

VETS PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE ACROSS THE ENTIRE AGRI FOOD SECTOR

The recent hosting of the British Veterinary Association's annual dinner in Northern Ireland gave that organisation a much deserved opportunity to highlight the role played by veterinarians across the entire gamut of Northern Ireland's farming and food sectors.

Image 1: British Veterinary Association Logo



This was a point further endorsed by the Livestock and Meat Commission chief executive Ian Stevenson earlier this week. He said: "Not only are vets working ever-closer with farmers, but they are also playing a critically important role in formulating animal health policies that have a direct impact at all levels within our farming and food sectors.

"An excellent example of this latter activity has been veterinary input that has led to the development of Northern Ireland's much

acclaimed APHIS animal movement and traceability system. "This unique facility has played a key role in allowing Northern Ireland's food sector numerous export markets in countries around the world.

"And, no doubt, this momentum will be further built upon courtesy of the replacement for APHIS that is currently under development. "It's often overlooked that veterinary protocols underpin every food export agreement, which underpin the export reliance of our food sector.

Ian continued: "Vets also represent Northern Ireland's key line of defence when it comes to determining which food imports can be allowed into Northern Ireland.

They are also to be found in each of our primary food processing operations, again working to ensure that the meat products that we export meet the quality criteria demanded by consumers here and abroad in full."

And as Ian went on to point out, veterinarians also play a more than important role in helping to develop the medicines that are needed to treat animals in the most effective and humane way possible.

He said: "All of this work is carried out in universities with veterinarians charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the development work is both relevant and ground breaking. "Vets also play a critical role in helping to deliver the reduction in antibiotic usage that will be required over the next decade and beyond.

"Antimicrobial resistance is as much an issue for farmers and production agriculture, as it is for the public at large. "It is more than significant that the campaign to tackle antimicrobial resistance has been identified as a One Health Action Plan, which will require a professional medical and veterinary input in equal measure."

Ian then referred to the evolving role of veterinarians on-farm. "Gone are the days when vets were simply used by farmers to treat sick animals. This relationship has now evolved in ways that allow veterinarians and farmers to work more closely together on an ongoing basis," he said.

"Such an approach is allowing vets to develop specific animal health programmes with their clients. Such an approach is helping to drive down drug usage with farm businesses while also improving the inherent ability of farm animals to achieve higher levels of performance

on a consistent basis.

"The increasing scale of individual farming operations here in Northern Ireland is also allowing vets to have a much greater role when it comes to the development of fertility and nutrition related programmes that are implemented within these businesses."

The LMC representative concluded: "Tremendous work has been carried out by our vets over many years to help secure the highly acclaimed animal health status that Northern Ireland enjoys on a truly global basis. "And this work has been added to by the strategies put in place to help eradicate BVD. Work of this nature continues apace with Johne's the next disease that looks set to be tackled, not just by vets but by the farming industry as a whole.

"But underpinning all of this is the tremendous professionalism demonstrated by our veterinarians on a daily basis. "Vets already play a critically important role within our farming and food sectors and this role may be further expanded as the local food sectors look to a future within which exports will play an even more important role than is the case today."

IS WESTMINSTER BEING DISINGENUOUS TO UK FARMERS?

Livestock and Meat Commission chief executive Ian Stevenson believes there is now a fundamental disconnect between the Westminster government's trade, climate change and food standards' policies. He made this point in the wake of the recent trade deal struck between the UK and New Zealand, adding: "This followed-on, almost directly, from the new trading arrangements announced by London and Canberra.

"Both deals may well combine to allow significant quantities of food come into the UK from the southern hemisphere." Ian continued: "A high proportion of this produce will be subsequently marketed in direct competition with food produced here in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

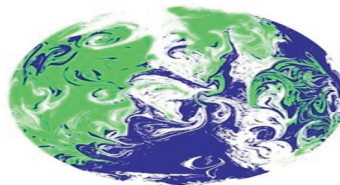
"At a very fundamental level, the food miles associated with these imports must be questioned. But so must the issue of the production standards associated with these imports." The current UK government had previously committed to ensuring that future food imports would in no way compromise the production standards achieved by farmers throughout the UK. "This policy commitment no longer seems credible, given the fact that food accounts for such a significant proportion of the new trading agreements entered into by the UK, New Zealand and Australia. Meanwhile, the COP 26 summit is nearing its

close in Glasgow. Ian Stevenson recognises that Northern Ireland's farming and food sectors must rise to the challenge, from a sustainability point of view. But, in equal measure, he also points to the need for both industries to be fully recognised for the steps they have already taken in this regard. The Commission representative commented: "The most recent figures published by DAERA confirm that the carbon intensity indices associated with the food that we produce here in Northern Ireland have fallen by 62% over the past two decades.

