LMC BULLETIN

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NI LIVESTOCK NUMBERS INCREASE IN ALL SECTORS

Preliminary results of the June 2015 Agricultural Census have recently been published by DARD and indicate an increase in livestock numbers in all sectors of NI agriculture when compared to June 2014 levels.

Cattle herd

The report has indicated a three per cent growth in total cattle numbers on NI farms to over 1.6 million head of cattle in June 2015. This increase has been driven primarily by the increase in calf registrations over the previous 12 months with notable increases in the number of cattle in the younger age brackets.

The number of cattle aged under 6 months of age during June 2015 totalled 275,600 head. This is an eight per cent increase on the 254,000 head aged under 6 months in June 2014. This is the highest number of cattle in this age bracket on NI farms since June 2012.

A similar increase has been recorded in the 6-12 month age category with numbers increasing by seven per cent to a total of 201,800 head in June 2015. Meanwhile the total number of cattle in the 1-2 year age category in June 2014 was similar to year earlier levels at 328,500 head.

Other cattle on NI farms aged over two years in June 2015 totalled 120,800 head, a nine per cent reduction on the June 2014 levels when there were 132,600 cattle in this category on NI farms. This category includes male and female cattle over two years of age intended for slaughter as well as heifers intended for breeding but not yet in calf.

The number of male cattle over two years was back 5 per cent from year earlier levels to 46,800 head while the number of heifers for slaughter was back by 12 per cent to 64,000 head. Meanwhile the number of heifers intended for breeding but not yet in calf was back by 8 per cent to 10,000 head.

The NI suckler cow herd increased to 260,300 head in June 2015, a two per cent increase on June 2014 levels when there were 254,900 suckler cows on NI farms. This increase in suckler cow numbers on NI farms has followed on from several years of decline. Suckler cow numbers in June 2015 were four per cent lower than June 2013 levels when there were 270,100 suckler cows on NI farms.

The number of in calf beef heifers on NI farms in June 2015 totalled 31,400 head, a reduction of 500 head from June 2014 levels and this accounts for a three per cent decline year on year. The number of in calf dairy heifers on NI farms in June 2015 recorded a similar level of decline, back by two per cent from June 2014 levels to 61,100 head.

Meanwhile the number of dairy cows on NI farms has continued to increase with 311,500 head on NI farms in June 2015. This is a six per cent increase on June 2014 levels when there were 294,200 dairy cows on NI farms. This increase has taken dairy cow numbers to their highest ever levels with dairy cows accounting for 54.5 per cent of the total NI cow herd in June 2015.

Sheep flock

The NI sheep flock has also recorded growth with a two per cent increase in the total number of breeding ewes to 930,700 in June 2015. This is the highest level since June 2012. The increase in the ewe flock combined with better production conditions on NI farms have contributed to the four per cent increase in lamb numbers on NI farms in June 2015.

Pigs and poultry

The NI pig herd has continued to grow with a five per cent increase in the NI sow herd in June 2015 when compared to year earlier levels. The total herd size has recorded a seven per cent increase to 554,500 head in June 2015.

Meanwhile in the poultry sector the commercial laying flock recorded an eight per cent increase in June 2015 while the total number of broiler and other table birds on NI farms increased by five per cent from year earlier levels.

