

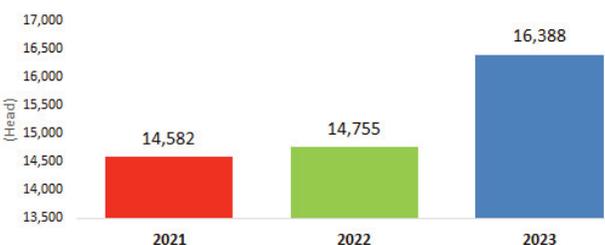
DEADWEIGHT CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 01/01/24	Next Week 08/01/24
Prime		
U-3	450 - 458p	452 - 458p
R-3	444 - 452p	446 - 452p
O+3	438 - 446p	440 - 446p
P+3	382 - 390p	384 - 390p
Cows		
O+3	312 - 320p	314 - 320p

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.

Prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter 2021-2023.
Source: DAERA.



REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 30/12/23	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	474.5	477.7	456.8
R3	471.4	474.1	451.2
O+3	463.0	458.7	448.4

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 30/12/23	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	210.7	227.3	238.8	250.3
P2	231.2	259.4	278.8	293.5
P3	246.0	267.3	297.3	306.2
O3	267.3	338.5	311.6	328.7
O4	-	308.2	326.1	332.5
R3	-	-	-	358.9

Deadweight Cattle Trade

The deadweight cattle trade in NI strengthened this week with base quotes from the plants ending this week ranging from 450-458p/kg for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle. The major plants are quoting 452-458p/kg for steers and heifers early next week.

Producers should note the deadweight cattle trade continued to strengthen in NI last week. The average price paid for an R3 grading steer locally last week was 475.5p/kg with 476.1p/kg paid on average for an R3 grading heifer. This is a substantial differential between base quotes and paid prices and producers should consider this when negotiating sales. Base quotes for good quality O+3 grading cows early next week are expected to be in the region of 314-320p/kg. Again producers are reminded to use these base quotes as a guide, as they are intended to indicate the direction in which the trade is travelling.

The deadweight cattle trade in NI continued reporting improvements last week across the majority of grades, with all types of cattle reporting strong increases in category averages. The average price paid for steers, heifers and young bulls rose by 6.8p/kg, 10p/kg and 3.3p/kg respectively. The cow trade also ended the year on a strong footing with the average price paid per kilo up 20p/kg on the previous week to 298.4p/kg. A strengthening trade was also reported in ROI and GB as the 2023 year came to an end. Tight supplies of cattle is expected to continue having an influence on the market into the new year.

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

W/E 30/12/23	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	475.6	445.8	501.4	504.0	502.5	504.7
	R3	475.5	440.0	500.0	503.5	491.6	495.7
	R4	471.5	445.3	503.0	503.2	491.3	493.5
	O3	469.1	432.2	489.4	478.9	475.3	473.3
	AVG	467.3	-	499.8	494.8	484.1	483.6
Heifers	U3	479.1	453.2	506.6	502.4	507.2	508.4
	R3	476.1	442.8	498.9	493.8	493.8	493.5
	R4	474.1	444.6	499.7	497.9	491.6	494.4
	O3	464.6	437.2	480.5	479.5	473.9	472.3
	AVG	469.7	-	497.9	491.7	484.3	481.7
Young Bulls	U3	452.8	428.6	494.1	494.2	479.6	412.5
	R3	448.6	425.9	483.3	485.8	482.6	472.1
	O3	444.0	415.6	430.7	459.2	447.4	442.3
	AVG	446.4	-	480.6	476.7	467.1	447.0
	Prime Cattle Price Reported	3,745	-	3,757	3,622	4,782	2,984
Cows	O3	327.2	353.2	345.4	347.5	334.1	332.4
	O4	331.6	356.3	354.6	354.1	330.2	333.5
	P2	282.0	318.0	291.8	298.9	285.7	293.7
	P3	300.3	331.9	304.3	313.3	310.0	312.9
	AVG	298.4	-	354.3	322.7	299.5	298.2

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.93p 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

DEADWEIGHT SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 01/01/24	Next Week 08/01/24
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg	530 - 535p	530 - 535p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 16/12/23	W/E 23/12/23	W/E 30/12/23
NI L/W Lambs	472.0	489.1	-
NI D/W Lambs	535.7	535.7	534.7
GB D/W Lambs	585.3	584.3	598.4
ROI D/W	554.1	558.7	566.0

Sheep Trade

Base quotes from the major NI processing plants for R3 grade hoggets ended this week ranging from 530-535p/kg up to 22kg. Next week the deadweight sheep trade in NI is expected to remain steady. Producers are reminded to produce hoggets as close to specification as possible as weight over 22kg generates no additional return.

