

DEADWEIGHT CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE		
(P/KG DW)	This Week 02/12/24	Next Week 09/12/24
Steers & Heifers		
U-3	494 - 498p	494 - 500p
R-3	488 - 492p	488 - 494p
O+3	482 - 486p	482 - 488p
P+3	426 - 430p	426 - 432p
Cows		
O+3	385 - 396p	385 - 396p

*Base quotes for in-spec U-3 steers and heifers, and O+3 cows were received from 6 of the 7 major NI beef slaughter plants.
 *Base quotes vary depending on age, weight and grade.
 *Pricing policies vary from plant to plant. Producers are advised to check pricing policies before presenting cattle for slaughter.

NI REPORTED AVERAGE CATTLE PRICES - P/KG			
W/E 30/11/24	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	510.5	512.7	505.6
R3	504.9	506.2	491.5
O+3	496.2	497.4	487.7

*Prices Exclude Aberdeen Angus, Hereford, Wagyu and Organic Cattle.

NI REPORTED AVERAGE COW PRICES - P/KG				
W/E 30/11/24	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	252.5	274.2	287.3	308.6
P2	288.2	304.7	324.2	346.1
P3	319.0	331.1	343.0	358.1
O3	323.5	344.9	360.9	374.0
O4	333.0	319.7	370.0	379.9
R3	-	-	-	409.3

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the major NI processing plants have reached record highs for early next week, with both in spec U-3 grade prime cattle expected to range at 494-500p/kg and O+3 grade cows expected to range at 385-396p/kg. Last week, prime cattle throughput locally totalled 7,707 head. During the four-week period ending 30 November 2024 prime cattle throughput totalled 33,436 head, an increase of two per cent when compared to the corresponding period of 2023. Meanwhile, cow throughput last week totalled 2,834 head taking the four-week total to 11,641 head. Direct slaughter imported from ROI continue at steady levels with a consignment of 320 prime cattle comprised of 275 steers and 45 heifers imported, bringing the four-week total prime imports to 1,623 head. ROI cow imports to local plants totalled 210 head last week, bringing the four-week total imports to 958 cows. Meanwhile, three steers and 42 cows were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter.

The deadweight cattle trade continues to strengthen across all regions with almost all grades of cattle reporting week-on-week price increases in NI, ROI and GB. Improvements were reported in NI across the majority of cattle grades last week, with R3 steers, heifers and young bulls reporting average increases of 5p/kg, 4.3p/kg and 5.5p/kg respectively. A stronger trade was also reported for non-premium cattle as the average U3, R3 and O+3 grade prime cattle prices all reported week-on-week increases. The average cow trade in NI also strengthened by 4.1p/kg to 331p/kg meanwhile, O3 cows reported a similar increase of 4.9p/kg to 372.4p/kg last week. In ROI, the deadweight cattle trade strengthened across all cattle grades in both sterling and euro terms. The average O3 cow price was 392.8p/kg in both ROI and GB, 20.4p/kg ahead of the average O3 cow price in NI.

LAST WEEK'S AVERAGE DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES							
W/E 30/11/24	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	509.3	457.1	556.8	549.7	547.5	550.0
	R3	509.9	451.7	553.6	546.5	542.9	545.9
	R4	510.7	451.5	553.2	552.5	540.1	542.6
	O3	504.0	445.5	537.8	531.4	523.4	523.9
	AVG	501.1	-	550.8	541.4	530.0	531.2
Heifers	U3	513.1	464.2	559.2	548.0	552.9	553.1
	R3	508.6	456.1	550.6	543.2	541.1	541.2
	R4	508.3	457.1	551.6	547.4	539.0	542.6
	O3	499.4	453.4	529.9	524.2	513.1	520.5
	AVG	501.9	-	548.4	534.9	523.8	521.0
Young Bulls	U3	502.7	454.3	543.3	528.8	543.9	542.3
	R3	491.2	449.7	540.8	525.7	532.0	542.3
	O3	481.6	435.5	516.9	489.8	510.8	526.1
	AVG	484.5	-	531.2	517.5	518.7	518.6
	Prime Cattle	6,163	-	5,714	6,479	7,864	4,920
Cows	O3	372.4	392.8	401.7	393.7	390.8	389.3
	O4	378.5	393.0	402.8	396.9	391.2	392.3
	P2	335.0	360.5	365.1	356.7	348.5	350.6
	P3	354.9	375.6	370.6	370.9	367.1	371.2
	AVG	331.0	-	397.6	368.7	353.9	352.6

*Prices listed are for deadweight price reported animals only.

*Prices are p/kg. Sterling to ROI prices are converted at 1 euro = 83.36p Stg.

*Shading indicates a lower price than the previous week.

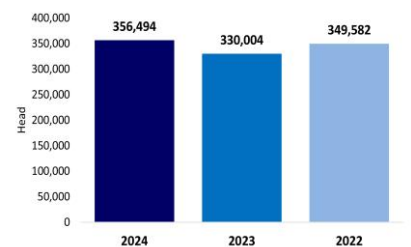
*AVG is the average price of all grades in the category (not just those listed).

