

CATTLE IMPORTS HELPING TO SUSTAIN BEEF PRODUCTION LEVELS IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN 2020

Prime cattle throughput in Northern Ireland has remained firm in recent weeks with the processors reporting steady supplies of cattle to meet the demand for beef. Base quotes have held steady at 356-366p/kg for U-3 grading steers and heifers.

Prime cattle throughput

Last week there were 7,267 prime cattle processed in local plants which takes throughput for the year to date to 301,621 head. This is a two per cent decrease from the corresponding period in 2019 when there were 307,037 prime cattle killed locally.

Within this however there has been a shift in the type of prime cattle being presented for slaughter. Steer throughput in Northern Ireland during 2020 to date is almost 6,500 head higher than the corresponding period in 2019 with 151,820 steers processed. Meanwhile young bull throughput has declined by 25 per cent to total 30,964 head. The heifer kill has been back marginally to 118,837 head.

Current levels of prime cattle throughput in Northern Ireland are being supported by lower prime cattle exports and higher levels of imports for direct slaughter. During 2020 to date 413 prime cattle have been exported to Great Britain or Ireland for direct slaughter, back from 932 head in the corresponding period last year.

Import/export balance

Meanwhile imports of cattle for direct slaughter from southern Ireland have

recorded a strong increase to 13,241 head during 2020 to date. This is up from 9,437 head in the same period last year. Imports of prime cattle from Great Britain for direct slaughter have remained low with just 156 head imported during 2020 to date compared to 463 head in the same period last year.

NI Prime Kill Overview

Prime cattle throughput 2020 YTD
301,621 head **-5,416 head**

Prime cattle carcass weight 2020 YTD
345.4kg **+1.8kg**

Prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter 2020 YTD
13,241 head **+3,804 head**

ROI cattle on NI farms for beef production age 12-30 mths at the end of October 2020
12,121 head **+6,708 head**

There has also been a strong increase in the number of cattle being imported from Ireland for further production on local farms and this has contributed to the higher throughput in local plants. At the end of October 2020 there were 12,121 Irish born cattle for beef production on local farms aged from 12-30 months, a strong increase from 5,413 head the same time last year.

Prime beef production

During 2020 to date there have been 104,309 tonnes of prime beef processed in Northern Ireland plants,

back one per cent or 1,225 tonnes from the corresponding period in 2019. A slight increase in the average prime cattle carcass weight to 345.4kg has helped to offset some of the decline in prime cattle throughput.

Cow beef overview

During 2020 to date there have been 90,082 cows processed in Northern Ireland plants, an increase of three per cent or 2,921 head from 2019 levels.

Cow throughput in local plants has also been impacted by a shift in the import/export balance for direct slaughter. During 2020 to date 6,040 cows have been imported from Ireland for direct slaughter compared to just 2,192 cows in the same period last year. There has however been a decline in cow imports from Great Britain with 1,496 cows imported during 2020 to date compared to 3,202 cows last year.

Meanwhile exports of cows for direct slaughter in Ireland declined from 3,601 head in the 2019 period to 2,641 head during 2020 to date. The trade with GB remained very small with just 43 cows exported this year compared to 92 cows in the same period last year.

Cow beef production in Northern Ireland has totalled 28,164 tonnes during 2020 to date, a five per cent increase from 2019 levels. This has been driven by the higher cow throughput but also by an increase in the average carcass weight from 308kg in the 2019 period to 312.6kg in the 2020 period.

