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LESS IMPORTS FROM ROI IN 2016

IMPORTS of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants during 2016 were notably behind the level of imports recorded in the previous two years. A total of 8,498 prime cattle were imported from ROI for direct slaughter during 2016, accounting for just three per cent of the total NI prime cattle kill. This is notably lower than 2015 levels when 22,766 prime cattle were imported from ROI, accounting for seven per cent of the total NI prime cattle kill. The level of import was also lower than 2014 when 24,422 prime cattle were imported from ROI accounting for eight per cent of the total NI prime cattle kill.

Figure 1 outlines the monthly imports of prime cattle from ROI to NI for direct slaughter from 2014 to 2016. Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter generally peak in the autumn months as prime cattle availability for slaughter increases however as indicated in Figure 1 the monthly level of export recorded during the last two quarters of 2016 were notably lower than year earlier levels.

Imports from ROI to NI for direct slaughter reached their lowest level of 2016 during October when a total of 230 prime cattle were imported for direct slaughter and conversely imports reached their highest level of 2015 during the same month with a total of 2,831 head imported.

The decline in the value of sterling against euro during 2016 made finished cattle in ROI relatively more expensive for local processors when compared to previous years. In addition many major retail customers have a preference for beef sourced from animals that have been born, reared and finished on UK farms and since the largest majority of NI origin beef is destined for the UK retail market there is therefore a much more limited market outlet for beef reared and finished in ROI and then slaughtered in NI.

Another factor behind the decline in imports for direct slaughter during 2016 has been the relatively steady supply of prime cattle from local farms to meet demand for beef resulting in less demand for prime cattle from ROI to secure plant throughput.

Further production

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for further production on NI farms during 2016 have also been lower than year earlier levels with 2,936 male store cattle imported during 2016, back from the 7,363 head imported during 2015 and 7,220 head imported during 2014.

While import levels from ROI for further production during 2016 have been lower than previous years they have generally followed a similar trend to 2015 import levels with the exception of the months of July and August as indicated in Figure 2. Imports from ROI to NI for further production reached their lowest level of 2016 during July when a total of 61 male store cattle were imported compared to 561 male store cattle during July 2015.

As with imports for direct slaughter, import levels for further production will also have been impacted by the decline in the value of sterling against euro during 2016 which made ROI origin cattle comparatively more expensive for NI producers than in previous years.

Notable deductions at point of slaughter and the more limited market outlets for these mixed origin cattle have also made importing cattle for further production less attractive. While cattle that are imported from ROI for further finishing on NI farms can achieve Farm Quality Assured status provided that the required 90 days residency on an FQAS farm is completed, they cannot qualify for Red Tractor Assured status which is a requirement of trade with many of the major GB multiples and food service companies. While processors can still market beef from these mixed origin animals they will do so at a price that may be below that of UK born animals. It is therefore important that producers have consulted the processors and organised an outlet for these animals prior to purchase to avoid significant penalties further down the line.

Figure 1: Prime cattle imports from ROI into NI for direct slaughter 2014-2016

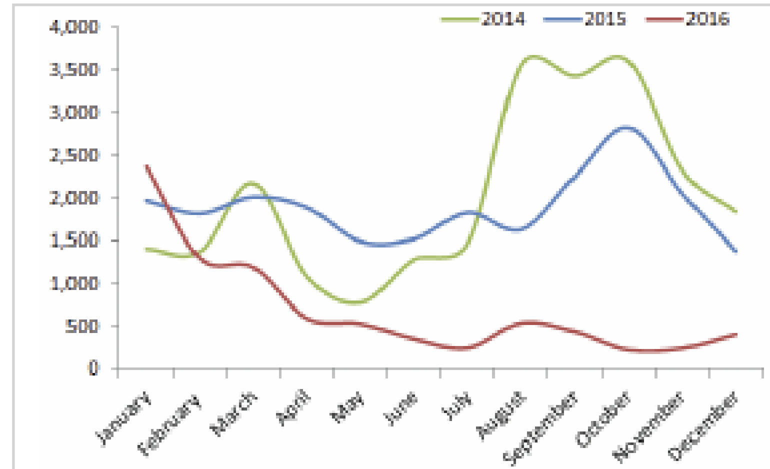
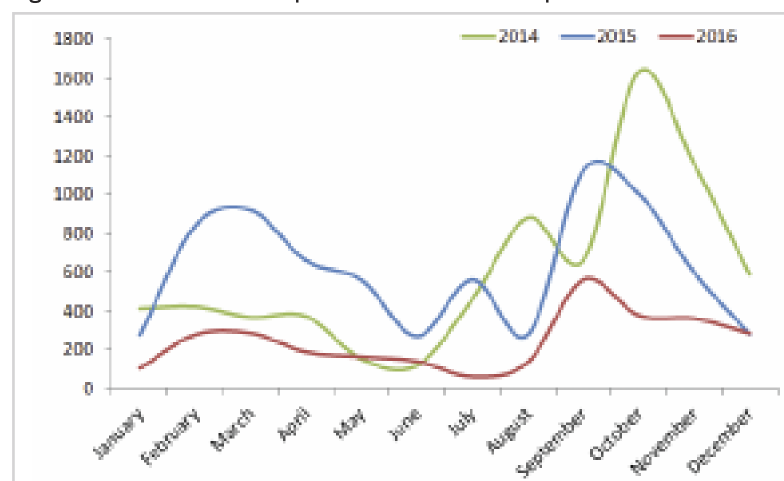


