LMC

WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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INCREASE IN ABERDEEN ANGUS AND HEREFORD CALF REGISTRATIONS

DURING October 2017 there were 18,961 beef sired calves registered on NI farms. This was very similar to October 2016 levels when 18,932 beef sired calves were registered in NI.

During 2017 to date there have been 331,703 beef calves registered on NI farms. This is a marginal increase from 330,778 head during the corresponding 10 month period in 2016 however it is notably higher than the 304,090 beef calves registered in the same period in 2015.

While the total number of beef sired calves has increased in recent years there has been an overall decline in the proportion of calf registrations to the major continental breeds in NI. Meanwhile the proportion of native breed beef calves registered in NI has increased.

Continental sired calf registrations

Limousin continues to be the most popular beef sire used in NI and accounted for 27.8 per cent of all beef sired registrations during 2017 to date. However as outlined in Table 1 this is back from the same period in 2016 when Limousin calves accounted for 28.9 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations. There were 3,368 fewer Limousin calves registered in NI between January and October 2017 when compared to the same period in 2016.

Charolais calves accounted for 23.7 per cent of beef sired calf registrations in NI during 2017 to date with a total of 78,606 registrations. In the corresponding period in 2016 Charolais calf registrations totalled 82,181 head and accounted for 24.8 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations.

During the 2017 period 24,558 Simmental calves were registered on NI farms and these accounted for 7.7 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations. This was fairly similar to year earlier levels when 25,466 Simmental calves accounted for 7.4 per cent of total calf registrations.

While the proportion of Limousin, Charolais and Simmental calves registered has declined the number of Belgian Blue calves registered in NI has increased, although the numbers involved remain relatively small. During 2017 to date 18,684 Belgian Blue calves were registered in NI, accounting for 5.6 per cent of all beef calf registrations. In the same period last year 17,500 calves were registered, accounting for 5.3 per cent of total beef registrations.

Native breed calf registrations

During 2017 to date 64,892 Aberdeen Angus calves have been registered on NI farms and accounted for 19.6 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations. This is an increase of 5,032 calves from the same period last year when 59,860 Aberdeen Angus calves were registered on NI farms and these accounted for 18.1 per cent of all beef sired registrations.

A total of 26,010 Hereford calves were registered on NI farms during 2017 to date and these accounted for 7.8 per cent of total beef sired calf registrations. In the same period in 2016 24,593 Hereford calves were registered in NI and accounted for 7.4 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations.

Dairy herd

The dairy herd continues to act as an important source of animals for beef production. During 2017 to date 32 per cent of all beef sired calves had a dairy dam, an increase from 30 per cent in the corresponding period in 2016.

Dairy sired male calves also act as an important source of cattle for finishing as beef. During October 2017 9,445 dairy sired male calves were registered in NI, taking the total for the year to date to 63,578 head. This is a reduction of 4,051 head (five per cent) from the corresponding period in 2016 when 67,629 dairy sired male calves were registered in NI.

During October 2017 1,712 calves were exported out of NI and these are predominantly dairy sired male calves destined for mainland Europe. This takes the total exported for the year to date to 12,712 head. In the same period last year 14,317 calves were exported out of NI, accounting for an 11 per cent decline year on year.

Figure 1: Monthly beef sired calf registrations in NI from January 2015 to October 2017.

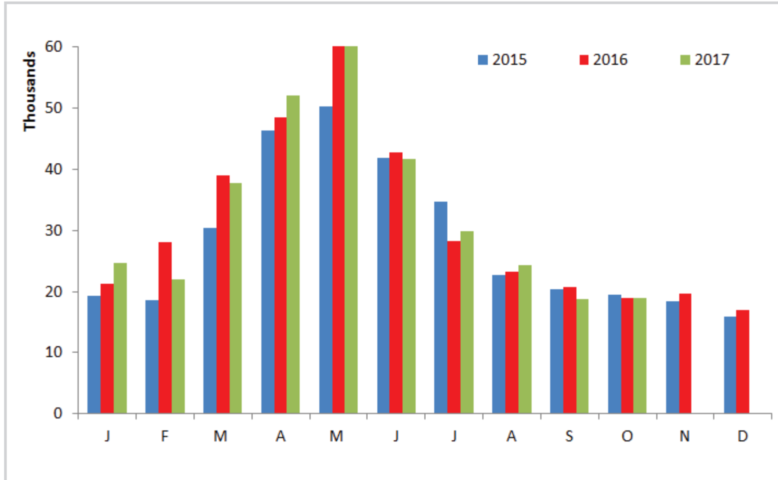


Table 1: Proportion of beef sired calf registrations by breed in NI January to October 2016/2017