"This is a remarkable achievement and reflects the scope of the farming and food sectors here to significantly reduce their carbon footprints during the period ahead. But the Commission chief executive also believes that carbon mitigation measures cannot be discussed in total isolation. "The future food security of the UK must also be addressed in the context of climate change policy," he said.

"Northern Ireland currently produces 15% of the total food produced in the UK. So we truly punch above our weight in this regard. "The UK's Climate Change Committee, a totally independent body, fully recognises this reality. "This is why it has been deemed appropriate that Northern Ireland should be tasked to achieve an 82% reduction in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 2050, as part of the UK's overall commitment to attain a 'Net Zero' status by the

Image 2: COP 26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow from 31st October to 12th November



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021**

same date." Climate Change Committee chairman Lord Deben addressed the recent pre-COP 26 conference, hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and the Ulster Farmers' Union.

He used this opportunity to again confirm that it is not feasible for Northern Ireland to secure a Net Zero while still maintaining the fabric of its farming and food industries. Ian Stevenson again: "This is the fundamental flaw within the climate change bill introduced at Stormont by Green Party leader Clare Bailley. If introduced, it would seek to secure a Net Zero status for Northern Ireland by 2045.

"All the available science confirms that this is not a realistic target. Its attainment would wreak havoc within the farming and food sectors. "The proposed legislation also fails to recognise that carbon mitigation and food security are two sides of the one coin." Ian concluded: "Farming in

Northern Ireland is committed to meeting the challenge of climate change head on. "In the first instance, securing higher levels of efficiency will allow the industry to lower its carbon footprint significantly.

"Farmers will also be expected to verify the improvements they are making. In part this will be achieved through the use of carbon calculators." But farmers must also be rewarded for the steps they are already taking to help deliver climate change. Huge quantities of carbon dioxide are already sequestered courtesy of the soils, long-term grass leys, hedges and woodlands that make up the very fabric of our farming sector. "It is crucially important that all of this sequestration activity is accurately quantified and local farming businesses credited accordingly."

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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 01/11/21	Next Week 08/11/21
Prime		
U-3	386 - 394p	386 - 394p
R-3	380 - 388p	380 - 388p
O+3	374 - 382p	374 - 382p
P+3	320 - 332p	320 - 332p
Including bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3	260 - 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.

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 30/10/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	402.6	407.7	395.6
R3	398.2	401.9	393.6
O+3	391.1	394.1	379.3

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 30/10/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	202.2	217.5	223.0	239.2
P2	222.8	239.5	260.6	279.8
P3	248.3	276.8	278.8	289.2
O3	243.9	279.9	296.7	308.2
O4	234.0	284.9	291.0	308.7
R3	-	-	316.0	325.3

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the local plants for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 386-394p/kg this week with similar quotes expected for early next week. Base quotes for O+3 grade cows continued to range from 260-300p/kg with the majority of plants quoting in the region of 290-300p/kg.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 7,763 head, back 269 from the previous week, although 210 head higher than cattle throughput in the same week in 2020. Cow throughput in NI last week recorded the highest weekly throughput to date in 2021 with 2,540 cows processed in local plants. This is an increase of 218 cows from the previous week.

Cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants last week consisted of 321 prime cattle and 157 cows. This is well above the 234 prime cattle and 83 cows that were imported from ROI during the corresponding week in 2020. Meanwhile there were no cattle imported from GB for direct slaughter last week. Exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of two prime cattle and 47 cows with a further 18 prime cattle and 17 cows exported from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The NI deadweight trade for prime cattle reported a strengthening in prices last week across the majority of grades when compared to the previous week. The average NI steer price last week was back marginally 0.4p/kg to 391.8p/kg while the R3 steer price was up 0.7p/kg to 401.5p/kg. In the corresponding week last year, the R3 steer price was 369.6p/kg, 31.9p/kg behind current levels. Last week the average heifer price in NI reported an increase of 0.3p/kg to 395.4p/kg while the R3 heifer price reported a decrease of 1.7p/kg to 401.5p/kg. Meanwhile the average young bull price was up 3.6p/kg to 378.2p/kg while the R3 young bull price was up 1.7p/kg to 390.6p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2020, the R3 young bull price was 357p/kg, 33.6p/kg behind current levels. The NI cow trade came under pressure last week with prices back across all grades. The average cow price was back 3.9p/kg to 275.0p/kg with the O3 cow price back 3.9p/kg to 306.2p/kg.

In GB last week the deadweight prime cattle prices reported came under pressure from the previous week. The average steer price in GB last week held steady at 410.6p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 0.7p/kg to 418.4p/kg. This brings the differential between the GB and NI R3 steer price to 16.9p/kg or £59 on a 350kg carcass. The average heifer price in GB last week was back by a penny to 408p/kg with the R3 heifer price back 1.2p/kg to 416.8p/kg. Meanwhile the average young bull price in GB last week was back 1.4p/kg to 395.9p/kg with the R3 young bull price back 3.4p/kg to 409.5p/kg. The cow trade in GB continued to remain under pressure last week with prices back 4-6p/kg from the previous week. The average cow price was back 5.3p/kg to 260p/kg with the O3 cow price back 5p/kg to 289.7p/kg.

