LMC BULLETIN

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NI CALF REGISTRATIONS UPDATE 2015

BEEF sired calf registrations in NI during September 2015 totalled 20,369 head. This was a 10.5 per cent increase from September 2014 levels when there were 18,433 beef sired calves registered in NI.

Beef sired calf registrations in NI for 2015 to date have totalled 284,576 head, an 8 per cent increase (+21,106 head) on the corresponding period in 2014 when 263,470 beef sired calves were registered. This is the highest level of beef sired calf registrations for the year to date recorded since 2012.

September was the seventh month during 2015 to date in which beef sired calf registrations were higher than the corresponding month in 2014. The increase in registrations can be attributed to an increase in both suckler and dairy cow numbers on NI farms, as recorded in the June Agricultural census.

During the first nine months of 2015 72,822 beef sired calves were registered to dairy dams and these accounted for 25.7 per cent of all beef sired calves in NI during this period. In the corresponding period in 2014 64,760 beef sired calves were registered to dairy dams and these accounted for 24.6 per cent of total beef sired calf registrations.

Beef cattle on NI farms

The increase in the number of beef sired calf registrations in NI has led to a notable increase in the number of young beef sired cattle on NI farms. At the end of September 2015 there were 151,766 cattle on NI farms aged 0-6 months.

This was a five per cent increase on the 144,476 beef sired cattle in this age category at the end of September 2014. The number of beef sired cattle on NI farms aged 6-12 months in September 2015 was 160,889 head, a 13 per cent increase on year earlier levels while the number of cattle aged 12-18 months totalled 161,868 head, 6.6 per cent higher than year earlier levels.

Dairy calf registrations

Dairy sired calf registration in NI during September 2015 totalled 16,793 head, a 2.3 per cent reduction from the 17,194 head registered in September 2014. Dairy sired calf registrations for 2015 to date have totalled 132,833 head, a 2.9 per cent increase on the corresponding period in 2014 when 129,141 dairy sired calves were registered.

Male calves accounted for 47 per cent of dairy sired calves during the first nine months of 2015, unchanged from year earlier levels. Typically a proportion of these dairy origin calves are exported to Europe for further production.

Calf exports

During September 2015 1,699 calves aged under six weeks were exported out of NI taking the total for the year to date to 13,704 head. This is notably lower than the 17,848 calves exported from NI during the corresponding period in 2014. This accounts for a 23 per cent decline in calf exports year on year and is the lowest level of calf export for the year to date recorded since 2010.

Spain has been the main destination for NI calf exports and during 2015 to date calf exports from NI to Spain have totalled 13,126 head, a 15 per cent reduction from the 15,169 calves exported to Spain during the corresponding period in 2014. However with total NI calf exports declining the proportion of NI calves exported to Spain actually increased from 85 per cent in the 2014 period to 95 per cent in the 2015 period. The main production system in operation in Spain for Friesian bulls is a 12 month bull beef system which is based primarily on a diet of ad-lib cereals and straw.

During 2015 to date the second most popular destination for NI calf exports has been Italy with 458 calves exported. This accounted for just 3 per cent of total calf exports and was notably lower than the 2,560 calves exported during the corresponding period in 2014 when they accounted for 14 per cent of calf exports.

Dairy sired cattle on NI farms

This decline in the number of dairy sired male calves being exported has resulted in a larger proportion of calves remaining on NI farms for beef production. At the end of September 2015 there were 18,371 dairy sired male calves aged 0-6 months on NI farms, a 27.9 per cent increase from year earlier levels.

The lower level of export has also resulted in an increase in the number of dairy sired male cattle on NI farms aged 6-12 months. In September 2015 there were 29,859 dairy sired male cattle in this age category on NI farms, a 16.3 per cent increase on year earlier levels.

Future supplies

The increase in beef sired calf registrations in NI during 2015 to date, combined with the reduction in the number of dairy sired calves being exported, is expected to lead to an increase in cattle availability towards the second half of 2016. With beef supplies also expected to improve in GB and ROI next autumn It is important that every effort is made by the entire NI beef industry to secure potential market outlets for these cattle.