	Limousin	Charolais	Aberdeen Angus	Simmental	Hereford	Belgian Blue	Other Beef
2016	28.9%	24.8%	18.1%	7.7%	7.4%	5.3%	7.8%
2017	27.8%	23.7%	19.6%	7.4%	7.8%	5.6%	8.1%

FODDER SHORTAGES AND FIRM PRICES DRIVING STRONG COW THROUGHPUT IN LOCAL PLANTS

COW throughout in NI plants last week totalled 2,707 head. This is the highest weekly throughput for the year to date and brings throughput for the month of October to 10,122 head. This is a slight increase from October 2016 levels when 9,867 cows were killed in local plants.

Reports have indicated that there is reduced fodder availability on NI farms as we move into the winter months. A difficult summer prevented or delayed silage cutting on many farms and this combined with cattle being housed early has eaten into supplies. This will have encouraged many producers to offload unproductive stock and will have contributed to the strong cow supplies for slaughter.

A relatively strong cow beef price will also have encouraged producers to consider culling cows. Figure 2 displays the weekly O3 cow price in NI from January 2016 to October 2017. Cow beef prices in NI have been strong during 2017 to date and have been above the corresponding period in 2016 as outlined in Figure 2.

The O3 cow price in NI last week was 273.5p/kg, an increase of 20.9p/kg from the corresponding week in 2016. This is the equivalent of a £61 in the value of a 290kg carcase year on year. The average P2 cow price in NI last week was 232.5p/kg, an increase of 19.8p/kg from the corresponding week last year when it was 212.7p/kg.

There has also been an increase in the number of cows being exported out of NI for direct slaughter in recent weeks. A total of 803 cows were exported to ROI for direct slaughter during October 2017 with a further 178 cows exported to GB. In October 2016 633 cows were exported to ROI for direct slaughter with a further 159 head exported to GB.

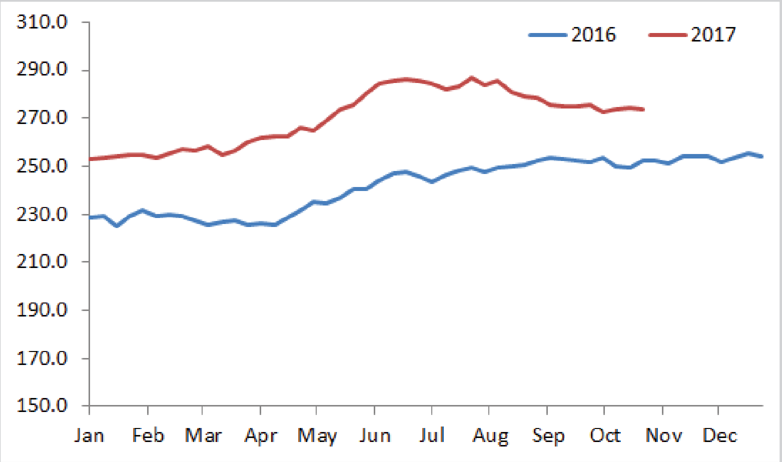
It should also be noted that there has been a marked increase in the number of cows being imported for direct slaughter in local plants. During October 2017 164 cows were imported from ROI and a further 492 cows from GB. In the same month last year 38 cows were imported from GB for direct slaughter with 141 cows imported from ROI.

While cow throughput has recorded an increase in local plants during October 2017 there has also been a slight shift in the type of cows being slaughtered. During October 2017 38 per cent of cows were of suckler origin compared to 36 per cent in October 2016. Meanwhile the proportion of dairy origin cows in the slaughter mix declined from 64 per cent in October 2016 to 62 per cent in October 2017.

This increase in the proportion of suckler origin cows may have contributed to a slight increase in average carcase weights. During October 2017 the average cow carcase weight in NI was 292.1kg, up 2.8kg from October 2016 when the average carcase weight was 289.3kg.

This increase in the average carcase weight combined with the increase in cow throughput has meant the plants have processed a higher volume of cow beef. During October 2017 local plants processed 2,957 tonnes of cow beef, an increase of 103 tonnes or four per cent from the corresponding period in 2016 when they processed 2,854 tonnes of cow beef.

