

## STRONG COW THROUGHPUT IN NI PLANTS

THE NI cow kill has remained strong in recent weeks with 1,848 cows killed in NI plants last week. This takes cow throughput in NI for the six week period ending 20 February 2016 to 11,289 head compared to 9,917 cows slaughtered during the corresponding period in 2015. This increase by 1,372 head accounts for a 14 per cent increase in throughput year on year.

While cow throughput has recorded a strong increase in NI there have been declines in cow throughput in the UK and ROI. During January 2016 (latest available data) cow throughput in the UK totalled 47,218 head, an 11 per cent reduction on January 2015 levels. Meanwhile cow throughput in ROI during the six week period ending 20 February 2016 totalled 35,778 head, an eight per cent decline from the 38,931 cows killed in ROI plants during the corresponding period in 2015.

Imports of cows for direct slaughter in NI plants have remained fairly steady year on year. During the six weeks ending 20 February 2016 475 cows were imported from ROI while 289 cows were imported from GB which together accounted for seven per cent of total cow throughput in NI. In the same period in 2015 imports from ROI totalled 390 head while 266 cows were imported from GB which together also accounted for seven per cent of total cow throughput in NI plants.

Meanwhile exports of cows out of NI for direct slaughter have also continued at similar levels year on year. During the six week period ending 20 February 2016 1,207 cows were exported to ROI for direct slaughter while 180 cows were shipped to GB. This was broadly similar to year earlier levels when 1,392 cows were exported to ROI and 88 cows were exported to GB for direct slaughter.

The increase in cow throughput in NI plants has coincided with an increase in the average carcass weight of cows slaughtered. During the six weeks ending 20 February 2016 the average cow carcass weight in NI was 309kg compared to 304kg during the corresponding period in 2015. The average carcass weight of dairy origin price reported cows increased by 0.6kg to 277.9kg during the 2016 period while the average carcass weight of price reported suckler origin cows increased by 3.7kg to 348.3kg.

There was no change to the proportion of dairy and suckler origin cows in the NI slaughter mix year on year. Dairy origin cows accounted for 64 per cent of the NI cow kill with suckler origin cows accounting for the remaining 36 per cent during the six weeks ending 20 February 2016.

The combination of increased throughput and the increase in average carcass weights resulted in a

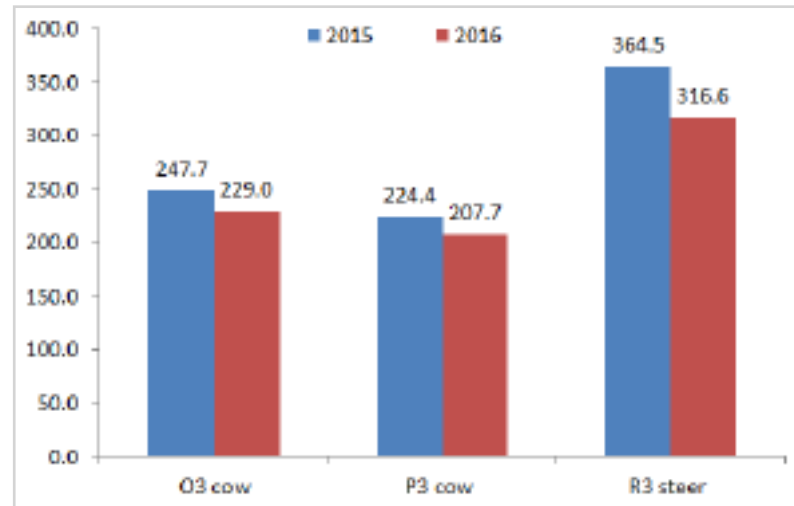
notable increase in the volume of cow beef handled by NI processors. During the six weeks ending 20 February 2016 NI plants processed 3,488 tonnes of cow beef compared to 3,015 tonnes during the corresponding period in 2015. This increase by 474 tonnes year on year represents a 16 per cent increase year on year. During the 2016 period cow beef accounted for 21 per cent of the total beef processed by NI plants compared to 18 per cent in the corresponding period in 2015.

Deadweight prices for cows during 2016 to date have been below the corresponding period in 2015. While the increase in cow beef availability in NI will have impacted on deadweight prices the decline recorded in cow prices has been much less notable than the decline in deadweight prices recorded for prime cattle.