The R3 steer price in ROI last week was marginally back 0.1p/kg to 352.8p/kg, this is 48.7p/kg behind the equivalent price in NI. Meanwhile the R3 heifer price in ROI last week was back 0.3p/kg to 356.9p/kg.

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

	W/E 30/10/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	403.5	362.3	422.8	419.3	425.7	423.7	422.7
	R3	401.5	352.8	421.8	420.4	416.8	414.8	418.4
	R4	399.8	352.5	422.9	424.9	417.2	414.1	421.9
	O3	391.5	337.8	406.9	400.6	393.1	394.8	397.0
	AVG	391.8	-	418.8	413.4	405.3	403.5	410.6
Heifers	U3	406.5	366.9	426.0	428.4	432.2	419.9	427.6
	R3	401.5	356.9	419.8	417.4	418.6	411.4	416.8
	R4	399.7	357.9	422.0	422.9	417.9	413.6	420.3
	O3	393.9	348.2	401.0	401.4	391.1	390.2	394.4
	AVG	395.4	-	418.5	412.6	401.5	398.1	408.0
Young Bulls	U3	392.6	345.6	403.4	414.8	412.4	411.5	408.3
	R3	390.6	338.5	406.6	406.3	415.2	408.9	409.5
	O3	373.8	328.6	384.1	379.6	384.8	357.3	381.2
	AVG	378.2	-	394.6	394.1	399.2	387.7	395.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6069	-	6051	6236	6847	4591	23725	
Cows	O3	306.2	295.4	290.9	287.3	293.2	286.9	289.7
	O4	307.6	295.6	294.0	290.8	288.0	284.6	289.1
	P2	264.9	260.9	248.8	240.3	252.5	249.5	250.0
	P3	286.7	284.5	257.7	257.7	268.6	264.5	265.6
	AVG	275.0	-	285.2	264.3	256.6	251.5	260.0

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=84.39p 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 30/10/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	243	256	246	200	242	220
Friesians	159	174	168	148	157	151
Heifers	215	244	225	180	214	200
Beef Cows	175	209	187	135	174	148
Dairy Cows	112	139	120	75	111	100
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	235	308	250	205	234	212
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	225	283	240	185	224	200
Bullocks over 500kg	210	246	225	175	209	198
Heifers up to 450kg	225	283	238	180	224	200
Heifers over 450kg	200	230	215	170	199	185
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	350	480	410	240	345	290
Continental Heifers	300	465	370	180	295	230
Friesian Bulls	110	235	170	14	100	50
Holstein Bulls	70	150	95	5	65	45

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 01/11/21	Next Week 08/11/21
R3 Lambs up to 22kg	500-510p/kg	520-525p/kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 16/10/21	W/E 23/10/21	W/E 30/10/21
NI L/W Lambs	459.2	470.6	484.2
NI D/W Lambs	482.4	487.7	497.0
GB D/W Lambs	528.3	529.9	533.2
ROI D/W	524.5	531.3	537.0

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the plants strengthened as the week progressed and ended the week ranging from 515-520p/kg up to 22kg. Quotes for next week are expected to range from 520-525p/kg. There were 8,950 lambs processed in local plants last week, up 411 head from the previous week. However, this a noticeable decrease of 1,270 lambs when compared to the same week in 2020. Lambs exported to ROI last week for direct slaughter decreased by 180 head to 7,387 lambs. In the same week last year 5,472 lambs were exported to ROI for direct slaughter. The average lamb price in NI last week was 497.0p/kg, up almost 10p/kg from the previous week.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

The marts have reported steady numbers of lambs passing through the sale rings this week. In Swatragh on Saturday 1175 lambs sold from 439-610p/kg compared to last week when 930 lambs sold from 447-512p/kg. On Monday in Massereene 802 lambs sold from 470-505p/kg compared to 810 lambs sold from 460-476p/kg the week before. In Enniskillen on Wednesday 838 lambs sold from 460-558p/kg compared to 802 lambs sold from 440-510p/kg last week. In Arroy this week 564 lambs sold from 475-530p/kg compared to 412 lambs sold from 460-525p/kg last week. Top reported prices for cull ewes ranged from £112-£183 across the marts this week.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 30/10/21		Lambs			
To: 04/11/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	1095	506	541	-
	Swatragh	1175	439	610	-
Monday	Kilrea	880	458	685	-
	Massereene	802	470	505	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	515	475	575	-
	Rathfriland	671	480	566	502
Wednesday	Ballymena	2755	490	535	486
	Enniskillen	838	460	558	-
	Arroy	564	475	530	-
	Markethill	1130	490	565	-

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