Figure 1: Beef sired calf registrations on NI farms Jan 2013 - Sept 2015

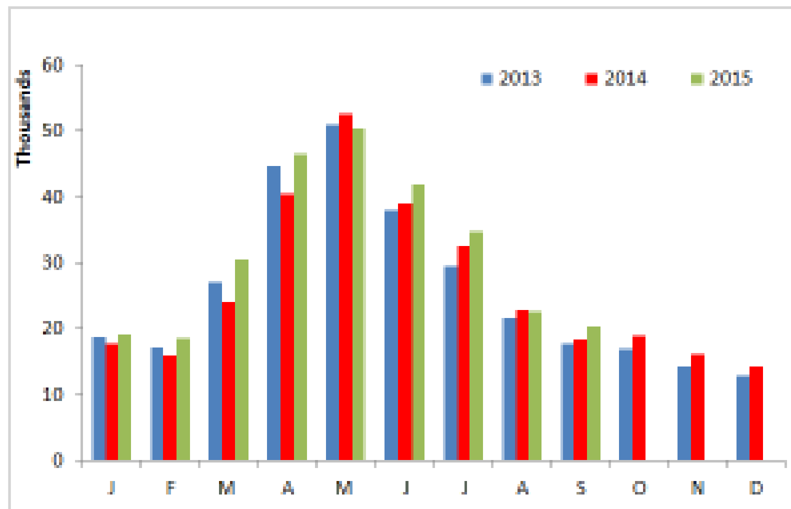


Table 1: Beef sired cattle on NI farms by age category September 2015

	2013	2014	2015	2014/2015	2013/2015
0-6	137907	144476	151766	5.0%	10.0%
6-12	148174	142346	160889	13.0%	8.6%
12-18	157396	151818	161868	6.6%	2.8%
18-24	137526	128124	125245	-2.2%	-8.9%
24-30	77644	81602	77789	-4.7%	0.2%

FAO FOOD INDEX PRICE INCREASES IN SEPTEMBER

THE FAO Food Price Index is a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities and it provides a useful guide to the direction of the global food trade. The index is calculated using Food Price Indexes for Meat, Dairy, Cereals, Vegetable Oils and Sugar. During September 2015 the FAO Food Price Index averaged 156.3 points, up 1.2 points from August 2015 levels but well below September 2014 when it was 192.7 points. This accounts for an 18.9 per cent decline year on year.

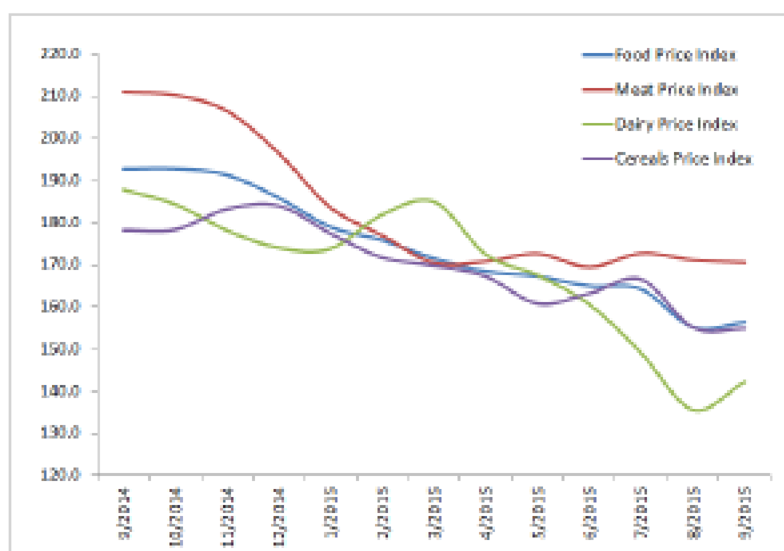
The FAO Cereal Price Index during September 2015 average 154.8 points, almost unchanged from August 2015 levels. This was 23.4 points lower than the August 2014 average of 178.2 points. This drop in prices has been driven by good supplies of cereal in storage and positive prospects for crops yet to be harvested around the globe. According to the FAO global wheat prices are now 20 per cent lower than September 2014 levels however maize prices have held steady due to an expected decline in world maize production.

The FAO Meat Index during September 2015 was 170.5 points in September, down marginally from 155.1 points recorded in August 2015. The Meat Index however is notably lower than September 2014 levels when it was 192.7 points, an 18.8 per cent reduction year on year. The FAO Meat Index has held relatively steady since March 2015 however there have been some key changes within the individual proteins. Global poultry prices have declined over this period in response to lowering feed costs while strong demand and some limitations with supply have increased global beef prices. Global pigmeat prices have meanwhile remained fairly constant.