During the six weeks ending 20 February 2016 the average O3 cow price in NI was 229p/kg, a decline of 18.7p/kg from the same period in 2015. Meanwhile the P3 cow price in NI during the 2016 period was 207.7p/kg, back by 16.7p/kg from the 224.4p/kg paid in the 2015 period. This accounts for a 7.4 per cent decline in the deadweight prices paid for both grades between the two periods.

By comparison the average R3 steer price in NI during the six weeks ending

Figure 1: O3 cow, P3 cow and R3 steer prices in NI during the six week period ending 20 February 2016 and the corresponding period in 2015



20 February 2016 was 316.6p/kg, a decline of 47.9p/kg from the 364.5p/kg paid for R3 steers during the corresponding period in 2015. This accounted for a 13 per cent decline in the deadweight price year on year.

Reports from the major NI processors have indicated subdued demand for all types of beef when compared to previous years although while deadweight quotes for prime cattle have come under some pressure cow quotes have held relatively steady.

The most recent data from Kantar Worldpanel for the 12 weeks ending 31 January 2016 has indicated

reduced volume sales for beef in the UK although manufacturing beef has performed better than premium cuts in terms of volume sales.

Volume sales of mince recording a 1.6 per cent decline from the corresponding period in 2015 while volume sales of premium cuts recorded more notable declines. Volume sales of beef roasting joints were back by 3 per cent while sales of stewing beef were back by 6.1 per cent and frying and grilling steaks back by 5 per cent during the 12 weeks ending 31 January 2016 when compared to year earlier levels.

# FQAS MART CLINICS

## MARCH 2016

LOCATION	DAY	DATE
Saintfield	Wednesday	02/03/2016
Omagh	Monday	07/03/2016
Enniskillen	Thursday	10/03/2016
Markethill	Tuesday	15/03/2016
Kilrea	Wednesday	16/03/2016
Ballymena	Friday	25/03/2016

LMC's Farm Liaison Officer, Terry White, runs Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) mart clinics at a range of Livestock Marts across Northern Ireland. Terry is present to assist members of FQAS with non-conformances, general scheme queries and any issues prior to or following an inspection.

Any farmers who wish to join the scheme can also do so through their local FQAS mart clinic. Terry will be available at the livestock marts listed above. For further information call (028) 9263 3024.



# NI CATTLE HERD UP THREE PER CENT IN DECEMBER SURVEY

THE results of the December 2015 agricultural survey have been released by DARD this week and they have indicated increases in both cattle and sheep numbers on NI farms.

### Cattle herd

The December 2015 survey has indicated a three per cent increase in total cattle numbers on NI farms to total 1.6 million head. This is the second year in a row in which total cattle numbers in NI have increased.

Suckler cow numbers on NI farms totalled 261,000 head in December 2015 which represents a three per cent increase from the 254,100 suckler cows in December 2014. The number of in calf beef heifers on NI farms recorded a slight increase on year earlier levels to total 46,700 head in December 2015.

The December 2015 survey has also indicated an increase in the number

of dairy cows on NI farms to 313,600 head. Dairy cow numbers are now at the highest level on record and represent a two per cent increase from December 2014 levels.

The increases recorded in both dairy and suckler cow numbers have contributed to an increase in calf registrations during 2014/2015 with higher numbers of younger cattle on NI farms in December 2015 as a result. The number of calves on NI farms in December 2015 under 6 months of age was three per cent higher than December 2014 levels at 222,900 head.

The number of calves aged 6-12 months also recorded a notable increase, up by 10 per cent on year earlier levels to total 268,200 head in December 2015. The number of cattle aged 1-2 years of age recorded a three per cent increase

to total 337,000 in December 2015.

Meanwhile there was a decline of 11 per cent in the number of cattle on NI farms aged two years and over. The number of male cattle over 2 years of age intended for slaughter was back by eight per cent from year earlier levels while the number of female cattle over two years intended for slaughter was back by 17 per cent. This indicates that prime cattle supplies in NI will be tighter than previous years this spring but are expected to improve as the year progresses.

