Livestock & Meat Commission

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QUIETER START TO NI SPRING LAMB TRADE

QUOTES from the three major lamb processing plants in NI ranged from 480-485p/kg for R3 grading lambs up to 21kg this week with 470-480p/kg expected early next week.

The plants have reported steady supplies of spring lambs to meet demand from major customers. Lambs accounted for 53 per cent of price reported sheep in NI last week, up from 37 per cent of the price reported kill in the same week last year.

The better weather conditions this spring compared to last year will have helped improve lamb performance and has resulted in an increase in the availability of lambs for slaughter. There has also been a notable reduction in the number of hoggets available for slaughter in recent weeks compared to the same period last year which has meant spring lambs account for a larger proportion of total plant throughput.

The average price paid for R3 grading spring lambs in NI last week was 488p/kg, While this price was well back from the 566.9p/kg paid in the corresponding week last year it was ahead of the same week 2017 when the average R3 spring lamb price was 442.8p/kg as outlined in Figure 1.

Reduced supplies of spring lambs due to production difficulties contributed to record spring lamb prices in all parts of the UK in April 2018. While deadweight prices this year are back it is worth noting that the trade is still relatively strong in comparison to previous years. With the exception of last year deadweight R3 spring lamb prices in NI in recent weeks are at their highest recorded level since 2014.

Figure 1: Average price paid for R3 grading spring lambs in NI during the week ending 27/04/2019 and the corresponding weeks in 2017 and 2018.

Image 1: The processors are reporting good supplies of spring lambs to meet demand.

With UK lamb imports operating at lower levels during 2019 to date this has increased demand for both old and new season lamb, particularly in the weeks running up to Easter when demand for lamb in the UK tends to peak.

The latest available date from HMRC indicates a 20 per cent decline in UK sheepmeat imports during January and February 2019 when compared to the same period in 2018. There has been a strong decline in imports from New Zealand in particular. While no HMRC data is available yet for March 2019 indications from New Zealand are that less lamb was shipped to both the EU and UK in the run up to Easter this year.

Producing spring lambs is a high cost business so the stability in deadweight prices in recent weeks will have been welcomed by local producers to help cover the higher costs of production. The demand for spring lambs is heavily influenced by the availability of lambs for slaughter and demand from the major retail and food service markets.

Producers are reminded to try and meet current market specifications for lamb. The processors want farm quality assured lambs that will produce an 18-21kg carcase with a fat cover of 2 or 3. These lambs can be used to service the widest range of customers. Meeting specification for carcase weight is a particular issue with producers not getting paid beyond 21kg. Last week the average carcase weight of price reported spring lambs was 21.5kg, up from 20.6kg in the same week last year.

TIGHTER PRIME CATTLE SUPPLIES

THROUGHPUT of prime cattle in NI has been relatively strong during 2019 to date however the availability of prime cattle for slaughter is expected to tighten as we move into the second half of the year.

At the end of April 2019 there were 129,085 cattle for beef production (beef sired and dairy males) on NI farms in the 24-30 month age category. This was a 3.2 per cent increase from April 2018 levels. However as we move into the younger age brackets there is a decrease in the number of cattle as outlined in Table 1 below.

In the 18-24 months age range cattle numbers totalled 120,053 head in April 2019, back 1.4 per cent from April 2018. Stronger declines are recorded in the number of cattle on NI farms in the 12-18 month and 6-12 month age ranges which were back by 5.5 per cent and 4.3 per cent respectively at the end of April 2019. The lower availability of prime cattle for slaughter as we move into the second half of 2019 can be linked back to declining calf registrations. Beef sired calf registrations started to record a decline during 2017 and ended the year 1,821 head behind 2016 levels. Beef sired calf registrations in NI declined by a further 18,922 registrations in 2018.

There has also been a decline in the number of dairy sired male calf registrations in NI over the last two years while the exports of calves for further production in Europe levels have continued at similar levels. This resulted in a reduction in the number of dairy sired male cattle retained on local farms for beef production.

LMC's latest quarterly cattle kill forecasting report is now available online at www.lmcni.com and indicates a 4.4 per cent decline in prime cattle throughput in Q3 and a 5.3 per cent decline in Q4 when compared to the same periods in 2018. Overall prime cattle throughput in 2019 is forecast to be 2.2 per cent behind 2018 levels.

Table 1: Cattle for beef production on NI farms by age category at the end of April 2018 and 2019

Age (Months)	April 2018	April 2019	% Change
0-6	158,991	158,124	-0.5%
6-12	157,327	150,569	-4.3%
12-18	230,226	217,571	-5.5%
18-24	121,714	120,053	-1.4%
24-30	125,108	129,085	3.2%

FQAS MART CLINICS MAY 2019

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 in the table below. For further information call (028) 9263 3024.