The FAO Dairy Index during September 2015 averaged 142.3 points, an increase of 6.8 points or five per cent from August 2015 levels. This increase in the Dairy Index has been welcomed after a 13.6 point (10 per cent) drop between July 2015 and August 2015. Prices of all dairy commodities firmed in August 2015 with milk powders recording the most notable rise. The FAO have attributed this increase to lower supplies of milk in New Zealand as producers respond to a lowering milk price by scaling back production.

The FAO Vegetable Oil Index during September 2015 was 154.8 points, down marginally from August 2015 levels but 23.4 points lower than the September 2014 when the Vegetable Oil Index was 178.2 points. This was the lowest recorded level since March 2009. Meanwhile the FAO Sugar Index increased by 5.2 points (3.2 per cent) to 168.4 points in September 2015. This increase was largely driven by lower production in Brazil, India and Thailand.

Figure 2: FAO Food Price Index (Average, Meat, Dairy, Cereals) from September 2014 until September 2015.



WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 19/10/15	Next Week 26/10/15
Prime		
U-3	316 - 322p	316 - 322p
R-3	310 - 316p	310 - 316p
O+3	304 - 310p	304 - 310p
P+3	264 - 292p	264 - 292p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	224 - 240p	224 - 240p
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 17/10/15	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	320.6	329.2	311.8
R3	318.5	321.6	313.9
O+3	310.5	310.3	307.7

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

w/e 17/10/15	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	126.1	138.2	148.9	161.8
P2	143.8	176.0	197.2	208.3
P3	178.7	207.0	213.5	221.3
O3	-	219.3	227.5	241.5
O4	151.8	-	235.9	244.3
R3	-	-	270.0	257.0

Deadweight Cattle Trade

QUOTES from the major processors this week for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 316-322p/kg with the majority of plants quoting from 318-322p/kg. Similar quotes are expected for early next week. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows have remained fairly steady at 224-240p/kg with a similar trade expected for Monday.

The processors have reported steady supplies of prime cattle to meet demand for beef with 6,260 prime cattle slaughtered in NI last week. This is six per cent lower than the 6,662 prime cattle slaughtered in the corresponding week in 2014. Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI last week totalled 551 head and accounted for nine per cent of the NI prime cattle kill. In the corresponding week last year prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter totalled 634 head and accounted for ten per cent of the total prime kill in NI. A total of 211 prime cattle were exported from NI to GB last week for direct slaughter.

Cow throughput in the NI plants has remained strong with 1,997 cows killed in NI last week compared to 1,904 in the same week last year. Dairy cows accounted for 60 per cent of the price reported cow kill in NI last week. A total of 298 cows were also exported from NI for direct slaughter in ROI plants last week, a notable decline from the 474 cows exported during the previous week.

The average steer price in NI last week was within a penny of the previous week at 311.2p/kg while the R3 steer price was back by 1.5p/kg to 320.5p/kg. Meanwhile in GB the average steer price was back by 3.2p/kg to 346.2p/kg with the R3 steer price back by 1.9p/kg to 352.5p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 steer prices between NI and GB at 32p/kg or £112 on a 350kg carcase. R3 steer prices were back in all the UK regions with the exception of Northern England where it increased by 1.9p/kg to 349.6p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 318.5p/kg, up marginally from the previous week, while the R3 heifer price was up by 1p/kg to 323.9p/kg. Meanwhile in GB the average heifer price was back by 2.9p/kg to 347.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back by 2.5p/kg to 353.9p/kg.

The average young bull price in NI last week was up by 4.4p/kg to 301.9p/kg with the O3 steer price up by 5.2p/kg to 301.9p/kg. This improvement in deadweight prices can be attributed to a decrease in the proportion of dairy sired young bulls in the slaughter mix. Last week 34 per cent of the young bull kill were dairy sired compared to 42 per cent during the previous week.

Reports from ROI have indicated a tightening in the supplies of prime cattle with throughput last week totalling 22,884 head, a six per cent decline from the 24,318 prime cattle killed in ROI plants during the previous week. Deadweight prices were largely unchanged in euro terms last week however an improvement in the value of the euro against sterling meant an improvement of 1-2p/kg in sterling terms for some grades. The R3 steer price in NI last week was the equivalent of 281.8p/kg while the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 291.6p/kg.

