

# DEADWEIGHT BEEF TRADE STEADIES AS PRIME CATTLE SUPPLIES TIGHTEN

Base quotes from the local processing plants for in spec U-3 grading steers and heifers ranged from 350-358p/kg this week with the majority of plants quoting in the region of 354-356p/kg. This is similar to the quoted prices last week.

While some cattle are bought at these quoted base prices they generally act as a starting point for negotiation between the individual producer and the processor. Reports have indicated higher prices are available than these

base quotes suggest, particularly for cattle that meet current market specifications and this is also evident in the reported prices as outlined in the tables on the opposite page.

The R3 steer price in NI last week was 364.1p/kg which was very similar to the previous week as outlined in **Figure 1**. This stability in deadweight prices follows on from three consecutive weeks in which the R3 steer price in NI declined. A similar trend can be observed in R3 heifer prices with an

average price last week of 365.7p/kg. With prices last week holding fairly similar to the previous week across the range of grades it indicates some signs of the market stabilising.

Despite the downward movement in paid prices for prime cattle during August 2020 the deadweight trade remains well ahead of this time last year as indicated in **Figure 1**. In the week ending 21/09/2019 the R3 steer price in NI was 323.1p/kg. This is 41p/kg behind current levels which is the equivalent of £144 on a 350kg carcass. The current level of trade is just ahead of 2018 levels with an R3 steer price in the week ending 22/09/2018 of 359.7p/kg. This is 4.4p/kg or £15 behind current levels.

Some of the major processors have reported a tightening in the availability of cattle for slaughter with prime cattle throughput last week of 6,962 head. While this was similar to the previous weeks it was almost ten per cent lower than the 7,690 prime cattle processed in the same week last year as indicated in **Figure 2**.

This tightening in availability is also reflected in the latest cattle population

**Figure 2: Weekly prime cattle slaughterings in Northern Ireland from 2018-2020 YTD. Source: DAERA**

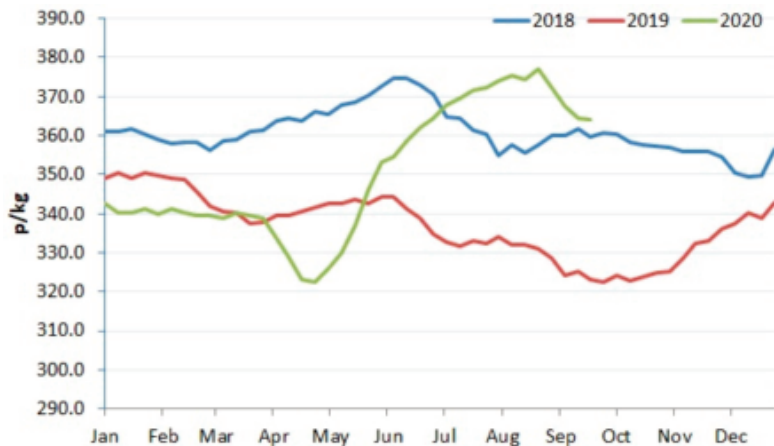


data available from APHIS. At the start of September 2020 there were 241,528 cattle for beef production on local farms, back 9,136 head or 3.6 per cent from the same time last year.

There has been a strong increase in the number of prime cattle being imported from ROI for direct slaughter in recent months. This increase in imports is in response to tighter domestic supplies of cattle and a widening price differential between the two regions.

During the six week period ending 19/09/2020 there were 2,148 prime cattle imported from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants. This is a notable increase from the 1,172 head imported during the same period in 2019. However despite the increase in the level of prime cattle imports it is worth acknowledging that these imported cattle accounted for just over five per cent of the total prime cattle kill in NI during the last six weeks.

**Figure 1: Weekly R3 steer prices in Northern Ireland from 2018-2020 YTD. Source: LMC Price Reporting**



# MORE BEEF SIRED CALVES REGISTERED TO DAIRY COWS

During the first eight months of 2020 there were a total of 278,286 beef sired calves registered on NI farms. This was an increase of 5,268 head or two per cent increase from year earlier levels when 273,018 beef calves were registered in the region.