LOCATION	DAY	DATE
Omagh	Monday	13/05/2019
Markethill	Tuesday	14/05/2019
Saintfield	Wednesday	22/05/2019
Enniskillen	Thursday	23/05/2019
Kilrea	Wednesday	29/05/2019
Ballymena	Friday	31/05/2019

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
Tel: 028 9263 3000

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 29/04/19	Next Week 06/05/19
Prime		
U-3	332 - 336p	332 - 338p
R-3	326 - 330p	326 - 332p
O+3	320 - 324p	320 - 326p
P+3	274 - 282p	274 - 284p
	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 27/04/19	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	340.5	346.0	333.0
R3	337.6	340.3	327.8
O+3	329.8	330.6	319.6

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 27/04/19	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	144.8	153.1	164.8	180.8
P2	161.9	186.8	201.6	217.9
P3	143.4	200.7	223.7	231.5
O3	136.0	212.5	242.9	252.8
O4	-	-	274.7	256.4
R3	-	-	-	273.8

Deadweight Cattle Trade

BASE quotes for U-3 grade prime cattle this week ranged from 332-336p/kg however with reports of higher prices available producers should use these quotes as a starting point for negotiation. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows ranged from 240-250p/kg. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Throughput of prime cattle in NI plants last week totalled 5,535 head. This brings total prime cattle throughput during 2019 to 115,192 an increase of 1.4 per cent on the same period in 2018. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,084 head taking throughput for the year to date to 28,520 head. This is a decrease of 18.4 per cent from the corresponding period in 2018.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 138 head with 38 cows also imported. This brings total prime cattle imports from ROI to 4,116 head up 3,017 head when compared to the same period in 2018. Meanwhile cattle exports from NI for slaughter in ROI plants consisted of 13 prime cattle and 56 cows last week. This brings the total year to date exports from NI to ROI to 2,045 head back 690 head when compared to the same period in 2018.

The deadweight cattle trade in NI firmed last week with the average steer price up 1.5p/kg to 333.5p/kg while the R3 steer price was up a penny to 341.5p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 336.2p/kg, up 1.5p/kg, while the R3 heifer price was 342.2p/kg, up 2.2p/kg from the previous week. Reported NI deadweight prices for young bulls also showed signs of improvement last week. The average young bull price was up by 3.9p/kg to 316.7p/kg with the U3 young bull price marginally increasing to 332p/kg. Meanwhile the average cow price in NI last week was back 4.5p/kg to 230.7p/kg with the O3 cow price up 3.8p/kg to 251.6p/kg.

The deadweight cattle trade in also strengthened in GB last week with the average steer price up by 1.5p/kg to 345p/kg compared to the previous week. The average R3 steer price increased by 2.5p/kg to 352.6pkg when compared to the previous week. All of the GB regions recorded increases in R3 steers prices with the strongest increase in Southern England (+5.2pkg). The average heifer price in GB last week was up by 3.8p/kg to 347.6p/kg while the average R3 heifer price was up 2p/kg to 352.9p/kg. The R3 heifer price increased in all regions except for Northern England (-3.1p/kg). The average cow price in GB last week was back by 0.6p/kg to 240.7p/kg.

In ROI last week the deadweight cattle trade strengthened in euro terms. The R3 steer price last week was up by the equivalent of 3.6p/kg to 321.6p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 1.8p/kg to 331.8p/kg. The cow trade also firmed in ROI last week with the O3 cow price up by 5.5p/kg to 242.5p/kg. This is 9.1p/kg lower than the equivalent price in NI. Prime cattle throughput in ROI last week totalled 23,727. This brings the number of prime cattle slaughtered in to 604,317 head up six per cent on the same period in 2018.

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

W/E 27/04/19		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	341.1	328.8	360.2	349.9	353.0	356.4	354.7
	R3	341.5	321.6	359.9	352.4	349.0	350.2	352.6
	R4	343.1	321.8	361.1	356.6	347.8	351.0	354.4
	O3	331.7	304.9	339.7	332.7	323.4	329.2	331.2
	AVG	333.5	-	356.8	345.8	337.2	340.8	345.0
Heifers	U3	346.7	342.7	371.6	355.8	362.5	359.5	362.9
	R3	342.2	331.8	362.6	349.0	350.1	349.4	352.9
	R4	340.6	332.1	363.5	351.9	351.2	347.8	354.0
	O3	332.0	316.4	342.8	341.8	322.8	332.7	335.2
	AVG	336.2	-	361.7	346.7	340.8	339.9	347.6
Young Bulls	U3	332.0	310.6	357.1	346.5	355.0	352.9	351.7
	R3	326.2	301.2	351.8	343.9	339.5	342.8	343.8
	O3	314.4	282.2	316.2	304.2	317.8	296.4	310.6
	AVG	316.7	-	345.4	328.2	330.9	327.1	332.3
Prime Cattle Price Reported		4,937	-	6,089	6,521	6,924	4,218	23,752
Cows	O3	251.6	242.5	279.2	266.8	263.1	262.1	266.0
	O4	256.8	243.9	277.5	270.2	264.4	258.0	267.3
	P2	206.2	216.8	237.1	223.7	216.9	228.6	223.5
	P3	228.3	234.6	247.2	237.7	238.8	246.7	241.6
	AVG	230.7	-	271.6	251.4	229.3	233.8	240.7