### Sheep flock

The NI sheep breeding flock recorded an increase in the December 2015 agricultural survey to 914,200 head. This is a three per cent increase from December 2014 levels and is the second subsequent year in which the NI breeding flock has recorded an increase.



### FQAS Helpline

If you have had a recent inspection and need help and advice to rectify any non-conformances, contact the FQAS helpline:  
028 9263 3024

Answerphone Service  
Factory Quotes &  
Mart Results  
Updated 5pm Daily

Tel: 028 9263 3011

Text Service  
Free Price Quotes sent to your mobile  
phone weekly

Email - [bulletin@lmcni.com](mailto:bulletin@lmcni.com)  
Tel: 028 9263 3000

# WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



## CATTLE TRADE

### Deadweight Cattle Trade

**Q**UOTES from the major NI processors this week for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 308-312p/kg. One plant has indicated quotes of 306-308p/kg for early next week while the other plants have maintained their quotes from 308-312p/kg. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows this week ranged from 214-240p/kg across the plants.

A total of 6,626 prime cattle were slaughtered in NI plants last week, very similar to the 6,670 prime cattle killed in NI during the corresponding week in 2015. Cow throughput has remained strong with a total of 1,848 cows killed in NI last week. This was 292 head higher than the corresponding week in 2015 when 1,556 cows were slaughtered in NI.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 349 head, an increase from the 244 head imported the previous week however less than the 481 prime cattle imported during the same week in 2015. The number of cows imported from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 26 head compared to 40 cows the previous week and 64 cows during the same week in 2015. Meanwhile 158 cows were exported from NI for direct slaughter in ROI plants last week, a decrease from the 216 cows exported the previous week. Exports of prime cattle to GB for direct slaughter last week remained steady at 175 head compared to 196 head the previous week. Cow exports to GB for direct slaughter increased to a total of 41 head last week.

The average steer price in NI last week increased by 0.8p/kg to 306p/kg while the R3 steer price increased marginally to 316p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was up by 1.4p/kg to 311.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price was up marginally to 317.3p/kg. Meanwhile the average cow price in NI last week recorded an increase of 1.8p/kg to 211.3p/kg while the O3 cow price was up by half a penny to 229.7p/kg.

The average steer price in GB last week declined by half a penny to 329.9p/kg while the average R3 steer price increased marginally to 337.5p/kg. The differential in R3 steer prices last week between NI and the GB average remained the same as the previous week at 21.5p/kg which is the equivalent of £71 on a 330kg carcass. The average heifer price in GB last week increased by half a penny to 331.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 0.7p/kg to 338.4p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and the GB average at 21.1p/kg which is the equivalent of £70 on a 330kg carcass.

The deadweight cattle trade in ROI has held relatively steady in euro and sterling terms with reported prices similar to the previous week despite a slight weakening in euro against sterling. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 297.3p/kg, back by 0.6p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was almost unchanged at 310.5p/kg. The O3 cow price in ROI last week was back by 1.2p/kg to 237.3p/kg which is 7.6p/kg higher than the equivalent price in NI. Reports from ROI have indicated steady supplies of prime cattle with throughput totalling 26,566 head last week.

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

	W/E 20/02/2016	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	315.0	303.0	348.4	341.6	342.6	346.6	344.6
	R3	316.0	297.3	341.2	336.9	336.5	335.4	337.5
	R4	314.1	296.5	342.8	346.7	332.7	332.2	340.4
	O3	301.1	284.1	317.8	312.6	304.5	307.7	310.7
	AVG	306.0	-	340.1	334.2	321.4	321.0	329.9
Heifers	U3	320.5	321.2	354.5	348.2	348.4	346.0	349.6
	R3	317.3	310.5	342.7	335.3	336.7	338.4	338.4
	R4	313.8	309.9	342.7	340.7	334.7	330.5	338.2
	O3	305.9	296.9	313.3	310.4	301.5	314.0	310.1
	AVG	311.1	-	341.0	332.7	323.5	322.7	331.1
Young Bulls	U3	305.8	290.1	344.8	325.8	341.8	329.7	335.2
	R3	303.4	282.9	334.1	318.5	323.9	322.5	323.5
	O3	290.2	271.7	296.3	281.4	283.2	301.7	290.7
	AVG	290.6	-	303.8	292.4	294.8	307.8	298.2
Prime Cattle Price Reported	5691	-	7211	7009	5992	4496	24708	
Cows	O3	229.7	237.3	226.3	218.0	223.4	213.1	220.3
	O4	229.1	238.5	230.3	220.9	223.2	217.5	222.4
	P2	184.3	210.9	167.8	180.2	170.8	171.1	172.5
	P3	207.5	230.0	185.9	194.3	194.7	192.9	193.3
	AVG	211.3	-	216.7	198.5	192.1	187.5	195.7