Hogget exports to ROI last week for direct slaughter totalled 4,757 head, bringing total direct slaughter hogget/lamb exports during 2023 to 290,688 head. This was an increase of 3,385 head from the 287,303 hoggets/lambs exported to ROI during 2022.

The deadweight lamb price in NI ended 2023 at 534.7p/kg which was back by a penny from the previous week. During the corresponding week of 2022 the NI deadweight lamb price was similar at 532.5p/kg. Meanwhile, last week in local marts the trade for hoggets was reported to be stronger than previous weeks. The deadweight sheep trade in GB remained strong last week, ending 2023 at an average price of 598.4p/kg, an increase of 14.1p/kg from the previous week. Meanwhile, the average deadweight lamb price in ROI ended the year on a strengthening note at the equivalent of 566p/kg.

LIVEWEIGHT SHEEP TRADE

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 30/12/23		Lambs			
To: 04/01/24		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Swatragh	700	478	524	-
Monday	Markethill	570	475	510	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	490	488	545	-
	Rathfriland	400	480	560	496
Wednesday	Ballymena	2012	478	542	492
	Enniskillen	309	460	500	-
	Armoy	382	485	531	-

CAFRE OPEN DAYS
FOR FARMERS AND AGRI CONTRACTORS

SLURRY MANAGEMENT

TUESDAY 16 JANUARY
10AM - 2PM
Greenmount Campus
45 Tirgracy Road
Antrim
BT41 4PS

TUESDAY 23 JANUARY
11AM - 1PM
Rex Wilson's farm
22 Ballymoyle Road
Coagh
Cookstown
BT80 0AD

TUESDAY 30 JANUARY
11AM - 1PM
Ian McClelland's farm
64 Moss Road
Banbridge
BT32 3NZ

BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW



SCAN HERE

OR VISIT
www.cafre.ac.uk/slurry-management



LMC INTERIM CEO REFLECTS ON 2023 AND LOOKS FORWARD TO 2024

The outlook for the local beef and lamb sector is promising as we move into 2024, according to LMC interim Chief Executive, Colin Smith.

Reflecting on 2023, Colin acknowledged that it had been a year of peaks and troughs in all aspects of farming life.

The year began with buoyant trade returning record prices, with more challenging market conditions in latter months. Further challenges were presented due to rising inflation, labour shortages and extremely challenging weather conditions, the effects of which continue to be felt by farmers on the ground at this time.

Yet, as we embark on another year the air is mixed with cautious optimism and robust resilience. "Many of the issues that took centre stage in 2023 will remain in play throughout 2024 and beyond," Colin explained, he added, "The bigger picture, issues such as evidencing our sustainability credentials, the roll out of future farm support measures, sustainable farm incomes and market access will remain to the fore. However, adding to these matters will be several other priorities that will serve to frame the development of the ruminant sectors throughout Northern Ireland.

Image 1: Colin Smith, Interim Chief Executive at LMC.



Evidencing our sustainability credentials

"In NI our farmers produce beef and lamb which is among the most sustainable in the world," Colin stated, adding that the industry is collaboratively working to evidence its sustainability credentials in the strongest form.

"Evidencing our sustainability credentials will enable the industry to progress on a strong footing, this is a shared vision. The year past saw the formation of the Carbon Steering Group (CSG), an alliance which brings together farmers and industry partners from across the agri-food industry.

"To date, LMC has spearheaded groundbreaking work on development of a bespoke carbon survey which captures on-farm data and delivers valuable information to assist farmers and their advisers to tailor future sustainability improvement pathways for their farms."

Throughout 2023 LMC successfully completed a research and development phase of carbon data collection. A much larger programme funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is planned to begin in 2024. This will allow a baseline carbon calculation to be created for all farms across NI over the next number of years. Colin added, "In addition to this we have seen the further roll out of the Soil Nutrient Health Scheme and strong progress on Sustainable Ruminant Genetics. These initiatives are the envy of many stakeholders in GB.

Producer organisations have shown strong leadership in championing this work."

Irish Grass Fed Beef

The latter part of 2023 brought welcome confirmation from the European Commission that its scrutiny of the amended application to register a PGI for Irish Grass Fed Beef on an all-island geography fulfilled regulatory requirements.

"This is another step forward in our ability to promote our sustainable credentials. The PGI will add another string to our bow and enable positive marketing of our beef under this exclusive banner in the years ahead, however there is some work to be done to establish a verification system before the full potential of this new PGI can be reached," Colin remarked.

Future Farm Support

A timeline for the rollout of a new programme of farm support and development was published by DAERA in June.