Figure 2: Male store cattle imports from ROI for further production 2014-2016



FARM HEALTH & SAFETY WORKSHOPS

cafre
College of Agriculture, Food & Rural Enterprise

Farm Health & Safety workshops are currently being delivered on farms throughout Northern Ireland. They are open to farmers, farm family members and farm employees and are free of charge.

The workshop covers the 4 main dangers associated with working on a farm - Slurry, Animals, Falls and Equipment and also gives an overview of the Making it Safer online risk assessment tool which is a requirement when applying to the DAERA Farm Business Improvement Scheme.

To register for one of the scheduled workshops please visit:
www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/farm-family-key-skills/
or alternatively contact RDC on 028 8676 6980 for more information.

NI BEEF INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT - DECEMBER 2016

TABLE 1 outlines key performance indicators for the NI beef industry during December 2016 and provides a useful comparison with year earlier levels. During December 2016 the average prime cattle price in NI was 346.3p/kg, 39.1p/kg higher than December 2015 when the average price was 307.2p/kg. The R3 steer price in NI during December 2016 was 355.9p/kg, 39.7p/kg higher than December 2015 when the R3 steer price was 316.2p/kg.

In GB the average R3 steer price during December 2016 was 362.6p/kg compared to 345.4p/kg in December 2015 which is an increase of 17.2p/kg. The differential in R3 steer prices between NI and GB narrowed from 29.2p/kg in December 2015 to 6.7p/kg in December 2016. In ROI during December 2016 the average R3 steer price was the equivalent of 308.7p/kg compared to 275.7p/kg in December 2015. This is an increase of 33p/kg however in euro terms the R3 steer price in ROI remained fairly steady year on year and it has been the strengthening of euro against sterling that led to the increase in deadweight prices in sterling terms.

Prime cattle throughput in NI during December 2016 totalled 24,024 head, a 6.5 per cent decrease from the 25,697 head killed locally in December 2015. The average carcase weight of prime cattle during December 2016 was 337kg, a decrease of 1.9 per cent from December 2015 when the average carcase weight was 344kg. Imports of cattle for direct slaughter in NI plants in December 2016 totalled 626 head compared to 1,819 head in December 2015. Meanwhile exports from NI for direct slaughter totalled 413 head in December 2016, a notable 78 per cent decline from year earlier levels.

The number of beef sired cattle on NI farms aged 12-30 months totalled 357,040 head in December 2016, a 5.2 per cent increase from December 2015 levels. The number of dairy sired male cattle on NI farms increased by two per cent year on year with 44,267 head on NI farms in December 2016. Beef sired calf registrations increased by 7.4 per cent to total 17,042 head during December 2016 while the number of dairy sired male calf registrations declined by 5.3 per cent to 7,560 head.

Table 1: NI Beef Industry Key Performance Indicators (December Snapshot)

