

LMC – LOOKING BACK ON A DECADE OF CONTINUOUS SUCCESS

Balmoral Show always provides an excellent opportunity to meet and greet stakeholders, to reflect on industry developments in the period since the last show and also to look forward to what's on the agenda over the coming months. This year's Balmoral Show marked the 10th anniversary of Ian Stevenson's appointment as chief executive of the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC). It has been a decade that has seen the role of the commission develop in a number of ways, all adding to the value that the organisation delivers to cattle and sheep farmers and processors throughout Northern Ireland.

Image 1: LMC Stand at Balmoral Show 2021



Take the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) as a case in point. Under the auspices of the Commission, the Scheme has helped to deliver improved standards relating to livestock traceability, animal welfare, the health and safety of both livestock and farm workers, the more effective use of farm inputs, the impact that cattle and sheep farms have on the environment around them and the more effective use of veterinary medicines.

All of these improvements have impacted positively on both farmers and consumers in equal measure.

Significantly, all of the changes made to FQAS over the past ten years have been introduced courtesy of a commitment on the part of LMC to work closely with farmers and processors: explaining the reasons for change and spelling out the benefits they can deliver at farm level and the wider supply chain.

As a result, the vast majority of Northern Ireland's cattle and sheep producers fully appreciate the impact that FQAS has on the final price they receive for their stock. It is a genuine supply chain partnership, where all parties are concerned.

Of equal importance is the reliance placed by all red meat stakeholder groups on FQAS as a means of demonstrating and communicating key, production-related facts to consumers and the public at large.

Looking to the future, FQAS will be used as a core platform in helping to secure the sustainability

targets set for the cattle and sheep sectors. And, in many ways, this is already happening, for example in driving towards the eradication of BVD.

Recent months have seen the principles established relating to the attainment of protected geographical indication for Irish grass fed beef. Brussels is currently scrutinising the initial application by the Republic of Ireland to register the PGI and once this stage is complete a road map to the securing of Northern Ireland participation in the geography of the PGI has been identified by the beef sectors and Government Departments on the island of Ireland.

The challenge of getting us there is now being actively addressed by all the competent parties. Here in Northern Ireland a working group comprising representatives from LMC, industry partners, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the College of Food, Agriculture and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) are working through the process for verification of the criteria that have already been identified as being in critical in making the grass fed PGI a reality.

But, already, it is clear that collection of the on-farm information, which FQAS can deliver, will be critically important in delivering the success of the project. Moreover, it is also clear that the assurance scheme inspections can be easily enhanced in order to provide additional information, which will be needed to help inform the carbon credentials of FQAS farmers in Northern Ireland.

Image 2: NIFQA Standard and Rules front cover



Another tremendous success secured by LMC over the past 10 years has been the development of its working relationship with schools.

The current academic year will see the commission hosting 375 school cookery demonstrations in post primary schools across

Northern Ireland. This fact is impressive enough in its own right. But it merely represents the tip of a very large iceberg when it comes to assessing the scope of the relationship that LMC enjoys with teachers and those charged with the education of tomorrow's consumers.

First off, the 375 figure is significant in that it represents the maximum number of cookery demonstrations that the commission can logistically cater for in any single academic year. But adding to its significance is the fact that a demand of this magnitude at school level reflects the strong trust that teachers have in LMC delivering impartial information regarding the important role of beef and lamb within a balanced diet.

Recent years have also seen aspects of FQAS referenced at GCSE level and the scheme is included as a formal element of the curriculum for A Level students studying Nutrition and Food Science. Students must be able to identify the NIFQA logo and demonstrate understanding of its purpose and application.

The universally accepted credibility of LMC has been at the heart of all these developments. And in a modern world where such a virtue is as hard to find as hens' teeth, this is a state of affairs that should give farmers and processors tremendous assurance regarding the role that the commission plays on their behalf.

Brexit is now a reality and significant change is coming, where the delivery of future support mechanisms for the beef and lamb sectors is concerned.

Significantly, LMC has been to the fore in funding critically important research, aimed at assessing the support options that will best deliver for local livestock producers in a world where securing sustainability for both farmers and consumers will be the main priority.

Projects of this nature have always been developed in conjunction with other industry stakeholders, including the Ulster Farmers' Union and the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters' Association. Such an approach has served to put Northern Ireland farmers ahead of the curve, when it comes to determining their futures. The most recent initiative of this kind was LMC's commissioning of the Andersons Centre to review the post-Brexit support options for Northern Ireland's beef and sheep sector. This followed-on from stakeholder engagement work carried out in 2018 by DAERA.

The end result was the identification of a cohesive policy framework for beef and sheep, much of which was referenced in the 'Future Agricultural Policy Framework Portfolio', recently published by Northern Ireland's farm minister Edwin Poots.