FQAS MART DATES

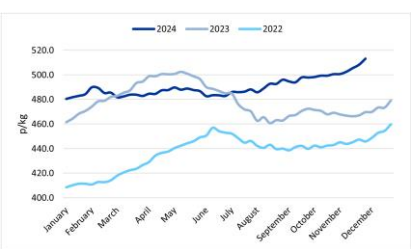
DECEMBER 2024

Markethill - Tuesday 10th December

Prime Cattle Throughput in NI Slaughter Plants 2022-2024 YTD. Source: DAERA.



U3 Heifer Price NI 2022-2024 YTD



DEADWEIGHT SHEEP TRADE

NI DEADWEIGHT SHEEP BASE QUOTES		
(P/Kg)	This Week 02/12/24	Next Week 09/12/24
R3 Lambs up to 23kg	650p	660 - 670p

NI REPORTED AVERAGE SHEEP PRICES			
(P/KG)	W/E 16/11/24	W/E 23/11/24	W/E 30/11/24
D/W R3 Lambs	631.8	635.2	651.4
D/W Lambs	626.6	636.2	652.3
L/W Lambs	624.3	620.8	629.8

AVERAGE SHEEP PRICES (GB / ROI)			
GB D/W Lambs	648.6	661.2	685.9
ROI D/W Lambs	637.1	645.4	655.9

Sheep Trade

As the deadweight lamb trade continues to strengthen, the 3 major NI lamb processing plants provided increased base quotes for early next week of 660-670p/kg for R3 grade lambs with the plants paying up to 23kg. The average deadweight lamb trade strengthened by 16.1p/kg to 652.3p/kg. The deadweight lamb trade also strengthened by 24.7p/kg in GB and 10.5p/kg in ROI last week. A total of 10,365 lambs were presented for slaughter in local plants last week, bringing the total lamb kill for the four-week period ending 30 November 2024 to 38,524 head, 10.8 per cent (4,643 head) behind the lamb throughput recorded during same four-week period ending 02 December 2023. Last week, 3,001 lambs were exported to ROI for direct slaughter bringing the four-week total to 11,074 head.

The average liveweight lamb trade strengthened by 9p/kg to 629.8p/kg last week. Greater numbers of lambs passed through the NI marts this week with a weaker trade reported. In Swatragh, 1,310 lambs were sold at a price range of 625-658p/kg this week compared to 650 lambs sold at price range of 632-395p/kg last week. However, the ewe trade strengthened across NI marts with top reported prices ranging from £168 - £335 last week.

NI LATEST LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES (BALLYMENA)

W/E 30/11/24	1st QUALITY		2nd QUALITY	
	FROM	TO	FROM	TO
Finished Cattle (p/kg)				
Steers	285	310	296	240
Friesians	228	234	230	198
Heifers	278	308	290	235
Beef Cows	240	308	262	140
Dairy Cows	144	220	168	96
Store Cattle (p/kg)				
Steers up to 400kg	350	465	390	260
Steers 400kg - 500kg	320	371	345	235
Steers over 500kg	285	335	300	210
Heifers up to 450kg	300	439	340	200
Heifers over 450kg	260	321	285	210
Dropped Calves (£/head)				
Continental Bulls	430	665	475	300
Continental Heifers	355	550	415	240
Friesian Bulls	150	305	200	35
Holstein Bulls	130	235	180	10



REFLECTIONS ON 2024: A YEAR OF FAST-CHANGING DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE BEEF AND SHEEP SECTORS

Colin Smith, CEO of the Livestock and Meat Commission:

On the basis of any metric, 2024 has been a very defining year for the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC). Our new Chairman, Joe Stewart, in tandem with a full complement of board members – all of whom will be in train for the next five years – brings new energy to the work of the Commission. In its first full year the new board membership team are already making a positive contribution to the impact made by the organisation. And, no doubt, this momentum will continue to grow during the period ahead.

Adding to this dynamic has been the appointment of key staff members in positions that will benefit the future development of LMC as an organisation that has the wherewithal to deliver significantly for Northern Ireland's red meat sector.

All of this positive change within the Commission is taking place at a time of significant transformation within agriculture as a whole. And the future prospects of the beef and lamb sector will be inherently associated with these changes.

Farming's response to climate change has already been closely linked to the future support schemes made available to the livestock sectors. The Beef Carbon Reduction Scheme is a case in point. The sustainable ruminant genetics programme is another example of how the ruminant livestock sectors will respond to the carbon mitigation measures identified in Northern Ireland 2020 Climate Change Act.

Historically, LMC has played a key role in helping to define the policy parameters that can drive progress within the red meat sector. It was the Commission-sponsored report, produced by the Andersons Centre back in 2021 that provided the framework for the detailed red meat support policies that followed. Significantly, this initiative was developed in collaboration with other key stakeholder organisations, including the Ulster Farmers' Union and the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters' Association. And, no doubt, LMC will continue to play a key role in this regard.