Figure 2: Weekly O3 cow prices in NI from January 2016 to October 2017



WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 30/10/17	Next Week 06/11/17
Prime		
U-3	350 - 354p	350 - 354p
R-3	344 - 348p	344 - 348p
O+3	338 - 342p	338 - 342p
P+3	288 - 306p	288 - 306p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	260 - 280p	260 - 280p
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 28/10/17	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	357.6	360.2	350.5
R3	353.4	354.3	347.2
O+3	345.4	345.0	338.5

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 28/10/17	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	175.5	188.1	197.9	205.1
P2	189.7	214.9	232.2	246.1
P3	214.6	239.6	248.4	256.7
O3	245.0	263.9	267.0	274.9
O4	-	-	271.4	279.2
R3	-	-	-	294.4

Deadweight Cattle Trade

THE deadweight trade for prime cattle has held steady in NI this week with quotes for U-3 grade prime cattle ranging from 350-354p/kg. The cow trade has also remained firm with base quotes for O+3 cows ranging from 260-280p/kg across the major processors. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Steady supplies of prime cattle have continued to come forward for slaughter however some reports have indicated that the processors are actively seeking more cattle. Prime cattle throughput last week was similar to previous weeks at 6,938 head which brought throughput for October 2017 to 27,797. This was a slight increase from October 2016 when 27,015 prime cattle were slaughtered in local plants. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 2,707 head and this was the highest weekly throughput since November 2016.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 68 prime cattle, 25 cows and 1 bull while 3 prime cattle and 103 cows were imported from GB for slaughter in local plants. Exports to ROI last week for direct slaughter included 2 prime cattle, 163 cows and 19 bulls while exports to GB included 132 prime cattle and 18 cows. These levels of import and export were generally similar to the previous week.

The average steer price in NI last week increased by 1.4p/kg to 347.7p/kg while the R3 steer price was up by 0.7p/kg to 357.2p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 351.2p/kg, up a penny from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was back by a similar margin to 358.1p/kg. The trade for young bulls firmed in NI last week with the average price increasing by 1.2p/kg to 335.2p/kg while the R3 young bull price was up 3.3p/kg to 346.9p/kg.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle generally came under pressure in GB last week however there was some variation across the regions. The average GB steer price was back by half a penny to 360.1p/kg last week however while the average price was back in Scotland (-2.1p/kg) and Northern England (-2.9p/kg) the average price increased in the Midlands (+0.4p/kg) and Southern England (+4.8p/kg). The average heifer price in GB last week was back by 1.2p/kg to 362.2p/kg with prices back in Scotland (-2.8p/kg), Northern England (-0.4p/kg) and the Midlands (-3.6p/kg). The average heifer price in Southern England last week increased by 3.6p/kg to 351.4p/kg.

The differential in R3 steer prices between NI and GB last week was 14p/kg or £49 on a 350kg carcase. Meanwhile the differential in R3 heifer prices between the two regions was 13.3p/kg or £47 on a 350kg carcase.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle held steady in ROI last week in euro terms however a weakening in euro against sterling meant prices were back slightly in sterling terms. The average steer price was back by 1.9p/kg to 327.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back 1.3p/kg to 337.9p/kg.

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

W/E 28/10/2017		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	359.0	337.7	386.0	372.9	371.7	370.6	375.5
	R3	357.2	327.1	380.4	368.1	367.0	369.4	371.2
	R4	356.1	326.1	381.6	378.1	366.3	371.0	375.3
	O3	346.9	309.4	358.6	339.9	334.9	344.1	344.4
	AVG	347.7	-	376.6	358.3	349.9	354.4	360.1
Heifers	U3	361.3	349.9	390.1	377.9	379.1	377.9	381.6
	R3	358.1	337.9	381.0	367.4	368.9	367.0	371.4
	R4	355.8	337.7	379.9	374.5	368.8	365.8	373.0
	O3	349.7	323.7	352.4	340.6	344.5	346.3	346.2
	AVG	351.2	-	378.0	361.9	354.4	351.4	362.2
Young Bulls	U3	350.2	336.8	376.9	364.7	361.9	367.6	366.4
	R3	346.9	327.5	367.8	359.4	345.7	336.5	354.6
	O3	333.6	313.0	327.2	315.7	318.5	337.2	321.1
	AVG	335.2	-	353.3	336.9	334.1	336.6	338.7
Prime Cattle Price Reported		6185	-	6713	7154	6792	4671	25330
Cows	O3	273.5	278.6	268.1	261.0	270.3	262.5	266.1
	O4	278.6	279.2	269.1	261.1	270.3	259.6	265.7
	P2	232.5	249.4	222.3	215.0	224.4	224.9	222.9
	P3	253.7	268.9	235.2	230.4	236.2	238.7	235.5
	AVG	249.1	-	257.5	230.9	228.4	221.8	230.8

