

## NI STEER KILL UPDATE QUARTER 4 2015

**D**URING the period October to December 2015 steers accounted for 57 per cent of the total prime cattle kill in NI, a slight increase from 56 per cent of the kill during the same 2014 period. Analysis of price reporting statistics have indicated that there were improvements recorded in both the conformation and fat scores achieved by the NI steer kill during October-December 2015 when compared to the corresponding period in 2014.

It is worth noting that the improvement in both conformation and fat scores were recorded despite a slight increase in the proportion of the NI steer kill sourced from the dairy herd during October to December 2015 when compared to the same period in 2014. During the 2015 period 64 per cent of the steer kill were of suckler origin and 36 per cent were sourced from the dairy herd. In the corresponding period in 2014 67 per cent of the steer kill were of suckler origin while the remaining 33 per cent were of dairy origin.

### Conformation

During the 2015 period 22.5 per cent of the NI steer kill achieved a U grade, an increase from the same period in 2014 when 20.2 per cent of the steer kill were awarded a U grade. Meanwhile the proportion of R grade

steer carcasses declined by 1.5 percentage points to account for 37.4 per cent of the price reported steer kill during the 2015 period.

The proportion of O grading steer carcasses in the NI kill during October to December 2015 was similar to the corresponding period in 2014 and accounted for 29.2 per cent of the price reported steer kill. Meanwhile the proportion of P grade carcasses accounted for 10.5 per cent of the steer kill in the 2015 period, back from 11.1 per cent in the 2014 period.

### Fat class

There was also a general improvement recorded in the fat class scores achieved by the NI steer kill during October-December 2015 when compared to year earlier levels as outlined in Table 1.

The proportion of price reported steers achieving a fat class two declined by 5.7 percentage points to account for 20.8 per cent of the steer kill in the 2015 period. Meanwhile the proportion of steers achieving a fat class three increased from 55.4 per cent in the 2014 period to 57.4 per cent in the 2015 period.

The proportion of steers achieving a fat class four also recorded an increase year on year. In the period October-

December 2015 19.9 per cent of the price reported steer kill were awarded a fat class four compared to 15.2 per cent in the 2014 period.

### Improved efficiency

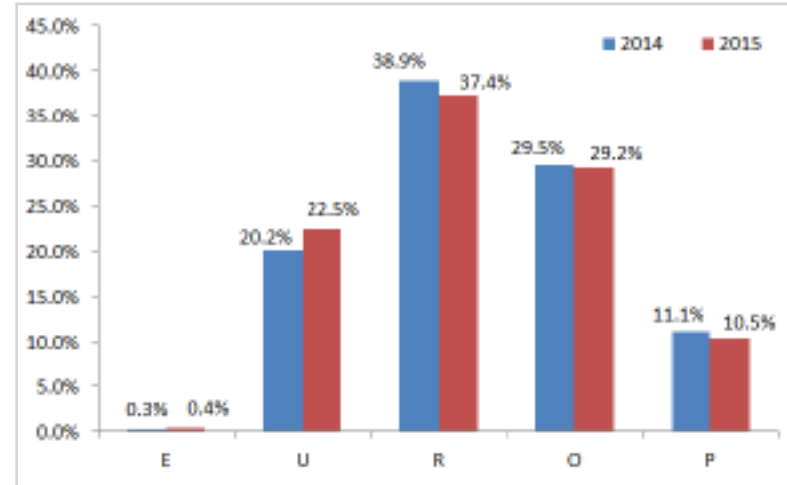
The general improvement in the grades achieved by the NI steer kill between October to December 2015 and the corresponding period in 2014 has coincided with a slight reduction in the average age at slaughter and an increase in average carcase weights which would indicate an improvement in production efficiency on NI beef finishing farms.

During October-December 2015 84 per cent of the price reported steer kill in NI were aged under 30 months, a proportion unchanged from the same period in 2014. However while the proportion of the NI steer kill meeting the under 30 month age requirement was unchanged year on year the average age at slaughter of these cattle was back from 747 days in the 2014 period to 741 days in the 2015 period. The good performance of prime cattle at grass last summer will have contributed to this six day reduction in the average slaughter age.