Colin noted, "The targeting of support points very clearly to sustainable food production. Since the publication of the timeline we have seen movement on a number areas, including the Ruminant Genetics programme and confirmation that the Beef Carbon Reduction Scheme will commence from this month onward.

"Over the next four years this scheme will support a reduction in the maximum age at slaughter of clean finished beef animals. Farmers slaughtering beef cattle at or below the target age will receive a payment for each eligible animal. The Scheme aims to help improve efficiencies for beef producers while reducing emissions. "We anticipate movement on the Farming for Carbon Benchmarking in early 2024 among other measures. This suite of support measures will require some adjustment and it is important that farmers are kept fully informed of changes as they roll out," Colin said.

NIBL FQAS

The Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) closed out 2023 on a strong and stable footing.

"NIBL FQAS membership has remained steady over the past 12 months," Colin confirmed, noting that overall membership sits at approximately 11,500 producers. The campaign to encourage responsible use of antimicrobials continued to gather momentum in 2023. A three year programme of free training courses on AMR usage concluded at the end of October. To date over 10,000 farmers across NI have undertaken training with many very experienced farmers reflecting back to LMC that the knowledge gained was invaluable to their animal health planning. The LMC representative sees NIBL FQAS continuing to play an important role in the future of the agri-food industry.

"NIBL FQAS has established itself as an integral part of the agri-food industry, providing unrivalled assurances to consumers about the quality and traceability of beef and lamb. Over the past three decades the Scheme has continuously evolved in line with changing consumer demands and legislative requirements. NIBL FQAS provides a foundation and gateway to access key markets, and this will remain unchanged in 2024.

"At a fundamental level we will continue to support our farmer members and meet them at their point of access, on the ground at livestock markets across NI. Further support is available via email and telephone. NIBL FQAS mart clinic dates for January are now confirmed with details available on the LMC website."

Education Programme

The Commission's education programme enjoyed continued success over the past 12 months. Commenting, Colin said, "The team successfully delivered 475 in school beef and lamb cookery demonstrations in primary and post primary schools across the province, reaching approximately 10,000 pupils.

"In addition, 2023 saw the return of the Meat4School's competition and highly valued red meat workshops which enable Food and Nutrition teachers to develop their theoretical knowledge, practical skills and confidence when preparing and cooking red meat."

Throughout the year, LMC was involved in a number of consumer facing promotional activities and industry initiatives including Balmoral Show, Beef Week, Love Lamb Week and Open Farm Weekend. Looking ahead Colin confirmed, "Plans are in place to grow and strengthen the Commission's education programme and consumer promotions work to share the positive attributes of NIFQA beef and lamb. This will include the relaunch of a multi-platform advertising campaign in 2024."

Market Information

LMC's Market Information department continues to examine and inform the NI red meat industry. Supporting producers and processors with their decision making through the provision of accurate and timely information, thus creating a better understanding of the trade. Colin said, "The beginning of 2023 painted a positive picture with a buoyant market generating positive returns. As the year progressed the marketplace became more challenging with fluctuations in returns. Poor weather, challenging harvest conditions and high input costs added to the challenges faced by beef and sheep producers.

"As 2023 ended we saw a tightening of supplies, driving an upward shift in paid prices for cattle. Farmers will be hoping that Spring comes early this year to ease pressure on fodder supplies that may have been of limited quality given the challenging harvest conditions in 2023."

New LMC Board

The Autumn months marked the beginning a new chapter for LMC with the appointment of a new complement of Board members. September saw Joe Stewart take the reigns as Chair of the Commission, stepping up to the role following a previous term serving as a Board member. In the weeks that followed a full complement of Board members were appointed. With the Board now in place, it is anticipated that recruitment for a permanent CEO will commence early this year.

The Outlook

Looking forward, 2024 is shaping up to be an interesting year for LMC and agriculture in Northern Ireland. Summarising, the LMC interim chief executive, Colin Smith said, "Sustainability will continue to dominate decisions within the industry, characterised with the forthcoming future support arrangements for the agricultural sector. "I am acutely aware that over 18,000 beef and sheep farmers are at the heart of the agricultural sector. They must have a sustainable income to deliver the high-quality local produce enjoyed by millions of consumers globally. The ongoing work in this sphere aims to ensure that our world leading produce continues to gain the recognition it deserves and market access we require. This goes hand in hand with ensuring that farmers receive equitable returns for their produce." LMC will continue to work on behalf of the industry to support farmers and stakeholders through another farming year in 2024."



Contact us:

W: www.lmcni.com

T: 028 9263 3000

LMC does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any third party information provided in or included with this publication. LMC hereby disclaims any responsibility for error, omission or inaccuracy in the information, misinterpretation or any other loss, disappointment, negligence or damage caused by reliance on third party information.

Not for further publication or distribution without prior permission from LMC