Figure 1: NI suckler cow numbers June 2005-June 2015

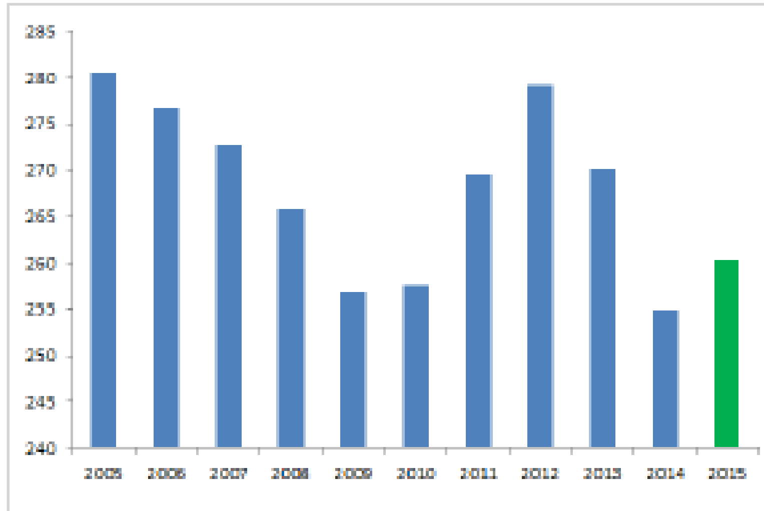
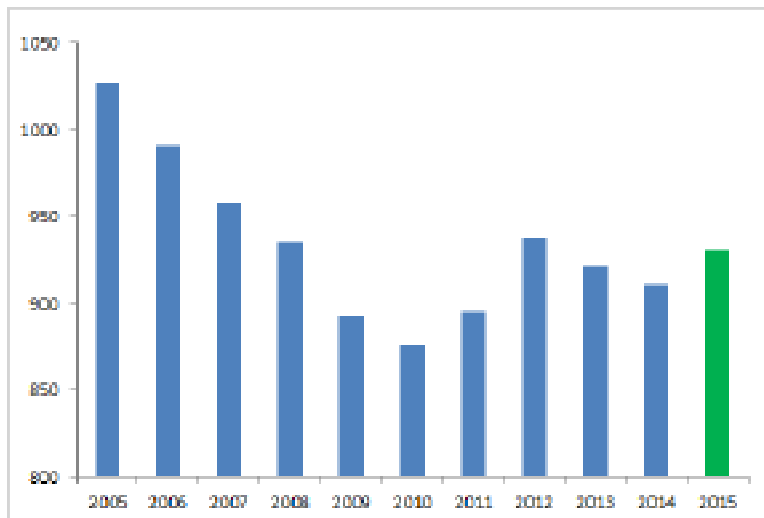


Figure 2: NI breeding ewe flock June 2005-June 2015



SHEEP INDUSTRY UPDATE AUGUST 2015

The average deadweight lamb price in NI during August 2015 was 305.7p/kg. This was 42.1p/kg lower than the 347.6p/kg paid in August 2014 which accounts for a 12.1 per cent decline year on year. This is the equivalent of £8.84 on a 21kg lamb.

The average lamb price in ROI in sterling terms during August 2015 was 314.9p/kg compared to 341.5p/kg in August 2014. This decline by 26.6p/kg represents a 7.8 per cent decline year on year.

However in euro terms the average lamb price in ROI increased by 10c/kg year on year and the decline in sterling terms has been driven by a weakening in euro against sterling as indicated in Table 1. In August 2014 €1 was worth 79.7 pence sterling and in August 2015 this had decline to €1 being worth 71.4 pence sterling.

In GB during August 2015 the average reported deadweight price was 336.9p/kg compared to 378.7p/kg in August 2014. This accounts for a 13 per cent decline year on year and puts the differential with NI at 31.2p/kg or £6.55 on a 21kg lamb.

Lamb throughput in the NI plants during August 2015 totalled 49,241 head, a 4.9 per cent increase on the 46,958 lambs killed in NI plants during August 2014. The average lamb carcase weight in NI was almost unchanged at 21.2kg in August 2015.

Meanwhile ewe and ram throughput in the NI processors was back by 45.7 per cent to 2,148 head in August 2015. The average carcase weight during August 2015 was 28.7kg, a 2.1 per cent increase from 28.1kg in August 2014.

During August 2015 a total of 27,917 sheep were exported from NI for direct slaughter in ROI plants. In the corresponding period in 2014 a total of 29,415 sheep made the journey from NI to ROI for direct slaughter. This accounts for a 4.9 per cent decline year on year.

The weakening in the value of euro against sterling has made NI lambs more expensive in euro terms. In addition to this there have been strong supplies of lambs in ROI with throughout running two per cent ahead of 2014 levels for 2015 to date.