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

W/E 17/10/2015		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	321.1	291.0	372.9	355.7	353.8	354.6	360.1
	R3	320.5	281.8	366.4	349.6	345.3	345.1	352.5
	R4	317.0	281.4	368.7	358.9	345.7	342.5	356.4
	O3	309.1	266.7	346.8	327.9	322.5	322.6	330.7
	AVG	311.2	-	364.2	346.9	332.8	334.6	346.2
Heifers	U3	330.2	301.3	378.1	362.4	361.0	358.8	366.1
	R3	323.9	291.6	369.1	351.4	347.3	344.0	353.9
	R4	320.9	290.6	369.3	352.3	346.5	343.6	354.8
	O3	313.8	278.9	336.9	327.9	319.7	314.8	325.8
	AVG	318.5	-	366.8	346.0	336.7	328.7	347.1
Young Bulls	U3	312.8	287.3	366.7	341.2	349.2	349.5	349.1
	R3	313.7	282.7	358.0	330.7	334.3	341.3	337.5
	O3	296.2	268.2	318.3	292.5	312.2	324.7	312.3
	AVG	301.9	-	338.4	318.5	326.2	328.3	326.2
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5188	-	6762	6799	5961	4563	24085
Cows	O3	239.7	245.7	244.1	227.3	232.8	223.8	233.0
	O4	243.2	247.0	248.6	231.6	234.4	224.5	236.1
	P2	199.1	219.9	185.0	196.9	187.6	178.1	187.1
	P3	218.6	239.9	202.3	210.9	201.8	198.1	204.2
	AVG	217.3	-	233.9	205.9	193.7	190.8	208.1

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=74.10p 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 17/10/15	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	181	201	194	160	180	170
Friesians	124	147	135	108	120	115
Heifers	190	210	197	166	188	177
Beef Cows	120	190	130	100	119	110
Dairy Cows	100	114	108	60	99	80
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	190	213	207	160	189	175
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	209	225	217	165	208	185
Bullocks over 500kg	200	224	212	155	199	175
Heifers up to 450kg	188	208	198	150	187	170
Heifers over 450kg	190	208	196	155	189	175
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	300	410	335	200	298	250
Continental Heifers	275	440	300	150	270	210
Friesian Bulls	140	260	175	50	138	100
Holstein Bulls	80	180	120	10	78	45

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 19/10/15	Next Week 26/10/15
Lambs	310-315>21kg	315-320p/kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 03/10/15	W/E 10/10/15	W/E 17/10/15
NI Lambs L/W	277.6	281.0	279.0
NI Lambs D/W	305.9	305.8	307.4
GB Lambs D/W	343.3	338.7	338.9
ROI D/W	321.6	320.4	318.4

Deadweight Sheep Trade

THE deadweight sheep trade has firmed with quotes of up to 320p/kg up to 21kg towards the end of this week. Similar quotes are expected for early next week. The major NI processors have reported steady supplies of lambs coming forward for slaughter with throughput last week totalling 13,490 head. A further 9,164 lambs were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week. Lambs slaughtered in NI last week were generally of good quality with 39 per cent of the price reported kill achieving an R3 grade and 27 per cent a U3 grade. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week increased by 1.6p/kg to 307.4p/kg while the deadweight price in ROI was back by 2p/kg to 318.4p/kg.

This week's marts

A good trade was reported across the marts this week with good numbers of lambs passing through the sale rings. In Omagh last Saturday a similar trade to the previous week saw 1,604 lambs sell from 291-364p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 1,216 lambs sold from 270-300p/kg compared to 1,162 lambs last Monday selling from 270-306p/kg. In Saintfield on Tuesday 907 lambs sold from 269-326p/kg compared to 989 lambs last week selling from 265-320p/kg. A large entry of 2,186 lambs in Ballymena on Wednesday sold to an average of 274p/kg compared to 2,158 lambs last Wednesday selling to an average of 271p/kg. Top reported prices for cull ewes generally ranged from £70-85 with a top reported price of £100 in Swatragh last Saturday.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 16/10/15		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 22/10/15		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	653	260	298	-
Saturday	Omagh	1604	291	364	-
	Swatragh	1175	261	360	-
Monday	Massereene	1216	270	300	-
	Kilrea	750	276	318	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	907	269	326	-
	Rathfriland	1009	268	338	292
Wednesday	Ballymena	2186	265	297	274
	Enniskillen	689	285	309	290

Contact us:
Website: www.lmcni.com
Telephone: 028 9263 3000
Fax: 028 9263 3001
FQAS Helpline: 028 9263 3024
Answerphone: 028 9263 3011
Comments: bulletin@lmcni.com

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