At the very heart of farming's response to climate change will be the precise recording and evaluation of the actions taken at individual farm level to reduce their respective carbon footprints. Significantly, the LMC will play a key role in this process.

Consumer Awareness of Farm Quality Assured Products

FQAS has played a key role over the past thirty plus years in delivering unfettered access across the UK for beef and lamb produced in Northern Ireland. And there is ample evidence to show that the work put in by LMC over the past three decades in developing what is a unique brand has really resonated with local consumers.

Significantly, independent market research, carried out earlier this year, confirms that the NIBL FQAS logo has an 83% recognition rating with the general public. This is an extremely high figure, well above the industry average and is in line with some of the best known food brands purchased in local shops every day of the year.

Beef and lamb marked with the NIBL FQAS logo is guaranteed to have been sourced from farms that have met the quality assured product standard, as independently verified by Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification (NIFCC). Delivering this level of public awareness for the quality assurance scheme also ensures

beef and sheep farmers can see how their money is being spent. The sustained growth in awareness of the farm quality assured logo benefits the beef and lamb sectors in equal measure. But the growing awareness of the logo goes well beyond brand recognition: it gives consumers the absolute reassurance of a naturally produced, fully traceable, high quality product which they want when it comes to buying beef and lamb in retail outlets.



School cookery demonstrations

Further, tangible evidence of the work carried out on the ground by the Commission on behalf of levy payers comes by way of the ongoing success generated by our school cookery demonstrations.

Demand continues to grow at both primary and secondary school level. We already know that 2024/25 is turning out to be another record-setting year, where demand for the cookery demonstrations, red meat support programmes and the wider education programme provisions are concerned.

All of this is extremely encouraging. But at another level altogether, the success of this Commission-hosted education programme underpins the confidence that teachers have in LMC as a trusted source of information, when it comes to the role that red meat can play within a healthy and balanced diet.

While it's impossible to put an actual value on this level of credibility, there is universal acceptance that the role played by LMC in liaising with the teaching profession must always be maintained and built on for the future, putting educational needs of children and support of teachers first at all times.

LMC Cookery Demonstration at St. Michael's College, Enniskillen.



2024: A Year of Political Change

The last 12 months have seen a total of 10 general elections held in countries throughout the European Union, the UK and the United States. The most recent poll was held in the Republic of Ireland over recent days. But coming even closer to home, 2024 saw political developments of a significant nature taking place here in Northern Ireland.

The Stormont Executive and Assembly have been fully functioning again since February past. What's more, the recent UK Budget marked the agreement of new funding principles being established between London and Belfast.

Specifically, this means that locally elected politicians now have the final say when it comes to budgetary

arrangements agreed for all of government, including the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). And there is much work to be done by our elected representatives and their officials. The need to agree new support policies for the sheep sector and take meaningful action to eradicate bTB are just two examples.

It will be the job of the Commission to explain the key role played by the beef and sheep sectors within the local economy as a whole. There is already universal agreement regarding the key role that ruminant farming must be allowed to play within agriculture as a whole. The challenge is that of finding out how this can be achieved in the most sustainable way.

The festive season

Christmas 2024 is almost with us. It is a time of year when we should all pay due regard to farmers from across Northern Ireland who produce the food and drink that we enjoy so much all through the festive period. And beef and sheep producers are at the very heart of all this. Their commitment in making this happen, not just at Christmas but on a daily basis throughout the year, must never be overlooked.

So, yes, 2024 has been an exciting year and a year of change for everyone involved with LMC and for agriculture in Northern Ireland as a whole. We look set to finish the year with strong producer prices, this will be welcomed by farmers across NI who have had to process the impact of recent tax changes in the budget, battle the impact of bTB and digest the new policy programmes that either have, or soon will be introduced. And no doubt there will be more of this to come during the year ahead.

The one true benefit of the upcoming holiday season is the fact that it gives us all an opportunity to take stock of what's going on around us and plan for the future. And we must never take our eyes off the big picture. The fact is that beef and sheep production in Northern Ireland has an amazingly positive story to relate. And it's one that everyone at LMC is fully committed to telling in the most effective way possible.

BEEF AND LAMB WEBINARS

LMC CEO Colin Smith was delighted to have had the opportunity to update over 200 farmers on the market outlook for beef earlier this week as part of a webinar focusing on improving efficiency in beef production. The event organised by the Ulster Farmers' Union and CAFRE was hosted online and the first in a two-part series can be viewed here ([UlsterFarmersUnion - YouTube](https://www.ulsterfarmersunion.com/you-tube)). The second webinar will focus on improving efficiency in lamb production and will be held online on Tuesday 10th December. Visit www.ufuni.org/events-training to register.

BEEF AND LAMB EFFICIENCY WEBINARS

Join our webinars to hear about technical efficiency measures within individual farm businesses' control, showcasing successes on local farms and CAFRE beef and sheep farms.

Beef Webinar:
3 December, 7.30pm

Lamb Webinar:
10 December, 7.30pm

Register online:
www.ufuni.org/events-training



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