NI Sheep Industry Key Performance Indicators (August Snapshot)			
	Aug-14	Aug-15	% Change
Sheep Prices (p/kg)			
Average Deadweight Price NI	347.6	305.7	-12.1%
Average Liveweight Price NI	317.9	276.6	-13.0%
Average Weekly Price GB (D/W)	378.7	336.9	-11.0%
Average Weekly Price ROI (D/W)	341.5	314.9	-7.8%
Slaughterings			
Total Hoggets & Lambs Slaughterings (Head)	46,958	49,241	+4.9%
Total Ewes & Rams Slaughterings (Head)	3,956	2,148	-45.7%
Average Hogget & Lambs Carcase Weight (kg)	21.3	21.2	-0.6%
Average Ewe & Rams Carcase Weight (kg)	28.1	28.7	+2.1%
Trade (Head)			
Live Imports for Direct Slaughter	0	0	-
Live Exports for Direct Slaughter	29,415	27,917	-5.1%
Euro / Stg Exchange Rate (€ / £)	79.73	71.42	-11.5%
All NI Figures Unless Otherwise Stated			

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

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CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 07/09/15	Next Week 14/09/15
Prime		
U-3	322 - 328p	324 - 328p
R-3	316 - 322p	318 - 322p
O+3	310 - 316p	312 - 316p
P+3	268 - 296p	270 - 296p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	224 - 250p	224 - 250p
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.

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 05/09/15	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	329.0	336.7	326.2
R3	326.5	329.9	322.5
O+3	316.4	317.8	314.9

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

w/e 05/09/15	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	128.7	136.7	146.1	162.9
P2	164.7	175.8	187.1	207.8
P3	186.4	205.1	212.7	225.2
O3	-	213.4	231.2	241.9
O4	-	216.8	226.6	245.9
R3	-	-	-	260.3

Deadweight Cattle Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week for in spec U-3 grade steers and heifers ranged from 324-328p/kg. Some of the processors have reported steady supplies of prime cattle to meet demand while others have reported a tightening in supplies. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows ranged from 224-250p/kg with the majority of plants quoting in the region of 235-240p/kg.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 5,060 head, similar to the previous week when 5,094 head were killed. In the corresponding week in 2014 prime cattle throughput in NI totalled 5,736 head which accounts for a 12 per cent decline year on year. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,809 head, back 215 head from the previous week. In the corresponding week last year 1,812 cows were slaughtered in NI plants.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 590 head, an increase of 120 head from the previous week and the highest weekly level of import since June. Cow imports from ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 179 head. Meanwhile 263 cows were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week, a decline of 58 head from the previous week. Exports of prime cattle from NI to GB last week totalled 54 head, a notable decline from the 201 exported the previous week.

The average steer price in NI last week was back by 3.2p/kg to 319.3p/kg while the R3 steer price was back by a similar margin to 328.7p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was back by 1.7p/kg to 323.8p/kg while the R3 heifer price was unchanged at 331.5p/kg. The trade for the small number of young bulls slaughtered last week improved with the average price up by 2.4p/kg to 311p/kg while the R3 young bull price increased by 2.7p/kg to 322.8p/kg.

In GB last week there was a general improvement in the deadweight trade for prime cattle. The average steer price increased by 2.7p/kg to 349.7p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 1.7p/kg to 355p/kg. The R3 steer price was back by half a penny to 365.8p/kg in Scotland but recorded increases of 2-4p/kg across the other regions. The differential in R3 steer prices between NI and GB last week was 26.3p/kg or £92 on a 350kg carcase. This puts the differential in R3 steer prices at its highest since early September 2014.

The heifer trade in GB also recorded an improvement last week with the average GB price increasing by 3.1p/kg to 349.3p/kg and the R3 heifer price increasing by 3.4p/kg to 355.6p/kg. The R3 heifer price recorded an increase in all of the GB regions. The R3 heifer price increased in the region of 2p/kg in Southern England and by 3-4p/kg in Scotland, Northern England and the Midlands.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price was the equivalent of 288.7p/kg, back 2p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was within half a penny of the previous week at 297.2p/kg. This puts the differential with NI at 40p/kg for R3 grade steers and 34.3p/kg for R3 grade heifers.

