

STRONGER LEVELS OF CATTLE BEING IMPORTED

Direct Slaughter Imports

Prime Cattle

With the availability of locally produced prime cattle for processing remaining tight in NI there has been a notable increase in the number of prime cattle imported from ROI for direct slaughter in recent weeks.

Last week there were 270 prime cattle imported from ROI for direct slaughter in local processing plants. While this was a decrease of 126 head from the previous week, during the last six week period the total number of prime cattle imported from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants totalled 1,749 head. An increase of 600 from the previous six week period. During this 12 week period of 2023 imported prime cattle from ROI were primarily steers which accounted for 66 per cent while 33 per cent were heifers. During the corresponding 12 week period last year steers were also the primary type of prime cattle imported.

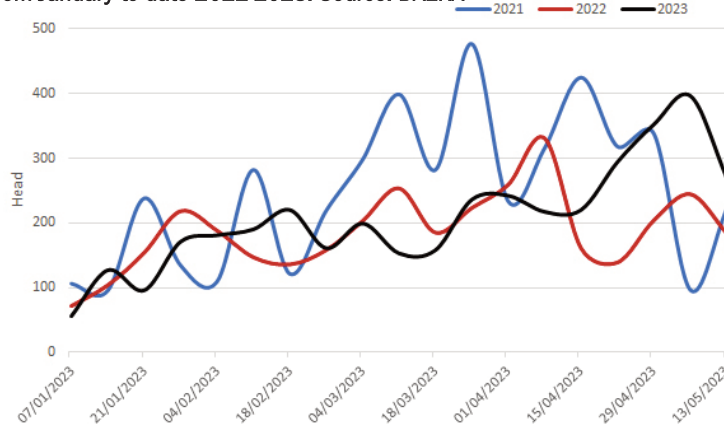
As outlined the numbers of prime cattle imported have increased sharply in the last few weeks and the number of prime cattle imported from ROI during 2023 to date has totalled 3,939 head, 377

head more than the 3,562 head imported during the same period in 2022. While there has been an increase year on year, direct slaughter imports remain behind 2021 levels by 768 head.

As outlined in **Figure 1** the levels of prime cattle for processing imported from ROI shows significant fluctuation from week to week with the level of imports driven by supply and demand of prime cattle locally and the euro exchange rate.

Prime cattle throughput in local plants

Figure 1: Weekly prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants from January to date 2021-2023. Source: DAERA



has been operating at lower levels in recent weeks due to reduced supplies of locally produced prime cattle. During the last six week period 43,170 prime cattle were processed locally, back 3.6 per cent on the corresponding period last year.

In recent weeks the widening differential between NI and ROI prime cattle prices will have benefitted NI processors sourcing cattle from ROI. During the week ending 13 May 2023 the differential between the average R3 steer price in NI and ROI was 34.5p/kg. Meanwhile the average R3 heifer price

in NI was 496.1p/kg, 31.9p/kg ahead of the same price in ROI (464.2p/kg). However, as highlighted in a recent edition of the bulletin, cattle throughput in ROI this year is also well behind previous years and therefore there will undoubtedly be competition for beef supplies in ROI.

During 2023 to week ending 13 May prime cattle imports from ROI accounted for three per cent of total NI prime cattle throughput. During the corresponding period in 2022 prime cattle imports from ROI accounted for 2.5 per cent of the local kill when the local kill was high at 140,648 head. Meanwhile, imported prime cattle accounted for 3.8 per cent of local throughput during the same period in 2021.

Cows

Cull cattle, particularly cows continue to be an important cross border trade. Cow numbers entering NI for direct slaughter recorded an increase of 54 head during the last six week period from the six weeks prior. Unsurprisingly, cow import levels are also up during the year to date from the relevant period during 2022 when the cow kill in NI was at record levels. However, this year cow throughput in NI is also relatively strong

and therefore cow imports are only 121 head more than last years levels. In comparison to 2021 levels, the number of ROI cows entering NI for direct slaughter are up by 523 head during the year to date.

Until a fortnight ago the cow trade in ROI had been running ahead of NI since November 2022. With a current widening in the differential between regions and a steady supply of cull cows in NI it is yet to be seen how the numbers imported to NI will respond.