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=88.98p 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 28/10/17	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	200	215	209	175	196	185
Friesians	150	169	159	125	148	142
Heifers	192	210	197	160	190	175
Beef Cows	144	225	157	116	143	130
Dairy Cows	107	123	112	65	106	85
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	225	258	232	180	224	200
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	205	225	215	170	204	188
Bullocks over 500kg	195	210	200	165	194	180
Heifers up to 450kg	215	246	225	170	214	190
Heifers over 450kg	200	221	210	170	199	185
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	260	390	315	150	258	205
Continental Heifers	250	390	280	120	248	180
Friesian Bulls	100	150	125	50	98	75
Holstein Bulls	75	135	100	5	72	40

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 30/10/17	Next Week 06/11/17
Lambs >21kg	375-380p	375-380p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 14/10/17	W/E 21/10/17	W/E 28/10/17
NI Lambs L/W	325.2	336.4	336.8
NI Lambs D/W	356.4	356.6	363.7
GB Lambs D/W	389.7	386.4	385.4
ROI D/W	387.7	385.7	390.2

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the major processors for R3 grading lambs firmed towards the end of this week to 375-380p/kg up to 21kg. Similar quotes are expected for early next week. Lamb throughput in local plants last week totalled 10,044 head which takes total throughput for October 2017 to 41,239 head. This is a three per cent increase from October 2016 levels when 39,970 lambs were killed in local plants. Lamb exports to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 8,217 head, a notable increase from 7,019 lambs exported during the previous week. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week increased by 7.1p/kg to 363.7p/kg. In the corresponding week last year the deadweight lamb price in NI was 371.8p/kg.

This week's marts

The marts have reported a mixed trade this week however there has generally been a steady demand for good quality lambs passing through the sale rings. In Swatragh last Saturday 950 lambs sold from 306-337p/kg compared to 820 lambs the previous Saturday selling from 330-366p/kg. In Massereene this week 923 lambs sold from 325-358p/kg compared to 960 lambs last week selling from 330-373p/kg. In Rathfriland this week a sharper trade saw 815 lambs sold to an average of 347p/kg compared to 942 lambs last week selling to an average of 342p/kg. A good entry of 2,088 lambs in Ballymena this week sold to an average of 332p/kg this week which was very similar trade to last week. In Markethill this week a firmer trade saw 1,170 lambs selling from 330-371p/kg compared to 1,100 lambs last week selling from 320-360p/kg.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 27/10/17		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 02/11/17		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	290	310	354	-
Saturday	Omagh	1034	351	395	-
	Swatragh	950	306	337	-
Monday	Kilrea	420	336	345	-
	Massereene	923	325	358	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	986	322	378	-
	Rathfriland	815	327	395	347
Wednesday	Ballymena	2088	319	357	332
	Enniskillen	492	328	369	-
	Markethill	1170	330	371	-
	Armoy	370	320	365	-

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LMC MONTHLY NEWS
Saturday 04 November 2017
Issue No. 0020

330 LMC SCHOOL COOKERY DEMOS AND COUNTING

The demand for LMC school cookery demonstrations continues to grow exponentially, according to the Commission's Education Services Manager Cherrie Kenny. "We have already 330 demonstrations confirmed with a further 22 schools on a backup list.

"The demonstrations for the 2017/18 academic year have already started and will continue through to the end of March next year. The school-based events are delivered by a 9-strong team of independent demonstrators. We cater for the needs of students from age 11 through to age 18," said Cherrie.

"The work that we do with the students in Year 10 is of particular importance as it can positively influence them to look at GCSE and A Level subjects with a strong food and nutrition bias. We also place great emphasis on communicating the provenance of the food that we use in the demonstrations. This, in turn, will be of great benefit to those students wishing to follow careers in food processing, marketing or production agriculture."

Cherrie confirmed that all of the activities undertaken by the LMC with the schools is fully curriculum compliant. "We have spent a lot of time working with teachers to ensure that the information we communicate either complements or adds to the criteria laid down within the curriculums for the various courses."

But, according to Cherrie, the cookery demonstrations represent an integral part of LMC's wider commitment to schools. "We have developed a range of resource materials with a strong food and nutrition focus. All of these can be found on our Food4Life website".

"These resources are freely available to all the schools. What's more, the website is constantly updated with new material that will be of direct interest to teachers. We are also in regular communication with the examinations' body CCEA, again to ensure that all the material we produce is fully curriculum compliant."