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=77.49p 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 20/02/16	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Steers	180	193	186	166	178	171
Friesians	130	136	132	125	127	126
Heifers	192	216	205	160	189	175
Beef Cows	135	180	140	100	132	115
Dairy Cows	92	118	100	60	90	75
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Bullocks up to 400kg	196	204	200	171	187	178
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	188	200	192	156	186	170
Bullocks over 500kg	188	200	193	155	187	170
Heifers up to 450kg	200	210	205	150	199	175
Heifers over 450kg	191	201	198	154	190	172
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>						
Continental Bulls	285	415	330	180	280	230
Continental Heifers	250	405	280	150	248	200
Friesian Bulls	100	152	125	30	98	68
Holstein Bulls	60	120	90	5	55	30

### NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 22/02/16	Next Week 29/02/16
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	308 - 312p	306 - 312p
R-3	302 - 306p	300 - 306p
O+3	296 - 300p	294 - 300p
P+3	222 - 260p	222 - 260p
	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 20/02/16	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	314.2	319.6	306.0
R3	313.4	315.5	304.1
O+3	304.3	306.4	296.7

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

w/e 20/02/16	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	127.6	135.7	146.9	154.7
P2	145.0	164.4	180.4	198.7
P3	160.9	181.3	199.8	211.1
O3	200.0	227.9	224.1	230.3
O4	-	196.2	216.2	229.8
R3	-	-	-	249.8

# SHEEP TRADE

## SHEEP QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 22/02/16	Next Week 29/02/16
Hoggets	400-405p > 22kg	400-405p > 22kg

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 06/02/16	W/E 13/02/16	W/E 20/02/16
NI Lambs L/W	354.3	361.3	366.8
NI Lambs D/W	395.1	396.9	400.9
GB Lambs D/W	408.0	424.4	422.5
ROI D/W	377.0	411.7	413.6

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

**Q**UOTES from the NI plants this week for R3 grade hoggets ranged from 400-405p/kg with plants paying up to 22kg. The plants have reported a reduction in the number of hoggets coming forward for slaughter with throughput last week totalling 4,276 head. This was a reduction of 843 head from the 5,119 hoggets killed in NI during the previous week. A total of 8,487 sheep were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week, very similar to the 8,346 sheep exported during the previous week. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week increased by 4p/kg to 400.9p/kg while the deadweight hogget price in ROI last week increased by an equivalent of 1.9p/kg to 413.6p/kg.

## This week's marts

**T**HE live hogget trade remained fairly steady this week with most marts indicating a tightening in the numbers passing through the sale rings. In Omagh last Saturday 734 hoggets sold from 341-391p/kg compared to 1,056 hoggets the previous week selling from 354-411p/kg. In Kilrea on Monday 325 hoggets sold from 373-400p/kg compared to 425 hoggets last Monday selling from 366-392p/kg. In Saintfield on Tuesday 425 hoggets sold from 352-400p/kg compared to 501 hoggets last week selling from 342-404p/kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday 1,300 hoggets sold from 345-446p/kg compared to 1,523 hoggets last week selling from 350-427p/kg. Prices for cull ewes generally ranged from £83-101 with a top reported price of £109 in Massereene on Monday.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 19/02/16		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 25/02/16		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	105	358	389	-
Saturday	Omagh	734	341	391	-
	Swatragh	715	331	383	368
Monday	Kilrea	325	373	400	-
	Massereene	702	370	402	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	425	352	400	-
	Rathfriland	900	348	398	367
Wednesday	Ballymena	1300	345	446	360
	Enniskillen	894	364	397	375
	Markethill	820	350	387	365
	Armoy	592	368	435	392

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