There is no aspect of beef and sheep production in Northern Ireland that LMC does not interact with in a positive and cohesive manner.

Price reporting has been an important activity undertaken by the commission since its inception. As part of this remit, the organisation was responsible for computing and communicating Northern Ireland's official deadweight cattle prices to the European Commission in Brussels. This role is now undertaken in a UK context and the transparency and independence that LMC brings to its market intelligence and analysis work is well recognised and valued by stakeholders.

LMC has also been to the fore in getting access for Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb to a range of countries around the world. The last decade has seen significant new opportunities open up in Hong Kong, Canada, the Philippines, Japan, South Africa and USA and this market access work gathers pace with every year that passes.

The last decade has also thrown up a number of specific opportunities, the realisation of which required the bespoke input of LMC. Chief among these was Northern Ireland's securing of BSE Negligible Risk Status back in 2017.

Image 3: LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson



Not only did the Commission pay the submission fee to the accrediting body – the World Organisation for Animal Health – staff also played a key role in developing the overall submission that was officially presented on behalf of the local beef industry.

All of this work and a lot more besides, have been achieved with a dedicated and knowledgeable staff team at LMC, who with the support and strategic direction of commission board members can look back on the last 10 years with a tremendous amount of satisfaction.

LMC is funded by a levy paid in equal measure by farmers and red meat processors. The recent history of the organisation confirms its ability to deliver in spades for its 'stakeholders'. This is a scenario that should give all the stakeholder groups within the beef and lamb sectors tremendous confidence as they look to the future.

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 base quotes & Mart results
Updated 5pm Daily
Tel: 028 9263 3011

Text Service

Free weekly base quotes sent to your mobile phone
Email: bulletin@lmcni.com
Tel: 028 9263 3000

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 27/09/21	Next Week 04/10/21
Prime		
U-3	384 - 394p	384 - 394p
R-3	378 - 388p	378 - 388p
O+3	372 - 382p	372 - 382p
P+3	318 - 332p	318 - 332p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3	280 - 300p	260 - 300p

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 this week continued to range from 384-394p/kg with similar quotes expected early next week. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows are ranging from 280-300p/kg with the majority of plants quoting 290-300p/kg, however quotes expected for early next week are to range from 260-300p/kg.

Throughput of prime cattle in NI plants last week totalled 7,056 head, an increase of 294 head when compared to the previous week. This is also an increase of 207 head from the 6,849 prime cattle processed in the same week in 2020. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 2,175 head a marginal decrease when compared to the previous week.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 338 head with 165 cows also imported. Meanwhile there continues to be no cattle imports from GB for direct slaughter in NI plants. Exports from NI to ROI consisted of no prime cattle and 40 cows, with a further 19 prime cattle and six cows exported out of NI for direct slaughter in GB.

The NI deadweight prime cattle trade strengthened last week and reported increases across the majority of grades from the previous week. The average NI steer price increased by a penny to 391.8p/kg with the R3 steer price up 1.3p/kg to 402.2p/kg. In the same week in 2020, the R3 steer price was 365.8p/kg, 36.4p/kg behind current levels. Meanwhile the average NI heifer price was up 0.9p/kg to 394.4p/kg, with the R3 heifer price down 0.2p/kg to 400.6p/kg. In the same week in 2020, the R3 heifer price was 365.9p/kg, 34.7p/kg behind current levels. The average young bull price in NI last week was up 3.0p/kg to 382.7p/kg, while the R3 young bull price was up 2.5p/kg to 392.7p/kg. The deadweight cow trade in NI remained steady with the average cow price up 1.4p/kg to 281.8p/kg and the O3 cow price up 1.7p/kg to 315.6p/kg.

The average steer price in GB last week was 411.7p/kg, up 0.4p/kg from the previous week, while the R3 steer price remained steady at 417.1p/kg. This places the R3 steer price in GB at 14.9p/kg above the same price in NI. Last week the average heifer price in GB was back 0.6p/kg to 409.8p/kg, with the R3 heifer price up 0.3p/kg to 418p/kg. This places the R3 heifer price in GB 17.4p/kg above the same price in NI. Meanwhile the GB cow trade remained under pressure with all grades back from the previous week. The average cow price was back 6.5p/kg to 279.4p/kg, while the O3 cow price was 306.7p/kg, back 4.6p/kg from the previous week.

In ROI last week the deadweight cattle trade sharpened across all grades from the previous week. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 360.2p/kg, up 2.6p/kg from the previous week. This puts the R3 steer price in ROI at 42.0p/kg behind the same price in NI. Meanwhile the R3 heifer price in ROI was up 2.3p/kg to the equivalent of 363.4p/kg. This puts the R3 heifer price in ROI at 37.2p/kg behind the same price in NI. The O3 cow price reported a increase of 3.3p/kg to 304.9p/kg.