Figure 1: Weekly prime cattle throughput in Northern Ireland processing plants 2019-2020. Source: DAERA

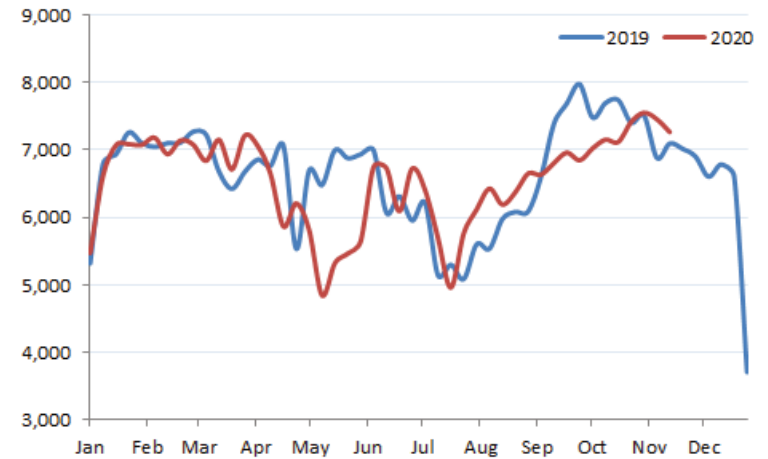
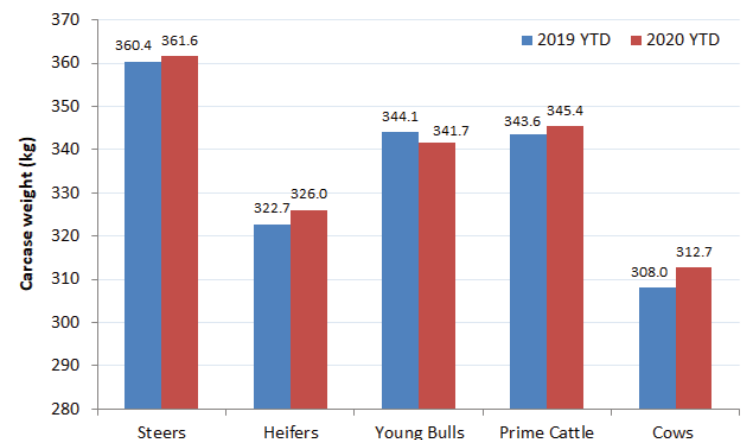


Figure 2: Average carcass weight of prime cattle and cows killed in local plants during 2019 YTD and 2020 YTD (kg). Source: DAERA



DEMAND FOR FQAS LAMBS FROM KEY CUSTOMERS

There is currently no additional cost to become FQAS approved for sheep if you are already approved for beef. The annual renewal fee for FQAS membership is the same whether a producer is approved for 'Beef', 'Sheep' or 'Beef & Sheep'. If a FQAS participant is currently only approved for beef and would like to gain approval for sheep it is a relatively simple process.

Sourcing FQAS approved lambs is important for NI sheep processors as it allows them to service the high value retail and foodservice markets in the UK. For many of these customers FQ status on lamb is a key requirement of their specification. FQAS provides additional assurances on animal welfare, food safety, traceability and care for the environment, all of which retailers place in high regard.

FQAS approved status allows producers to keep their options open when marketing lambs and producers slaughtering animals in local plants may receive a financial bonus for eligible animals.



In addition producers with FQAS lambs will find it easier to secure sales than those presenting non-FQAS lambs. This avoids the need to hold finished lambs

for longer periods than necessary and thereby reduces costs. Buyers in the local marts are also increasingly seeking to purchase finished and short keep lambs that have FQ status.

A further benefit of FQAS membership is that scheme membership is recognised by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and DAERA Service Delivery Group as having a lower risk and therefore there is a reduced likelihood of selection for a cross compliance inspection in this area when compared to non-FQAS members.

Should you wish to apply for FQAS, increase your scope to cover sheep, or require any FQAS documentation please call the **FQAS Helpline on 028 9263 3024**.

Image 1: If a FQAS participant is currently only approved for beef and would like to gain approval for sheep please call the FQAS Helpline on 028 9263 3024.



