg lower than the same price in NI. Last week the O3 cow price in ROI was back 1.8p/kg to the equivalent of 397.7p/kg, 10p/kg above the same price in NI.

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

	W/E 04/03/23	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	481.8	474.0	491.8	493.2	499.4	497.0	494.8
	R3	479.6	466.4	487.8	489.4	492.2	487.1	489.4
	R4	478.5	469.5	492.1	491.4	488.7	487.7	490.9
	AVG	467.3	-	489.0	483.8	480.5	475.7	482.5
Heifers	U3	482.9	481.6	497.8	494.3	506.0	497.3	499.6
	R3	479.4	469.3	489.9	488.5	492.0	486.4	489.5
	R4	477.1	473.3	492.1	489.2	489.3	486.8	490.1
	AVG	470.2	-	490.9	481.0	481.6	473.0	482.0
Young Bulls	U3	468.1	461.1	484.4	485.7	488.9	505.0	485.9
	R3	466.0	451.4	479.2	479.4	483.1	477.9	480.8
	AVG	452.3	-	470.5	468.5	463.5	458.3	466.0
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6,156	-	5,996	6,927	7,287	5,018	25,228	
Cows	O3	387.7	397.7	411.2	408.7	407.9	402.8	407.5
	O4	391.9	397.6	410.8	409.7	407.0	404.8	407.8
	P2	349.4	364.9	367.7	369.3	367.0	367.6	367.6
	P3	366.5	384.3	382.5	385.5	386.1	385.9	385.8
AVG	359.1	-	403.9	390.3	380.0	372.9	383.5	

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=88.33p 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 04/03/23	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	481.1	482.9	468.4
R3	477.5	478.0	466.9
O+3	469.3	469.8	455.3

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 04/03/23	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	275.4	292.0	306.0	319.8
P2	304.2	327.3	346.7	363.3
P3	305.3	340.0	361.5	369.5
O3	-	359.3	382.8	388.3
O4	-	370.0	381.7	392.3
R3	-	-	415.0	407.3

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 06/03/23	Next Week 13/03/23
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg	530p	530 - 545p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 18/02/23	W/E 25/02/23	W/E 04/03/23
NI L/W Hoggets	472.9	477.3	482.9
NI D/W Hoggets	521.8	521.1	518.9
GB D/W Hoggets	511.3	510.6	504.6
ROI D/W	536.2	530.3	539.2

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes for R3 grade hoggets firmed this week ranging from 530-545p/kg up to 22kg, similar quotes are expected early next week. Hogget throughput in local plants last week totalled 7,775 head bringing hogget throughput for the year to date to 78,594 head, up 13,280 head on last years levels. A further 5,356 hoggets were exported to ROI for direct slaughter last week, a decline of 443 hoggets from the levels exported the previous week. The average NI deadweight hogget price last week decreased by 2.2p/kg from the previous week to 518.9p/kg. In the same week last year the average hogget price in NI was 537.4p/kg. The average ROI hogget price last week increased by the equivalent of 8.9p/kg to 539.2p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

The marts have reported a firm trade this week with a steady demand for good quality hoggets. In Kilrea this week 450 hoggets sold from 492-526p/kg compared to 600 hoggets last Monday selling from 482-511p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 711 hoggets sold from 480-527p/kg (avg 492p/kg) compared to 303 hoggets last week selling from 470-512p/kg (avg 480p/kg). On Wednesday in Enniskillen 402 hoggets sold from 475-524p/kg compared to 448 hoggets last week selling from 470-512p/kg. In Markethill this week a similar trade to last week saw 610 hoggets selling from 480-518p/kg. This week top reported prices for cull ewes ranged from £152-243 across the marts.

LATEST LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

	W/E 04/03/23	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)							
Steers		280	320	305	210	279	245
Friesians		216	233	225	201	215	208
Heifers		280	319	290	215	279	235
Beef Cows		234	293	255	175	233	210
Dairy Cows		160	195	175	95	159	125
Store Cattle (p/kg)							
Bullocks up to 400kg		320	388	340	250	319	280
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		300	373	320	225	295	250
Bullocks over 500kg		275	324	290	215	274	240
Heifers up to 450kg		300	500	330	200	299	250
Heifers over 450kg		245	312	270	200	244	220
Dropped Calves (£/head)							
Continental Bulls		420	620	470	275	415	345
Continental Heifers		400	640	420	250	395	300
Friesian Bulls		120	240	165	50	115	80
Holstein Bulls		100	190	145	2	95	50

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 04/03/23		Hoggets			
To: 09/03/23		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Swatragh	920	480	542	-
	Omagh	526	475	523	-
Monday	Kilrea	450	492	526	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	675	490	535	-
	Rathfriland	711	480	527	492
Wednesday	Ballymena	1875	480	561	500
	Enniskillen	402	475	524	-
	Markethill	610	480	518	-
	Armoyle	309	500	586	-

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