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

	W/E 25/09/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	402.3	369.7	420.1	419.3	423.0	426.8	421.8
	R3	402.2	360.2	418.8	417.6	415.7	417.3	417.1
	R4	400.6	360.8	420.9	423.2	416.4	417.3	420.5
	O3	392.6	346.0	405.4	404.7	392.9	398.3	399.2
	AVG	391.8	-	417.2	413.7	407.2	407.6	411.7
Heifers	U3	403.1	374.1	427.8	424.8	427.2	425.1	426.4
	R3	400.6	363.4	421.4	418.7	416.0	416.1	418.0
	R4	398.7	364.4	421.3	421.8	416.1	417.4	419.8
	O3	393.3	354.0	404.5	401.3	388.6	391.9	395.0
	AVG	394.4	-	419.1	413.0	402.3	402.0	409.8
Young Bulls	U3	398.6	355.9	414.5	417.7	416.1	420.6	416.3
	R3	392.7	347.1	405.8	412.1	411.2	407.9	409.8
	O3	373.2	335.0	374.1	375.9	383.0	384.8	378.3
	AVG	382.7	-	401.4	400.3	399.4	394.7	399.6
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5756	-	6557	6952	7339	4444	25292
Cows	O3	315.6	304.9	314.2	303.7	305.6	307.0	306.7
	O4	318.5	305.4	314.2	305.7	304.3	305.6	306.6
	P2	276.0	274.6	266.4	258.9	264.6	273.6	266.8
	P3	296.2	294.3	282.6	278.5	279.1	289.6	282.1
	AVG	281.8	-	308.0	282.6	272.5	277.5	279.4

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=85.75p 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 25/09/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	235	255	243	200	234	217
Friesians	168	190	176	150	167	158
Heifers	225	253	236	200	224	210
Beef Cows	175	216	190	136	174	155
Dairy Cows	120	163	132	100	119	112
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	245	290	265	200	244	220
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	235	285	252	200	234	212
Bullocks over 500kg	220	261	230	185	219	195
Heifers up to 450kg	225	270	240	200	224	210
Heifers over 450kg	230	272	240	185	229	208
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	400	555	440	260	395	325
Continental Heifers	340	500	375	225	335	275
Friesian Bulls	120	180	150	60	115	100
Holstein Bulls	80	120	100	5	75	50

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 25/09/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	402.2	404.2	398.8
R3	399.1	400.1	394.9
O+3	392.5	393.0	378.6

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 25/09/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	211.3	223.5	228.7	243.0
P2	224.3	250.4	275.0	289.6
P3	265.6	275.8	298.0	298.0
O3	-	291.7	304.8	316.9
O4	250.0	302.8	315.4	319.3
R3	256.0	-	-	331.4

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 27/09/21	Next Week 04/10/21
R3 Lambs up to 21kg	480-485p/kg	485-490p/kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 11/09/21	W/E 18/09/21	W/E 25/09/21
NI L/W Lambs	441.9	439.2	450.7
NI D/W Lambs	476.3	469.2	471.7
GB D/W Lambs	526.9	508.4	494.0
ROI D/W	520.2	501.5	510.1

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the major processors for R3 grading lambs ranged from 480-490p/kg up to 21kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. Throughput of lambs last week totalled 9,774, up 300 from the previous week when 9,474 lambs were processed locally. A further 6,678 lambs were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter, a decrease of 587 lambs when compared to the previous week. In the corresponding week in 2020 6,475 lambs were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter. The average deadweight lamb price in NI last week was 471.7p/kg, up 2.5p/kg from the previous week. Meanwhile the deadweight lamb price in ROI was up 8.6p/kg to 510.1p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

The marts continue to report good numbers of lambs passing through the sale rings this week. On Saturday in Omagh a large entry of 1953 lambs sold from 446-485p/kg compared to 582 lambs sold from 468-535p/kg the previous week. In Kilrea on Monday 650 lambs sold from 433-531p/kg compared to 500 lambs sold from 429-473p/kg the previous week. A strong entry from Rathfriland on Tuesday with 1245 lambs sold from 440-559p/kg compared to 705 lambs sold from 434-528p/kg the previous week. On Thursday in Armoys 512 lambs sold from 450-495p/kg compared to 566 lambs sold from 425-465p/kg. Top reported prices for culled ewes ranged from £126-£186 across the marts this week.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 25/09/21		Lambs			
To: 30/09/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	1953	446	485	-
	Swatragh	1925	445	604	-
Monday	Kilrea	650	433	531	-
	Massereene	793	440	474	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	685	440	525	-
	Rathfriland	1245	440	559	467
Wednesday	Ballymena	2008	440	488	455
	Enniskillen	824	430	490	-
	Armoys	512	450	495	-
	Markethill	1450	450	506	-

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