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 Quotes & Mart Results
Updated 5pm Daily
Tel: 028 9263 3011

Text Service

Free weekly price 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 16/11/20	Next Week 23/11/20
Prime		
U-3	356 - 366p	356 - 366p
R-3	350 - 360p	350 - 360p
O+3	344 - 354p	344 - 354p
P+3	290 - 304p	290 - 304p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	240 - 260p	240 - 260p
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 local plants for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 356-366p/kg this week with the majority of plants quoting 360-366p/kg for steers and heifers. With the range of quotes available producers are encouraged to shop around to get the best possible deal for their cattle. Base quotes for O+3 grading cows came under pressure this week ranging from 240-260p/kg. Similar quotes for all types of cattle are expected early next week.

Prime cattle throughput has remained steady with 7,267 prime cattle processed in local plants last week back almost 190 head from the 7,456 head processed during the previous week. However this is up by 170 head from the same week last year when 7,097 prime cattle were processed in local plants. Cow throughput in local plants reported a strong decline of 805 head last week to 2,159 cows and is also back by 224 cows when compared to the same week in 2019.

Imports of prime cattle for direct slaughter last week totalled 185 head, 182 head of which came from ROI and the remaining three steers from GB. Cow imports for direct slaughter have remained similar to the previous week with 171 cows from ROI and a further 60 cows from GB last week. Exports out of NI for direct slaughter have continued at similar levels to previous weeks with two prime cattle and 69 cows exported last week to ROI with no cattle exported to GB for direct slaughter.

The NI deadweight prime cattle trade firmed last week across the majority of price reported grades when compared to previous weeks. The average steer price in NI last week was up 3p/kg to 362.6p/kg while the R3 steer price was up 2.5p/kg to 371.8p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week increased by 3.8p/kg to 367.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 2.5p/kg to 373.3p/kg. The cow trade in NI came under pressure last week with the average cow price back by 5.6p/kg to 242.8p/kg and the O3 cow price decreasing by 8.3p/kg to 265p/kg.

Last week the deadweight trade in GB reported increases in prime cattle prices from the previous week. The average steer price and R3 steer price in GB last week were both up just under 4p/kg to 374p/kg and 380.8p/kg respectively. The average heifer price in GB last week was up 2.3p/kg to 371.8p/kg with the R3 heifer price up by 2.7p/kg to 379.3p/kg. Meanwhile the cow trade in GB came under pressure last week compared to the previous week with the average GB cow price back 6.5p/kg to 223p/kg. The O3 cow price in GB decreased last week by 5.3p/kg to 251.2p/kg, this places it almost 14p/kg below the equivalent NI price.

In ROI last week a weakening in the euro against sterling has resulted in the majority of deadweight prime cattle prices decreasing in sterling terms from the previous week. The R3 steer price in ROI was back by the equivalent of 2.3p/kg to 324p/kg. This brings the differential to 47.8p/kg below the R3 steer price in NI. The R3 heifer price was back by 1.4p/kg to 329.6p/kg which puts the differential at 43.7p/kg behind the same price in NI. The O3 cow price in ROI was back 7.5p/kg last week to the equivalent of 242.3p/kg, 22.7p/kg below the O3 cow price in NI.

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

	W/E 14/11/20	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	374.8	334.4	394.0	380.6	383.0	380.9	385.8
	R3	371.8	324.0	392.4	380.0	378.0	374.1	380.8
	R4	369.0	323.6	392.4	386.5	375.2	376.0	386.2
	O3	362.4	306.9	381.7	362.0	355.6	353.4	358.8
	AVG	362.6	-	389.7	373.0	366.3	365.8	374.0
Heifers	U3	378.1	339.6	398.4	385.9	387.7	378.7	388.1
	R3	373.3	329.6	390.3	378.7	379.1	372.4	379.3
	R4	370.0	330.1	391.5	379.3	379.3	373.1	383.4
	O3	365.9	318.5	374.0	359.4	352.3	348.9	354.6
	AVG	367.1	-	388.7	371.6	366.1	358.2	371.8
Young Bulls	U3	362.7	317.4	379.9	373.9	385.4	375.8	380.3
	R3	360.9	309.6	374.9	359.1	370.7	370.2	369.9
	O3	347.0	294.0	343.8	353.0	341.8	347.1	343.9
	AVG	351.4	-	367.6	355.3	358.3	341.4	358.3
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6066	-	6851	6865	8213	4810	26739	
Cows	O3	265.0	242.3	256.0	256.4	249.7	244.4	251.2
	O4	269.4	242.9	259.5	253.8	250.2	239.1	250.3
	P2	229.7	213.1	215.5	208.1	205.8	205.2	206.6
	P3	250.9	231.7	225.4	229.9	222.6	216.6	222.8
	AVG	242.8	-	243.8	233.9	217.2	212.3	223.0