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.44p 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 27/04/19	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	200	213	206	180	199	190
Friesians	146	155	149	140	145	143
Heifers	198	215	203	170	194	182
Beef Cows	154	196	168	128	152	140
Dairy Cows	114	146	121	70	113	90
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	No Sale					
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg						
Bullocks over 500kg						
Heifers up to 450kg						
Heifers over 450kg						
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	340	450	375	225	335	280
Continental Heifers	300	400	340	200	295	250
Friesian Bulls	160	230	205	55	155	100
Holstein Bulls	100	180	140	30	95	60

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 29/04/19	Next Week 06/05/19
Hoggets> 22kg	445-450p	430-445p
Spring Lambs> 21kg	480-490p	470-480p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 13/04/19	W/E 20/04/19	W/E 27/04/19
NI L/W Hoggets	411.4	378.6	397.1
NI D/W Hoggets	454.9	452.6	442.9
GB D/W Hoggets	472.3	468.2	465.8
ROI D/W	469.1	463.1	463.1
NI L/W Spr Lambs	499.8	443.7	464.9
NI D/W Spr Lambs	500.1	485.6	483.5
GB D/W Spr Lambs	501.9	508.5	510.5

Deadweight Sheep Trade

BASE quotes from the major processors for R3 grade hoggets ended this week ranging from 440-445p/kg up to 22kg. Quotes for spring lambs ended this week ranging from 480-485p/kg up to 21kg with quotes expected to come back early next week. Hogget/lamb throughput in NI last week totalled 3,922 head this brings the year to date throughput to 87,494 head back 13.7 per cent compared same period in 2018. A further 2,338 hoggets/lambs were exported to ROI for direct slaughter last week bringing the total for the year to date to 92,941 head. This is a decrease of 21 per cent when compared to the same period in 2018. The deadweight hogget price in NI last week was back 9.7p/kg to 442.9p/kg while the deadweight spring lamb price was back by 2.1p/kg to 483.5p/kg. In ROI last week the combined hogget/lamb deadweight price held steady at 463.1p/kg.

This week's marts

SMALLER numbers of hoggets passed through most of the sale rings this week while the numbers of spring lambs on offer generally increased across the marts. In Massereene on Monday 297 hoggets sold from 400-430p/kg while 226 spring lambs sold from 450-500p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday, 100 hoggets sold from 350-400p/kg (avg 386p/kg) with 176 spring lambs selling from 451-525p/kg (avg 473p/kg). In Markethill on Wednesday 480 hoggets sold from 370-427p/kg with 200 spring lambs selling from 440-485p/kg. The cull ewe trade has remained firm across the marts with a top reported price of £127 in Swatragh last Saturday.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 26/04/19		Hoggets				Spring Lambs			
To: 02/05/19		No	From	To	Avg	No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	-	-	-	-	126	422	442	-
Saturday	Swatragh	600	380	456	-	100	476	498	-
	Omagh	425	384	422	-	63	426	508	-
Monday	Massereene	297	400	430	-	226	450	500	-
	Kilrea	-	-	-	-	350	435	485	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	415	330	416	-	181	430	500	-
	Rathfriland	100	350	400	386	176	451	525	473
	Armoy	234	365	400	-	78	412	471	-
Wednesday	Ballymena	332	270	428	340	236	410	490	445
	Enniskillen	220	350	392	-	202	430	492	-
	Markethill	480	370	427	-	200	440	485	-

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LMC

LMC
Livestock & Meat Commission
MONTHLY NEWS
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LMC WELCOMES SCRUTINY OF THE EAT LANCET REPORT

IT has been confirmed that the World Health Organisation (WHO) stepped back from its proposed sponsorship of the recent EAT Lancet Commission on Food, Planet Health launch event in Geneva on the back of pressure from Italy's ambassador to the United Nations (UN), Gian Lorenzo Cornado.

World Health Organization

He claimed that the overall findings of the report do not stand up to full scientific scrutiny while also suggesting that its implantation would lead to the loss of millions of jobs within the livestock sectors. This matter was profiled in the British Medical Journal.

Cornado also pointed out that the adoption of the report would destroy traditional diets which are part of cultural heritage. The EAT Lancet recommendations call for the adoption of a diet comprising largely of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and unsaturated oils.