As outlined in **Figure 3** the suckler herd continues to be the largest source of beef sired calves with 189,626 beef

**Image 1: There have been 40,252 Aberdeen Angus calves registered to dairy cows during the first eight months of 2020, up from 35,743 head in the 2019 period.**



calves registered to suckler cows during 2020 to date. This is an increase of more than 3,000 head from the same period in 2019. Calf registrations to suckler cows accounted for 68 per cent of all beef calf registrations during the first eight months of 2020.

However there have been a growing number of dairy cows being served using beef bulls in NI with 88,660 beef

sired calves registered to dairy cows during the 2020 period. This is up almost 2,000 head from the same period in 2019 and is at its highest recorded level since 2017. These beef cross calves have accounted for 32 per cent of all beef calf registrations in the region between January and August this year.

While beef sired registrations to dairy cows have increased the number of dairy sired calves registered has decreased during 2020 to date.

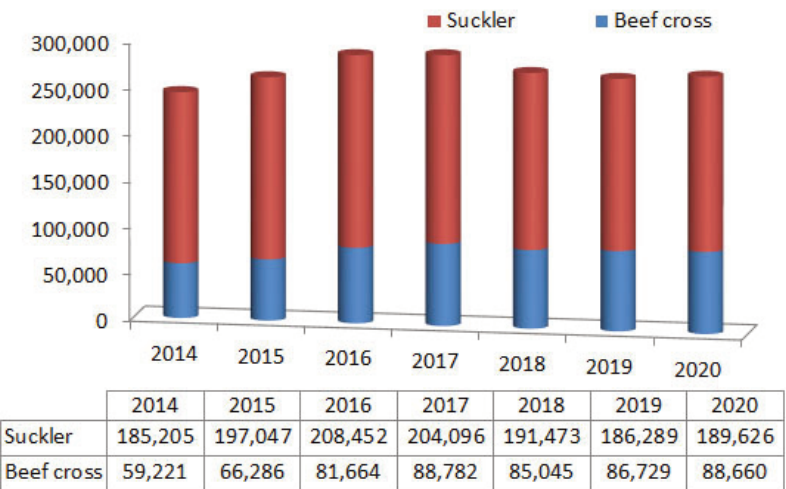
During the first eight months of 2020 there have been 92,859 dairy sired calves registered in NI back from 95,032 head in the corresponding period in 2019. This decline by 2,173 head represents a 2.3 per cent contraction in dairy sired calf registrations.

Aberdeen Angus continues to be the most popular beef sire used in NI on dairy cows with 40,252 Aberdeen Angus cross calves registered during the first eight months of 2020. This is an increase from 35,743 head in the

same period last year. If we consider the same period in 2013 there were just 17,117 Aberdeen Angus calves registered to dairy cows with the number of calves being registered increasing every year since.

Hereford is the next most popular beef bull used on dairy cows in NI with

**Figure 3: Breakdown of beef sired calf registrations between January to August 2014-2020 by dam type. Source: APHIS**



13,082 Hereford cross calves registered during the first eight months of 2020. However while Aberdeen Angus calf registrations have continued to grow the number of Hereford registrations has been fairly steady since 2016.

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# WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

## CATTLE TRADE

### NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 21/09/20	Next Week 28/09/20
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	350 - 358p	350 - 358p
R-3	344 - 352p	344 - 352p
O+3	338 - 346p	338 - 346p
P+3	288 - 300p	288 - 300p
Including bonus where applicable		
<b>Cows</b>		
O+3 & better	254 - 270p	258 - 270p
Steakers	140 - 170p	140 - 170p
Blues	120 - 130p	120 - 130p

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 processing plants for in-spec U-3 grade prime cattle have continued to hold steady this week ranging from 350-358p/kg with the majority of plants quoting at the upper end for steers and heifers. Similar quotes are expected for next week and producers are encouraged to use these base quotes as a starting point for negotiation. Quotes this week for good quality O+3 grade cows ranged from 254-270p/kg with quotes expected to range from 258-270p/kg early next week.