	Dec-15	Dec-16	% Change
Finished Cattle Prices (p/kg)			
Average Prime Cattle Price	307.2	346.3	12.7%
Average Cow Price	202.0	232.9	15.3%
Average R3 Steer Price **(NI)**	316.2	355.9	12.6%
Average R3 Steer Price **(ROI)**	275.7	308.7	12.0%
Average R3 Steer Price **(GB)**	345.4	362.6	5.0%
Slaughterings			
Total Clean Slaughterings (Head)	25,697	24,024	-6.5%
Total Cow Slaughterings (Head)	7,413	7,926	6.9%
Average Clean Carcase Weight (kg)	344	337	-1.9%
Average Cow Carcase Weight (kg)	302	292	-3.3%
Trade (Head)			
Live Imports for Direct Slaughter	1,819	626	-65.6%
Live Exports for Direct Slaughter	1,874	413	-78.0%
Availability (Head)			
No. Cattle on the Ground*	382,857	401,307	4.8%
Beef Sired	339,478	357,040	5.2%
Dairy Sired (Male Only)	43,379	44,267	2.0%
Calf Births Registrations (Head)			
Calf Births	23,852	24,602	3.1%
Beef Sired	15,865	17,042	7.4%
Dairy Sired (Male Only)	7,987	7,560	-5.3%
Euro / Stg Exchange Rate (€ / £)	72.60	84.44	16.3%

* Aged between 12-30 mths (Beef + Dairy Male Only)

All NI Figures Unless Otherwise Stated

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 09/01/17	Next Week 16/01/17
Prime		
U-3	346 - 350p	344 - 348p
R-3	340 - 344p	338 - 342p
O+3	334 - 338p	332 - 336p
P+3	280 - 298p	278 - 296p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	240 - 250p	240 - 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 07/01/17	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	356.1	359.4	350.4
R3	352.8	352.6	346.0
O+3	346.0	344.2	336.8

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 07/01/17	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	154.3	165.9	184.6	179.5
P2	167.9	196.1	215.8	229.1
P3	208.0	218.1	233.4	237.8
O3	-	229.7	242.3	254.9
O4	-	230.0	263.0	256.8
R3	-	-	-	272.1

Deadweight Cattle Trade

BASE quotes from the major NI processors early this week for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 346-350p/kg however the deadweight trade has started to come under pressure with the majority of plants quoting in the region of 346p/kg for Monday. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows remained steady ranging from 240-250p/kg across the plants. A total of 5,584 prime cattle were slaughtered in NI plants last week, almost identical to the number of prime cattle slaughtered locally in the corresponding week in 2016. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,685 head, a decrease compared to the same week in 2016 when 1,837 cows were killed in NI plants.

Prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 97 head, accounting for two per cent of the NI prime cattle kill. In the same week in 2016 a total of 554 prime cattle were imported, accounting for nine per cent of the prime cattle kill. The number of cows imported from ROI for direct slaughter in NI last week totalled 31 head, compared to 71 cows during the same week in 2016. Meanwhile 70 cows were exported from NI for direct slaughter in ROI last week, similar to the corresponding week in 2016. Exports from NI to GB for direct slaughter last week consisted of 24 prime cattle and 14 cows, back from 191 prime cattle and 50 cows in the same week last year.

Deadweight prices for prime cattle in NI generally weakened last week with the average steer price back by 4.1p/kg to 347.2p/kg while the R3 steer price declined 3.3p/kg to 356.1p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was back by 4.2p/kg to 349.2p/kg while the R3 heifer price declined by three pence to 354.9p/kg. The average cow price in NI last week recorded a decrease of 7.1p/kg to 232.3p/kg while the O3 cow price was back by almost a penny to 253.1p/kg.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle in GB also weakened last week although not to the same extent as recorded in NI. The average steer price in GB last week was back by half a penny to 354.1p/kg while the average R3 steer price was unchanged at 363.5p/kg. The differential in R3 steer prices between NI and GB was 7.4p/kg or £26 on a 350kg carcase. Northern England saw the largest decline in deadweight R3 price last week with a decrease of 4.1p/kg to 359.3p/kg, putting the differential in R3 steer prices between NI and Northern England at 3.2p/kg or £11 on a 350kg carcase. The Midlands and Wales however saw an increase in R3 steer price by 2.6p/kg to 361.8p/kg putting the differential in R3 steer prices between NI and this region at 5.7p/kg or £20 on a 350kg carcase. The average heifer price in GB last week was up by 0.8p/kg to 357.6p/kg while the average R3 heifer price decreased by 0.9p/kg to 363.7p/kg. The differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and the GB average was 8.8p/kg or £28 on a 320kg carcase.

In ROI last week the deadweight cattle trade strengthened in euro terms however weakened slightly in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 315.8p/kg, back by 1.4p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 327.3p/kg, a decrease of 0.6p/kg from the previous week. The O3 cow price recorded a similar decrease of 0.7p/kg to 254.5p/kg.