Cattle imports for further production

While direct slaughter imports from ROI have increased year on year, the numbers of cattle imported onto NI farms have declined. During the first four months of 2023, 10,586 cattle were imported onto local farms for breeding or further production. This is a decline of 1,671 head from the same period last year when 12,257 head were imported. This can largely be attributed to the tight supplies in ROI which is driving demand domestically. However, mixed origin beef from animals reared in both ROI and NI has also been more limited in market outlet options in recent years.

GB & NI R3 HEIFER PRICES AHEAD OF THE EU

The EU and UK prices league table, published weekly by LMC, provides a useful comparison of the deadweight cattle trade by ranking countries based on their average R3 heifer price that week and comparing it to the corresponding week in the previous month.

There have been increases in reported deadweight prices in a number of EU countries and UK regions in the week ending 07 May 2023 as outlined in **Table 1**. The average R3 heifer price in the EU during this week was 519.0c/kg which is a decrease of 0.6c/kg from the same week during the previous month.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland the average R3 heifer price for the week ending 07 May 2023 was the equivalent of 559.8c/kg. This is up 1.1c/kg from the week ending 09 April 2023 however, NI remained in second position on the EU and UK league table during this four week period. The increase in price in Northern Ireland widened the differential between the average R3 heifer price in the EU and NI to 40.8c/kg in the week ending 07 May 2023. This equates to an additional €130.56 on a 320kg heifer carcass in NI.

Great Britain

During the week ending 07 May 2023 the average R3 heifer price in Great Britain was 563.5c/kg meaning GB remained in top position on the EU R3 heifer league table, despite recording a marginal 0.1c/kg decline from the week ending 09 April 2023. GB was 44c/kg ahead of the EU average during the same week last month and 44.5c/kg ahead of the EU average price during the week ending 07 May 2023.

Republic of Ireland

In ROI the R3 heifer price reported was 532.0c/kg in the week ending 07 May 2023 which is a 1c/kg increase when compared to the week ending 09 April 2023. ROI remained in sixth position on the EU and UK league table, in the week ending 07 May 2023. ROI was 13c/kg ahead of the EU average price and 27.8c/kg behind the same price in NI in the week ending 07 May 2023.

Other EU Countries

The most notable change in reported R3 heifer prices in the week ending 07 May 2023 was recorded in the Netherlands where the R3 heifer price increased by 87c/kg. However the Netherlands remained in eighteenth position on the league table. Strong increases in reported prices were also reported in Lithuania (+21.8c/kg), Denmark (+19.9c/kg), Poland (+15.3c/kg) and Luxembourg (+8c/kg).

Meanwhile in Spain prices were back by 8c/kg to 526.5c/kg moving it down two places into seventh position in the league table. Notable declines in reported prices were also recorded in Slovenia (-6.5c/kg), France (-5c/kg) and Romania (-2.6p/kg). *

* The EU and UK Deadweight Cattle Prices League Table is compiled weekly by LMC is hosted on the LMC website: www.lmcni.com/market-information/market-reports/

Table 1: EU and UK R3 Heifers prices w/e 09 April 2023 compared to w/e 07 May 2023 (c/kg). Source: LMC, AHDB & EU Commission.

Position last Month	Position this Month	Country	Price last Month (w/e 09.04.23)	Price this Month (w/e 07.05.23)	Change on Month (cents)
1	1	Great Britain	563.6	563.5	-0.1
2	2	Northern Ireland	558.7	559.8	+1.1
4	3	Luxembourg	540.2	548.2	+8.0
3	4	France	551.0	546.0	-5.0
7	5	Italy	523.5	532.3	8.8
6	6	Ireland	530.9	532.0	+1.0
5	7	Spain	534.4	526.5	-8.0
10	8	Poland	495.5	510.8	+15.3
8	9	Portugal	505.6	509.1	+3.4
9	10	Sweden	504.8	504.9	+0.1
11	11	Germany	484.9	487.9	+2.9
12	12	Belguim	479.0	478.5	-0.5
15	13	Denmark	455.0	474.9	+19.9
13	14	Austria	472.8	471.0	-1.8
14	15	Slovenia	458.2	451.7	-6.5
16	16	Romania	426.5	423.9	-2.6
17	17	Lithuania	386.0	407.8	+21.8
18	18	Netherlands	261.0	348.0	+87.0
EU Average			519.6	519.0	-0.6
Euro (€1=)			87.6	87.9	+0.3