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=89.56p 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 14/11/20	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	374.7	377.9	363.0
R3	368.5	371.7	360.5
O+3	361.0	364.5	352.8

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 14/11/20	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	154.0	172.5	189.5	200.9
P2	177.5	208.7	224.3	241.2
P3	160.6	230.3	247.5	253.9
O3	160.0	248.0	262.9	265.7
O4	-	-	274.7	269.1
R3	-	-	-	285.2

LATEST LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 14/11/20	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	230	248	235	205	229	217
Friesians	168	195	186	155	167	161
Heifers	217	254	225	200	214	207
Beef Cows	165	198	175	130	164	148
Dairy Cows	113	132	117	100	112	106
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	235	284	247	210	234	220
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	225	243	229	200	224	212
Bullocks over 500kg	200	215	203	175	196	185
Heifers up to 450kg	228	247	236	200	226	211
Heifers over 450kg	216	233	224	186	212	200
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	375	465	420	260	370	315
Continental Heifers	330	410	355	225	325	275
Friesian Bulls	140	225	180	75	135	105
Holstein Bulls	125	190	150	20	120	70

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 16/11/20	Next Week 23/11/20
R3 Lambs up to 22kg	440 - 450p	460 - 470p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 31/10/20	W/E 07/11/20	W/E 14/11/20
NI L/W Lambs	402.5	409.5	423.2
NI D/W Lambs	430.2	428.6	441.3
GB D/W Lambs	436.1	447.9	462.9
ROI D/W	443.2	447.8	457.2

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the NI plants for R3 grading lambs were in the region of 450-465p/kg up to 22kg towards the end of this week. Base quotes for next week are expected to firm slightly to 460-470p/kg up to 22kg. Lamb throughput in local plants decreased by 427 lambs to 9,341 head last week. Exports of lambs to ROI for direct slaughter decreased last week with 5,493 lambs making to journey to plants in ROI. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week increased by 12.7p/kg to 441.3p/kg when compared to the previous week. In the same week in 2019 the NI deadweight lamb price was 373.7p/kg. The deadweight lamb price in ROI last week increased by the equivalent of 9.4p/kg to 457.2p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

Good numbers of lambs passed through the sales ring this week with many marts reporting a firmer liveweight trade from last week. In Omagh last Saturday 727 lambs sold from 417-479p/kg compared to 696 lambs the previous Saturday selling from 405-469p/kg. In Kilrea this week 500 lambs sold from 429-500p/kg compared to 380 lambs last week selling from 400-433p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 545 lambs sold from 410-500p/kg (avg 441p/kg) compared to 435 lambs last week selling from 390-475p/kg (avg 417p/kg). On Wednesday in Enniskillen 907 lambs sold from 403-447p/kg compared to 676 lambs last week selling from 412-449p/kg. In Arroy this week 519 lambs sold from 415-449p/kg compared to 412 lambs last week selling from 410-450p/kg. Top reported prices for cull ewes this week ranged from £96-£141 across the local marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 14/11/20		Lambs			
To: 19/11/20		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	727	417	479	-
	Swatragh	640	420	458	-
Monday	Massereene	762	420	462	-
	Kilrea	500	429	500	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	303	422	520	-
	Rathfriland	545	410	500	441
Wednesday	Ballymena	3102	400	515	428
	Enniskillen	907	403	447	-
	Arroy	519	415	449	-
	Markethill	1090	430	462	-

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

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM

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Contact us

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