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

W/E 07/01/2017		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	357.2	323.9	369.9	359.4	366.0	369.1	365.6
	R3	356.1	315.8	370.6	359.3	361.8	361.7	363.5
	R4	359.5	317.4	370.9	373.2	359.1	358.7	368.0
	O3	348.1	306.2	345.2	336.1	324.4	331.6	334.7
	AVG	347.2	-	366.1	356.3	346.5	343.4	354.1
Heifers	U3	360.4	338.6	377.8	367.6	371.1	372.5	372.2
	R3	354.9	327.3	370.9	356.4	363.6	359.5	363.7
	R4	352.2	327.8	372.3	368.9	361.4	361.6	366.9
	O3	346.7	314.6	351.3	327.3	338.5	338.7	339.6
	AVG	349.2	-	370.3	357.0	350.6	349.5	357.6
Young Bulls	U3	350.4	318.2	361.5	346.4	347.7	352.9	350.4
	R3	344.4	309.4	356.8	334.9	339.3	345.7	341.2
	O3	329.3	297.1	329.2	299.0	312.6	311.2	312.5
	AVG	324.6	-	344.8	316.7	322.9	310.5	323.5
Prime Cattle Price Reported		3975	-	4329	6086	5161	3413	18989
Cows	O3	253.1	254.5	234.0	243.3	243.9	233.4	240.7
	O4	257.0	255.9	240.9	248.8	243.8	233.3	242.4
	P2	217.2	232.3	187.6	196.9	192.0	181.1	190.2
	P3	235.9	243.6	204.0	224.3	211.5	208.3	212.3
	AVG	232.3	-	221.1	221.4	208.4	201.7	211.1

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=85.15p 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

W/E 07/01/17	1st QUALITY From	1st QUALITY To	1st QUALITY Avg	2nd QUALITY From	2nd QUALITY To	2nd QUALITY Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	203	213	207	165	198	182
Friesians	154	162	157	110	152	139
Heifers	200	220	210	160	199	180
Beef Cows	123	196	132	105	122	115
Dairy Cows	100	121	106	65	99	82
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	210	236	222	168	208	188
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	190	211	200	160	189	175
Bullocks over 500kg	200	224	210	168	198	185
Heifers up to 450kg	200	236	218	160	199	180
Heifers over 450kg	205	227	216	160	203	182
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	290	395	345	180	288	250
Continental Heifers	215	355	280	130	212	170
Friesian Bulls	100	180	140	25	98	60
Holstein Bulls	85	165	100	15	82	40

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 09/01/17	Next Week 16/01/17
Hoggets	365-370 > 22kg	365 > 22kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 24/12/16	W/E 31/12/16	W/E 07/01/2017
NI Lambs/Hoggets L/W	345.7	349.4	339.3
NI Lambs/Hoggets D/W	368.9	373.4	370.5
GB Lamb/Hoggets D/W	385.0	389.1	386.6
ROI Lamb/Hoggets D/W	372.3	377.6	375.2

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES for R3 grade hoggets in NI ranged from 365-370p/kg early in the week however came back in the region of 365p/kg towards the end of the week. A total of 7,670 hoggets were slaughtered in NI plants last week which was a decrease from the corresponding week in 2016 when a total of 7,908 hoggets were slaughtered locally. Meanwhile the number of NI origin hoggets slaughtered in ROI last week totalled 5,988 head, a decrease of 2,198 head from the 8,186 NI origin hoggets killed in ROI during the same week last year. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week was back by 2.9p/kg to 370.5p/kg while the average deadweight hogget price in ROI last week was back by the equivalent of 2.4p/kg to 375.2p/kg.

This week's marts

GOOD numbers of hoggets have been passing through many of the marts this week with reports of a steady liveweight trade. In Newtownstewart last Friday 358 hoggets sold from 320-394p/kg. In Swatragh last Saturday 900 hoggets sold from 310-364p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 1,086 hoggets sold from 330-360p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 600 hoggets sold to an average of 340p/kg compared to 515 hoggets the previous week selling to an average of 341p/kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday 1,991 hoggets sold to an average of 327p/kg compared to 1,906 hoggets the previous week selling to an average of 332p/kg. The trade for first quality fat ewes firmed this week with top reported prices generally ranging from £85-100.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 06/01/17		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 12/01/17		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	358	320	394	-
Saturday	Omagh	726	333	379	-
	Swatragh	900	310	364	-
Monday	Kilrea	385	328	348	-
	Massereene	1086	330	360	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	445	320	380	-
	Rathfriland	600	316	378	340
Wednesday	Ballymena	1991	290	352	327
	Enniskillen	289	322	355	-
	Markethill	1050	320	362	-
	Armoy	564	320	348	330

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