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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 15/05/23	Next Week 22/05/23
Prime		
U-3	460 - 480p	460 - 476p
R-3	454 - 474p	454 - 470p
O+3	448 - 468p	448 - 464p
P+3	392 - 412p	392 - 408p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3	370 - 386p	370 - 382p

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 this week for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle came back 2p/kg at the upper end to 460-480p/kg with the processors indicating a further drop in the trade next week with base quotes expected to range from 460-476p/kg. The cow trade remained steady across the plants this week at 370-386p/kg for good quality O+3 grade cows with quotes of 370-382p/kg expected for early next week.

Prime cattle throughput in local plants last week totalled 7,643 head, an increase of 406 head on the 7,237 prime cattle slaughtered the previous week. Throughput of prime cattle during the last six weeks totalled 43,170 head, a 3.6 per cent decrease on the corresponding period in 2022 when 44,790 prime cattle were slaughtered. In NI last week the number of cows slaughtered totalled 2,066 head. Cow throughput during the last six week period totalled 11,939 head, a 4.3 per cent decrease on the 12,473 cows killed in the same period in 2022.

Imports for direct slaughter from ROI last week consisted of 270 prime cattle and 103 cows. This brings the total imports to date from ROI to 3,939 head, an increase of 377 head when compared to the same period in 2022. Exports from NI for direct slaughter in ROI plants last week consisted of two steers and 11 cows. This brings the total exports to date from ROI to 882 head, a decrease of 458 head when compared to the same period in 2022.

The NI deadweight prime cattle trade strengthened last week with the R3 steer price in NI up 0.4p/kg to 495.4p/kg. However the average steer price came back 1.3p/kg from the previous week to 485p/kg. Last week the R3 heifer price was up 1.2p/kg to 496.1p/kg with the average heifer price up just over a penny from the previous week to 486.7p/kg. The young bull trade also improved last week with the average R3 price up by 2.2p/kg to 483.6p/kg. Last week the NI cow trade reported a mixed trade with the O3 cow price reporting a decrease of 2.3p/kg to 398.5p/kg, while the overall average cow price reported an increase of 3.1p/kg to 372.6p/kg.

In GB last week the deadweight trade was mixed across all grades and regions. The average R3 steer price was up by half a penny to 499.7p/kg while the average steer price was up by 0.8p/kg to 493.4p/kg. The average R3 heifer price in GB last week increased by 0.8p/kg to 499p/kg while the average heifer price was back by half a penny from the previous week to 489.9p/kg. Meanwhile last week the O3 cow price in GB was back almost half a penny to 412.1p/kg, 13.6p/kg above the same price in NI.

In ROI last week the deadweight prime cattle trade reported a drop in prices from the previous week. The R3 steer price was back by the equivalent of 5.3p/kg to 460.9p/kg with the R3 heifer price back by 6.1p/kg to the equivalent of 464.2p/kg. Meanwhile the O3 cow price in ROI decreased by 6.7p/kg to 392p/kg last week which puts it 6.5p/kg below the same price in NI.

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

W/E 13/05/23	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	500.4	468.8	512.2	504.7	505.2	507.3
	R3	495.4	460.9	506.8	498.6	497.8	499.7
	R4	494.9	463.2	509.0	501.7	494.1	503.3
	O3	481.5	452.3	492.2	479.2	479.0	479.1
AVG	485.0	-	506.3	492.7	488.4	487.0	493.4
Heifers	U3	502.4	474.8	513.9	508.3	510.4	510.4
	R3	496.1	464.2	505.6	498.1	499.0	499.0
	R4	492.4	465.9	509.7	500.3	496.1	502.1
	O3	482.9	457.5	480.9	478.6	472.2	474.4
AVG	486.7	-	505.7	491.7	485.0	478.5	489.9
Young Bulls	U3	489.8	459.8	505.8	498.6	497.3	501.3
	R3	483.6	448.4	500.3	494.7	491.6	494.4
	O3	468.6	434.6	481.9	460.9	462.3	468.0
AVG	470.8	-	501.0	491.5	481.8	485.1	488.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6,494	-	5,489	6,476	7,410	5,136	24,511
Cows	O3	398.5	392.0	417.9	408.7	413.2	412.1
	O4	402.9	391.1	424.3	411.7	413.9	413.6
	P2	359.8	354.1	377.4	374.9	368.3	369.2
	P3	380.1	376.2	391.1	393.3	389.5	389.9
AVG	372.6	-	414.1	385.3	381.5	373.1	384.0