The plants have reported steady supplies of all types of cattle coming forward to meet demand for beef with prime cattle throughput increasing by 156 head to 6,962 head last week. However this was a decrease of 728 head from the same week last year when 7,690 prime cattle were processed in local plants. Meanwhile cow throughput in NI plants last week increased by almost 300 head to total 2,277 head which was similar to the 2,325 cows processed in the same week in 2019.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 382 head, an increase of 64 head from the 318 prime cattle imported during the previous week. Meanwhile cow imports from ROI totalled 202 head last week, back slightly from the previous week. A further 30 cows were imported from GB last week for direct slaughter. Exports from NI for direct slaughter in ROI plants last week consisted of one young bull and 95 cows, while no cattle made the journey to GB for direct slaughter last week.

The average steer price in NI last week was back just over half a penny to 354.9p/kg while the R3 steer price was back marginally to 364.1p/kg. In the corresponding week last year the R3 steer price was 323.1p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week decreased by 1.4p/kg to 357.7p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back slightly to 365.7p/kg. In the same week in 2019 the R3 heifer price in NI was 325.7p/kg. The average young bull price in NI last week increased by just over 2p/kg to 342.4p/kg with the U3 young bull price up by 0.6p/kg to 357.1p/kg. The average NI cow price last week increased by 3p/kg to 247.8p/kg while the O3 cow price was back just over a penny to 273.4p/kg.

In GB last week the average steer price was back just under a penny to 368.8p/kg while the R3 steer price held steady at 376.5p/kg when compared to the previous week. In the corresponding week last year the R3 steer price in GB was 330.9p/kg. The average heifer price came back by 1.8p/kg in GB last week to 369.8p/kg while the R3 heifer price held steady at 376p/kg. The R3 heifer price in GB was 330.4p/kg in the same week last year. Meanwhile the average GB cow price last week decreased by 3p/kg to 244.7p/kg with the O3 cow price back 5.7p/kg to 269.8p/kg. This puts it at 3.6p/kg below the corresponding NI price last week.

In ROI last week a strengthening euro against sterling has improved reported deadweight prices in sterling terms for the majority of grades. Last week the R3 steer and R3 heifer prices in ROI both increased by 1.5p/kg to the equivalent of 334.5p/kg and 336.4p/kg respectively which places them almost 30p/kg behind the equivalent prices in NI.

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

	W/E 19/09/20	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	365.9	344.5	390.2	381.4	377.3	376.5	381.9
	R3	364.1	334.5	388.5	379.2	371.2	370.2	376.5
	R4	358.3	334.1	391.0	382.5	370.6	369.9	383.2
	AVG	354.9	-	387.0	369.3	359.2	360.0	368.8
Heifers	U3	367.4	348.0	393.3	384.4	382.6	377.6	384.8
	R3	365.7	336.4	387.8	376.9	374.3	369.8	376.0
	R4	362.2	335.9	390.8	379.7	374.4	368.3	381.6
	AVG	357.7	-	387.1	369.8	358.8	358.4	368.9
Young Bulls	U3	357.1	329.9	380.9	374.7	372.5	370.7	376.2
	R3	353.0	318.9	374.8	362.2	362.7	365.1	366.6
	O3	335.7	302.0	325.9	323.9	337.9	339.4	333.2
	AVG	342.4	-	364.2	345.5	356.9	354.7	355.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5,523	-	6,102	7,112	7,457	4,641	25,312
Cows	O3	273.4	271.5	273.2	269.1	269.0	270.2	269.8
	O4	277.3	272.1	276.6	269.3	267.6	267.4	269.4
	P2	239.9	243.5	241.7	225.1	227.3	236.6	231.0
	P3	255.1	260.9	242.9	243.2	239.6	250.8	244.3
	AVG	247.8	-	269.9	248.4	238.5	238.1	244.7