### Increasing carcase weights

This improvement in the performance of steers at grass last summer will also have been a contributing factor behind

**Figure 1: Conformation scores achieved by the NI steer kill during October-December 2015 and corresponding period in 2014**



**Table 1: Fat class achieved by the NI steer kill during October-December 2015 and corresponding period in 2014**

	1	2	3	4	5
2014	2.8%	26.5%	55.4%	15.2%	0.1%
2015	1.7%	20.8%	57.4%	19.9%	0.3%

an increase in average carcase weights. The average carcase weight of steers killed under 30 months of age during October to December 2015 was 355kg, an increase of 12kg from the corresponding period in 2014. It is also likely that this increase in carcase

weights can be attributed to producers attempting to maximise returns per head by increasing carcase weights to help offset the high cost of store cattle during autumn 2014 and spring 2015.

## FQAS NOTICE ONLINE PAYMENTS

LMC has launched an online payment system for the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme. This allows producers to pay annual membership renewal and initial registration fees through the LMC website.

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# R3 HEIFER PRICES IN GB STILL HIGHEST IN EU

THE EU league table provides a useful comparison of prices received by beef finishers across the EU by ranking EU countries in terms of the farmgate prices paid for R3 grade heifers.

During the week ending 10 January 2016 the average R3 heifer price in the EU was 389.7c/kg, an increase of 2.8c/kg from the week ending 13 December 2015 when the average R3 heifer price was 386.8c/kg. During the week ending 10 January 2016 €1 = 73.9p, a slight increase from the week ending 13 December 2015 when €1 = 72.3p.

During the week ending 10 January 2016 GB retained first position in the league table with an equivalent R3 heifer price of 456.7c/kg as indicated in Table 2. This was a reduction of 22.3c/kg from the week ending 13 December 2015 when the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 479c/kg. The notable reduction in the GB R3 heifer price reduced the price differential between GB and the EU average R3 heifer price from 92.2c/kg in the week ending 13 December 2015 to 67c/kg in the week

ending 10 January 2016.

In NI during the week ending 10 January 2016 the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 424.3c/kg, a reduction of 11.6c/kg from the week ending 13 December 2015 when the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 435.8c/kg. This decline in the R3 heifer price in euro terms moved it down one position on the EU league table into third position. In the week ending 10 January 2016 the differential in R3 heifer prices between NI and the EU average was 34.6c/kg compared to 49c/kg in the week ending 13 December 2015.

The R3 heifer price in ROI during the week ending 10 January 2016 was 398.6c/kg, an increase of 4.2c/kg from the week ending the 13 December 2015 when it was 394.4c/kg. This put the R3 heifer price in ROI 8.9c/kg above the EU average price and placed it in sixth position on the EU league table. The differential in R3 heifer prices between ROI and NI narrowed from 41.4c/kg in the week ending 13 December 2015 to 25.7c/kg in the week ending 10 January 2016.

**Table 2: EU Deadweight Cattle Prices - Heifers R3 Equivalent (€ Cents)**

Position last Mth	Position this Mth	Country	Price last Mth (w/e 13.12.15)	Price this Mth (w/e 10.01.16)	Change on Mth (cents)
1	1	Great Britain	479.0	456.7	-22.3
3	2	Sweden	429.6	448.5	+18.9
2	3	Northern Ireland	435.8	424.3	-11.6
8	4	Italy	373.1	405.0	+31.9
4	5	Luxembourg	403.2	401.2	-2.0
5	6	Ireland	394.4	398.6	+4.2
6	7	France	394.0	397.0	+3.0
9	8	Spain	368.5	379.8	+11.3
7	9	Denmark	375.4	368.7	-6.7
10	10	Germany	365.5	367.9	+2.4
11	11	Austria	357.1	357.0	-0.1
12	12	Slovenia	337.6	338.3	+0.8
13	13	Belgium	322.0	321.0	-1.0
14	14	Poland	299.5	303.0	+3.5
16	15	Czech Republic	261.5	266.3	+4.8
15	16	Lithuania	280.8	228.0	-52.8
EU Average			386.8	389.7	+2.8
Euro (€1=)			72.3	73.9	+1.6