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.97p 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 13/05/23	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	499.6	502.4	489.7
R3	494.4	496.1	482.3
O+3	487.1	488.1	471.9

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 13/05/23	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	290.2	307.5	322.8	337.5
P2	316.8	334.8	356.5	373.8
P3	328.2	357.0	375.0	382.7
O3	-	357.7	390.7	399.6
O4	-	378.7	389.7	403.8
R3	-	-	-	416.9

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 15/05/23	Next Week 22/05/23
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg	620 - 630p	600 - 620p
R3 Spring Lambs up to 22kg	660 - 670p	650 - 660p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 29/04/23	W/E 06/05/23	W/E 13/05/23
NI L/W Hoggets	536.4	553.4	549.9
NI L/W Spring Lambs	615.9	635.4	627.9
NI D/W Hoggets	613.3	626.8	642.9
NI D/W Spring Lambs	638.8	648.8	659.4
GB D/W Hoggets	654.9	669.3	671.5
GB D/W Spring Lambs	-	720.5	728.5
ROI D/W	646.9	646.4	652.9

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Base quotes from the major processors for R3 grade lambs ended the week ranging from 660-670p/kg up to 21kg. with quotes of 650-660p/kg expected on Monday. Throughput in local plants last week totalled 7,134 head, 1,473 more lambs than the previous week owing to the four day working week. Throughput of lambs/hoggets to date in 2023 has totalled 156,612 head, a 26,237 head or 20 per cent increase on the same period in 2022 when 130,375 lambs/hoggets were slaughtered. Lamb exports to ROI last week for direct slaughter totalled 2,391 head, back 1,739 head from the previous week. The average deadweight lamb price in NI last week strengthened by 10.6p/kg from the previous week to 659.4p/kg. Meanwhile in ROI the deadweight trade for lambs improved last week with the combined average hogget/lamb price up 6.5p/kg to 652.9p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

Spring lamb numbers in local marts were similar on last week with the trade slightly softer. In Kilrea on Monday 280 lambs sold from 620-649p/kg compared to 250 lambs last week selling from 610-652p/kg. In Markethill on Monday a good show of 350 lambs sold from 600-648p/kg compared to 425 lambs last week selling from 620-687p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 399 lambs sold from 590-625p/kg (avg 602p/kg) compared to an entry of 470 lambs last week selling from 590-630p/kg (avg 624p/kg). Hogget numbers in local sale rings recorded a significant decline this week with prices ranging from 510-622p/kg. The top reported price for cull ewes was £300 in Ballymena this week.

LATEST LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 13/05/23	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	285	324	300	215	284	250
Friesians	225	260	235	200	224	210
Heifers	282	326	300	230	281	255
Beef Cows	242	328	260	200	241	220
Dairy Cows	162	199	175	75	161	118
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	300	389	340	200	299	250
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	250	315	275	180	249	215
Bullocks over 500kg	275	339	295	200	274	230
Heifers up to 450kg	270	320	300	175	269	225
Heifers over 450kg	250	335	275	170	249	210
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	425	620	500	275	420	345
Continental Heifers	375	530	435	250	370	310
Friesian Bulls	160	270	200	80	155	115
Holstein Bulls	-	-	-	5	45	30

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 13/05/23		Lambs			
To: 18/05/23		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Swatragh	180	544	617	-
	Omagh	67	601	633	-
Monday	Kilrea	280	620	649	-
	Markethill	350	600	648	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	390	600	650	-
	Rathfriland	399	590	625	602
Wednesday	Ballymena	907	610	690	639
	Enniskillen	192	600	675	-
	Arroy	164	650	685	-

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