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=91.71p 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 19/09/20	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	365.1	366.8	355.3
R3	360.5	363.2	353.1
O+3	350.8	356.3	341.0

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 19/09/20	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	163.2	179.2	195.5	214.5
P2	186.2	207.0	234.4	249.3
P3	211.9	238.5	248.1	257.9
O3	212.0	266.0	266.6	274.4
O4	-	267.7	265.8	278.0
R3	-	-	-	292.4

### LATEST LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

	W/E 19/09/20	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>							
Steers		217	228	221	190	216	205
Friesians		162	179	169	150	160	154
Heifers		208	224	213	190	207	198
Beef Cows		151	206	160	120	150	135
Dairy Cows		118	145	122	100	117	108
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>							
Bullocks up to 400kg		230	265	250	200	229	215
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		220	243	230	195	219	208
Bullocks over 500kg		215	231	223	185	214	200
Heifers up to 450kg		220	242	232	190	219	205
Heifers over 450kg		205	238	220	175	204	190
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>							
Continental Bulls		405	540	455	280	400	330
Continental Heifers		365	470	385	230	360	290
Friesian Bulls		170	230	200	100	165	130
Holstein Bulls		125	200	165	12	120	65

# SHEEP TRADE

## NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 21/09/20	Next Week 28/09/20
Lambs up to 21kg	435-450p	430-440p

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 05/09/20	W/E 12/09/20	W/E 19/09/20
NI L/W Lambs	415.3	416.4	405.7
NI D/W Lambs	437.4	439.8	436.8
GB D/W Lambs	457.5	464.3	463.7
ROI D/W	450.1	467.1	461.7

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the plants this week for R3 grading lambs came under some pressure with quotes ending this week ranging from 435-440p/kg up to 21kg. Quotes for early next week are expected to range from 430-440p/kg up to 21kg. The local plants reported strong supplies of lambs to meet demand with throughput increasing to 10,067 lambs last week. This is well above the 8,892 lambs processed in the same week in 2019. Exports of sheep to ROI for direct slaughter last week decreased by 28 per cent to 5,239 head from the previous week. Exports accounted for 34 per cent of the total NI lamb output last week. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week was back 3p/kg to 436.8p/kg. Meanwhile in ROI the deadweight lamb price decreased by 5.4p/kg to 461.7p/kg last week.

## Liveweight Sheep Trade

Smaller numbers of lambs passed through many of the marts this week with trade generally back when compared to previous weeks. In Swatragh last Saturday 1,430 lambs sold from 385-413p/kg compared to 1,800 lambs the previous Saturday selling from 380-457p/kg. In Kilrea on Monday 450 lambs sold from 390-422p/kg compared to 520 lambs last week selling from 402-413p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 540 lambs sold from 385-457p/kg (avg 412p/kg) compared to 700 lambs last week selling from 390-492p/kg (avg 423p/kg). In Armoys this week 406 fat lambs sold from 385-435p/kg compared to 572 fat lambs last week selling from 395-435p/kg. Top prices for cull ewes ranged from £103-£128 across the marts with Armoys reporting the top price of £128.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 19/09/20		Lambs			
To: 23/09/20		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	921	423	480	-
	Swatragh	1430	385	413	-
Monday	Massereene	926	390	405	-
	Kilrea	450	390	422	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	466	385	425	-
	Rathfriland	540	385	457	412
Wednesday	Ballymena	1609	380	415	390
	Enniskillen	1220	390	444	-
	Armoys	406	385	435	-
	Markethill	1400	390	455	-

Strict Covid - 19 restrictions are in place across all of the livestock marts

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Contact us

T: 028 9263 3000  
E: bulletin@lmcni.com  
W: www.lmcni.com