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# WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



## CATTLE TRADE

### NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 18/01/16	Next Week 25/01/16
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	310 - 312p	310 - 314p
R-3	304 - 306p	304 - 308p
O+3	298 - 300p	298 - 302p
P+3	222 - 260p	222 - 262p
	Including bonus where applicable	
<b>Cows</b>		
O+3 & better	214 - 240p	214 - 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 16/01/16	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	316.6	319.2	306.0
R3	313.3	314.2	304.6
O+3	303.5	305.7	290.1

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

w/e 16/01/16	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220- 250kg	Wgt 250- 280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	127.7	137.2	146.7	150.6
P2	138.1	157.5	174.9	202.4
P3	122.9	184.7	199.3	210.5
O3	186.7	195.2	221.6	230.5
O4	190.0	207.0	221.7	232.1
R3	-	-	-	251.6

### Deadweight Cattle Trade

**B**ASE quotes for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 310-314p/kg towards the end of this week with similar quotes expected for early next week. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows this week have remained steady with quotes generally ranging from 214-240p/kg across the plants.

The processors have reported good supplies of prime cattle to meet demand for beef with 6,283 prime cattle slaughtered in NI last week. This is seven per cent lower than the 6,693 cattle slaughtered in the corresponding week in 2015. Cow throughput in NI has remained steady with 1,893 cows killed in NI last week, an increase of seven per cent from the 1,754 cows killed in the corresponding week in 2015.

Prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 663 head, an increase from the 554 head imported the previous week and higher than the 429 prime cattle imported from ROI during the corresponding week in 2015. A total of 128 cows were also imported from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week, an increase from 71 cows the previous week and 62 cows during the same week in 2015. Meanwhile 245 cows were exported from NI for direct slaughter in ROI plants last week compared to 51 cows exported during the previous week. Exports from NI for direct slaughter in GB last week consisted of 136 prime cattle and 11 cows, a decrease from the previous week when 191 prime cattle and 50 cows were exported.

The average steer price in NI last week was up by 2.2p/kg to 306.4p/kg while the R3 steer price was up by 2.5p/kg to 316.7p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week decreased by 1.7p/kg to 310.3p/kg while the R3 heifer price was up by 1.3p/kg to 316.8p/kg. The average cow price in NI last week recorded an increase of 1.4p/kg to 208p/kg while the O3 cow price increased by almost a penny to 229.3p/kg. The O3 cow price in NI last week was the highest in the UK and was 11.8p/kg higher than the GB average O3 cow price which was 217.5p/kg.

The deadweight cattle trade in GB has continued to come under some pressure with the average steer price back by 2.1p/kg to 330.3p/kg last week while the R3 steer price decreased by 1.4p/kg to 337.3p/kg. The differential in R3 steer prices last week between NI and the GB average was 20.6p/kg which is the equivalent of £68 on a 330kg carcass. A similar trend was recorded for deadweight heifer prices in GB with the average price last week back by 1.2p/kg to 333.1p/kg with the R3 heifer price back by a similar margin to 338.6p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 heifer prices between NI and the GB at 21.8p/kg which is the equivalent of £72 on a 330kg carcass.

Reports from ROI have indicated steady supplies of prime cattle with throughput totalling 26,390 head last week. A strengthening in euro against sterling has increased deadweight prices in ROI in sterling terms with prices relatively steady in euro terms. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 287.9p/kg, up by 4.1p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was up 5.8p/kg to 302.2p/kg.