Cherrie also confirmed that LMC will be hosting its annual teachers' conference next February. This is an important professional development opportunity for food and nutrition teachers," she said. The 2018 event will be held in Belfast's Stormont Hotel. For further education and nutrition information log onto our website. www.food4life.org.uk

Image 1: LMC's 9 strong team of cookery demonstrators will deliver 330 cookery demonstrations across NI secondary schools between now and March 2018.

LMC WELCOMES THE PUBLICATION OF UK ANTIMICROBIAL USAGE LEVELS

LMC's Colin Smith has welcomed the confirmation by the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) that antimicrobial usage within the UK's various livestock sectors averaged 45mg/kg in 2016. This is 10% below the target of 50mg previously set for 2018, which was established by the UK government in 2014.

"The figures were made public at a recent RUMA conference, held in London," said Colin. "They also confirm that the progress achieved represents a 27% overall reduction in usage levels since 2014. The fact that the 50mg/kg threshold was achieved a full two years before the 2018 target is also to be welcomed."

Colin represents Northern Ireland on a Cattle Anti-Microbial Usage Data Collection Steering Group. "The RUMA figures have been calculated on a liveweight basis and are derived from antimicrobial sales in the UK and the relevant census figures for the various farmed livestock populations," he said.

Looking ahead, Colin confirmed that new usage targets had been set for all of the relevant livestock sectors. "For beef, the new 2020 target is a 10% reduction on 2016 levels or for the industry to reach a usage level of 20mg/population correction unit. Where lamb is concerned, the plan is to work with the sheep sector to also achieve a 10% reduction in antimicrobial usage, across the UK."

Image 2: RUMA have set new targets for antimicrobial usage levels across the various UK livestock sectors. The target for the beef sector is a 10 per cent reduction between 2016 and 2020.

Colin said that work in Northern Ireland will commence in early 2018 to secure the data required to allow our redmeat sectors to establish baseline usage levels for antimicrobials. "We do not have this information at the present time and it is crucially important that we get it, otherwise we will not be in a position to gauge the progress we are making in reducing the level of antibiotic usage within the local livestock sectors.

According to Colin, the last thing which the local beef and sheep sectors should do now is 'rest on their laurels' on the back of the recent RUMA figures. "The challenge of antimicrobial resistance will not go away. The farming sectors and the veterinary profession must play their part in delivering sustainable solutions," he explained.

"We must secure lower levels of antimicrobial usage within our red meat sectors. Livestock farmers must, therefore, become more focused on establishing disease prevention strategies within their businesses. Working closer with veterinarians to develop a complete animal health herd plan is one option for producers in this regard. Work undertaken by RUMA has confirmed that such an approach has led to significant reductions in antimicrobial usage on livestock farms in the UK."

"I see no reason why comparable success rates cannot be achieved on livestock farms here in Northern Ireland."

SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO ANUGA 2017

LMC has confirmed that its recent attendance at the 2017 Anuga Food Fair in Cologne proved extremely worthwhile. "Our team participated on the stand jointly hosted by Invest Northern Ireland and the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board," said LMC economist Seamus McMenamin. "We were also in a position to support those local redmeat companies, who had stands in their own right at the event."

"Anuga is one of the world's largest food events. Securing new markets for our beef and lamb is crucially important for the future of the red meat sectors in Northern Ireland. Anuga provides a tremendous networking hub for those involved in the food industry and in our case provided us with an opportunity to communicate the benefits of Northern Ireland's Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme."

"It is, possibly, the oldest initiative of its kind in the world. The scheme has a proven track record in guaranteeing the highest possible production and traceability standards. All of this gives international buyers total confidence in the beef and lamb they procure from Northern Ireland." Seamus confirmed that the UK will remain the key market for the prime beef produced in Northern Ireland. "But we need to achieve access to a wider range of markets to achieve carcase balance," he added. "This means getting the best possible returns for offals and those parts of the animal which are not sought after in the UK. And we are making progress in this regard. The Philippines is now accepting locally produced beef products and efforts continue apace to secure access to countries such as the United States and China for locally produced beef."

According to Seamus, the challenge of Brexit will make the attainment of new markets for beef produced in Northern Ireland even more relevant into the future. "This is why our presence at international food events, such as Anuga, is just so important. Northern Ireland's redmeat sector has a very positive story to tell: we just have to get out there and communicate this reality."

"But attending Anuga also brings home just how large and diverse the world's food markets are. As a consequence, we can never take it for granted that potential customers know all that they need to know about the beef and lamb produced locally. Our competitors are always out there, communicating their messages. And we need to be doing the exact same thing on behalf of Northern Ireland's red meat sectors."

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