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

W/E 05/09/2015		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	329.1	297.2	371.3	358.1	359.2	357.9	362.1
	R3	328.7	288.7	365.8	352.1	350.9	348.5	355.0
	R4	324.1	288.6	371.3	362.0	349.1	347.2	360.0
	O3	314.9	274.4	349.4	333.2	324.1	328.1	334.6
	AVG	319.3	-	364.7	351.1	337.9	338.0	349.7
Heifers	U3	337.4	306.0	378.0	362.2	362.1	360.8	366.8
	R3	331.5	297.2	367.1	352.5	352.3	346.7	355.6
	R4	326.1	296.7	369.2	356.5	349.2	345.0	357.3
	O3	317.0	284.9	348.4	336.4	322.9	326.6	335.7
	AVG	323.8	-	364.1	350.0	338.2	333.2	349.3
Young Bulls	U3	326.2	292.9	365.2	346.0	352.4	357.3	353.3
	R3	322.8	287.7	360.4	331.5	341.0	341.1	339.2
	O3	309.1	274.5	314.7	300.2	310.4	318.5	310.3
	AVG	311.0	-	347.6	324.9	338.6	329.1	333.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported		3975	-	5981	6135	4233	3652	20001
Cows	O3	240.5	250.2	245.7	237.9	236.1	231.7	238.7
	O4	244.4	252.3	252.3	238.1	239.6	232.8	241.4
	P2	195.8	217.5	193.0	206.4	178.1	180.7	190.2
	P3	222.0	244.0	204.7	218.3	198.5	209.0	208.0
	AVG	212.9	-	235.1	211.8	185.5	197.3	209.6

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=73.26p 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

	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
W/E 05/09/15	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	190	210	198	160	189	176
Friesians	140	182	154	124	136	130
Heifers	195	215	205	165	194	180
Beef Cows	136	193	149	105	135	120
Dairy Cows	106	126	111	65	105	85
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	231	268	245	157	206	183
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	213	236	222	150	210	180
Bullocks over 500kg	205	225	213	150	202	175
Heifers up to 450kg	184	198	193	153	182	169
Heifers over 450kg	186	190	188	157	174	165
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	320	450	380	220	318	280
Continental Heifers	280	400	300	150	278	200
Friesian Bulls	150	310	200	50	148	80
Holstein Bulls	100	190	125	8	98	50

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 07/09/15	Next Week 14/09/15
Lambs	315>21kg	315-320>21kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 22/08/15	W/E 29/08/15	W/E 05/09/15
NI Lambs L/W	275.1	270.6	276.4
NI Lambs D/W	307.0	303.6	300.2
GB Lambs D/W	335.3	331.3	342.7
ROI D/W	315.6	321.3	321.6

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the major processors this week firmed to 315-320p/kg for R3 grade lambs up to 21kg. The processors have reported good supplies of lambs coming forward for slaughter with 12,241 lambs killed in NI plants last week. This was an increase of 608 head from the previous week but is well below the 13,129 lambs killed in NI plants in the corresponding week in 2014. The level of export to ROI for direct slaughter has continued to increase in line with normal seasonal trends with 9,171 sheep exported last week. This is an increase of 1,776 head from the previous week but lower than the 10,251 head exported in the corresponding week in 2014. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week was back by 3.4p/kg to 300.2p/kg.

This week's marts

GOOD numbers of lambs passed through the sale rings this week with reports of a slightly stronger trade in some of the marts. In Massereene on Monday an improved trade saw 1,217 lambs sold from 270-306p/kg compared to 1,206 lambs last week selling from 260-296p/kg. In Saintfield on Tuesday 788 lambs sold from 272-317p/kg compared to 784 lambs last week selling from 264-300p/kg. In Ballymena this week a large entry of 2,004 lambs sold from 270-328p/kg compared to 1,708 lambs last week selling from 260-312p/kg. Top prices reported for cull ewes across the marts this week generally ranged from £80-90.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 04/09/15		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 10/09/15		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	600	280	294	-
Saturday	Omagh	1922	292	345	-
	Massereene	1217	270	306	-
Monday	Kilrea	465	278	318	-
	Saintfield	788	272	317	-
Tuesday	Rathfriland	1327	260	323	287
	Ballymena	2004	270	328	282
Wednesday	Markethill	1300	270	328	295

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