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

W/E 16/01/2016	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	316.8	294.7	354.0	344.0	339.9	342.4	345.4
	R3	316.7	287.9	347.5	337.7	331.4	331.3	337.3
	R4	314.3	287.7	349.1	351.8	329.6	329.8	343.0
	O3	300.8	276.5	327.8	312.3	300.1	304.3	311.4
	AVG	306.4	-	346.2	336.2	315.6	316.8	330.3
Heifers	U3	320.0	312.2	359.1	351.2	345.8	345.7	351.4
	R3	316.8	302.2	349.7	336.7	334.4	331.6	338.6
	R4	314.9	301.5	348.4	346.3	335.3	329.1	341.6
	O3	305.3	289.1	331.1	318.8	300.1	308.5	315.5
Young Bulls	AVG	310.3	-	347.6	339.1	321.3	314.9	333.1
	U3	306.9	282.3	346.2	327.1	333.8	347.3	336.4
	R3	304.8	277.1	340.5	313.2	325.0	328.3	324.3
	O3	292.0	266.2	302.3	283.7	289.0	309.5	294.1
AVG	291.5	-	322.2	299.5	304.9	304.1	306.1	
Prime Cattle Price Reported	4927	-	6952	7138	5725	4107	23922	
Cows	O3	229.3	228.2	221.5	215.4	223.0	207.3	217.5
	O4	231.3	230.0	223.8	220.2	224.7	207.6	219.8
	P2	182.3	209.4	169.9	175.3	179.4	161.5	172.9
	P3	207.2	221.7	187.0	191.3	195.3	181.0	190.3
	AVG	208.0	-	213.9	191.6	196.5	178.5	193.8

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=75.33p 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 16/01/16	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Steers	180	183	182	160	178	170
Friesians	144	147	145	134	135	134.5
Heifers	192	208	198	162	186	173
Beef Cows	132	190	144	106	131	120
Dairy Cows	95	105	98	60	94	75
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Bullocks up to 400kg	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	192	209	200	169	186	179
Bullocks over 500kg	192	206	197	170	190	180
Heifers up to 450kg	185	200	192	165	184	175
Heifers over 450kg	180	200	190	160	179	172
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>						
Continental Bulls	250	370	295	150	248	200
Continental Heifers	210	330	245	100	208	150
Friesian Bulls	80	140	110	40	78	60
Holstein Bulls	60	132	80	2	58	30

# SHEEP TRADE

## SHEEP QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 18/01/16	Next Week 25/01/16
Hoggets	365-380p > 22kg	400>22kg

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 02/01/16	W/E 09/01/16	W/E 16/01/16
NI Lambs L/W	308.2	312.2	327.8
NI Lambs D/W	332.6	341.4	359.5
GB Lambs D/W	374.5	380.5	388.9
ROI D/W	356.0	360.8	372.9

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

THE deadweight sheep trade has firmed with quotes of 365-380p/kg up to 22kg for R3 grade hoggets this week. Quotes for early next week are up to 400p/kg to 22kg. The plants have reported a tightening in supplies of hoggets coming forward for slaughter with throughput last week totalling 6,779 head. This was a reduction of 1,129 head from the 7,908 hoggets killed in NI during the previous week however it was similar to the 6,538 hoggets killed in NI during corresponding week in 2015. A total of 9,539 sheep were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week, compared to 8,916 sheep the previous week. The deadweight hogget price in NI last week increased by 18.1p/kg to 359.5p/kg while in ROI last week the deadweight hogget price increased by an equivalent of 12.1p/kg to 372.9p/kg.

## This week's marts

THE lamb trade remained steady this week with marts reporting similar numbers passing through many of the sale rings. In Massereene on Monday 702 hoggets sold from 330-366p/kg compared to 709 hoggets last Monday selling from 305-340p/kg. In Saintfield on Tuesday 763 hoggets sold from 323-375p/kg compared to 612 hoggets last week selling from 302-360p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 1,145 hoggets sold from 317-367p/kg compared to 851 hoggets the previous week selling from 322-365p/kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday 1,463 hoggets sold from 342-426p/kg compared to 1,714 hoggets selling from 300-372p/kg the previous week. The ewe trade also remained steady with a top reported price of £98 in Enniskillen on Wednesday.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 15/01/16		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 21/01/16		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	147	296	368	-
Saturday	Omagh	1055	331	364	-
	Swatragh	625	332	342	335
Monday	Kilrea	330	329	340	-
	Massereene	702	330	366	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	763	323	375	-
	Rathfriland	1145	317	367	353
Wednesday	Ballymena	1463	342	426	355
	Enniskillen	685	359	386	370
	Markethill	1410	340	396	343
	Armoyle	718	380	442	397

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