A low to moderate amount of seafood and poultry would be deemed appropriate but the inclusion of red meat, processed meat, added sugar, refined grains, and starchy vegetables would only be deemed permissible at very low or zero levels.

Commenting on this development Ian Stevenson, Chief Executive of the LMC, said that the international red meat industry has voiced grave concerns about the recommendations contained within the EAT Lancet report.

"They are at odds with the UK's Eatwell recommendations, which promote a balanced diet comprising of five main food groups with up to 70g of lean red meat per day considered an appropriate intake within the protein food group."

He added: "Red meat contains a number of minerals and vitamins, which are crucially important components within a healthy diet."

Stevenson went on to point out that the significance of livestock farming goes beyond the impact of meat and dairy in the diet. "Livestock farming is at the heart of many cultures around the world, even to the extent of reflecting the wealth of those people owning animals," he said.

"Uniquely, livestock farming practices help convert inedible plant material into high quality foods for humans around the world. Grazing practise also helps to enhance the conservation value of many regions. And we have ample evidence of what this means, in a practical sense, here in Northern Ireland. Animals also produce the manures, which improve soil quality.

"The actions of Italy's ambassador to the UN have helped to bring balance to the EAT Lancet report. And this is an inherently positive development."

Image 1: Red meat is a good source of high quality protein. Protein is essential for growth, maintenance and the repair of the body

SPRING CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES FOR NI AGRICULTURE

A recent 'Spring Conference', hosted jointly by the Andersons Centre, the Livestock and Meat Commission and the Irish Farmers Journal confirmed the challenges that Brexit will pose for the grass-based sectors in Northern Ireland.

Andersons' Michael Haverty commented: "The beef and sheep sectors are those that potentially face the greatest upheaval over the next few years. Significant trade occurs in these sectors and the sheep industry is one of the few parts of UK farming where there is a surplus above domestic needs. A Brexit that disrupts trade flows will be keenly felt. Also, these sectors are heavily reliant on support. As this changes over the next decade then the sheep and beef industries are likely to have to adapt too."

But Haverty also pointed out that if a deal on Brexit is concluded then UK farming will face little change in trading conditions for 20 months. Where the island of Ireland is concerned Haverty pointed out that crossborder agri-food trade was valued at €1.58 billion in 2018, up by nearly 8% on 2018.

Image 2: Michael Haverty from Andersons Centre talking at recent LMC/IFJ Spring Conference

Image 3: Brexit will create challenges for all the gras based sectors in NI

He continued: "Overall, agri-food accounts for just over 45% of total goods traded between Northern Ireland and the Republic. This highlights the importance of farming and food to the cross-border question.

"Whilst movements of sheep meat appear low, there is a substantial live animal trade which also needs to be considered. In recent years, this has varied between 390,000 and 500,000 animals.

"In the context of Brexit on the Island of Ireland, it is also crucial to consider the Republic of Ireland's trade, particularly exports. Ireland is highly reliant on the UK, which accounts for 41% of agri-food exports. Within this, annual beef exports at €1.2 billion are the most important in monetary terms."

RICHARD HALLERON: IN MY OPINION

BEING a man of a certain age, I know well what's it's like to be walking around with the 'worries of the world' on my shoulders. I found my teenage years very difficult, leading me to take a year out of university because of stress-related issues.

And, in truth, it didn't get much better for quite a period after that. Marriage brought with it the pressure of having to cope with the challenge of children not being well at times and the ever-present worry of having to pay bills. Trying to do one's best for parents as they got older was another challenge and then came the pain of losing them both.

Looking back on it all, I am fully aware that my fears and worries could have been conquered a lot earlier in life, had I taken the opportunity of talking to someone – anyone – about them. But like most other men, I kept it all inside, fearing that any attempt to discuss issues that were concerning me would make me look weak.

In contrast, all my sisters could always talk about anything, no matter how intimate, whether among themselves or to my mother or with friends. So what has all this got to do with farming? I also know from experience that modern farming can be a very lonely profession to follow. One man today can do the work required of 20 men a few short decades ago.

Modern agriculture is also rife with challenges. The weather was always there. But given the ultra-thin margins that most farming businesses find themselves working on today, it wouldn't take much to go wrong for the whole house of cards to come falling down. Add in family issues that can impact on everyone and it's easy to see why farmers are very exposed to stress-related problems.

But above all else, having no one to talk to for large swathes of the day can easily allow farmers to exacerbate problems in their minds. My advice to every farmer reading this, and who is under stress right now, is very simple: get help now. As far as I'm concerned, this means talking to someone who can listen. If this person is not your partner, then it could be a friend or someone whose opinions you value and trust.

There are also lots of professional organisations, whose staff can give you the help and support that you need. You are – we are - never alone.I am old enough to know that a trouble shared is, indeed, a trouble halved. There is no problem that cannot be solved .....with a little support and guidance.

In short, don't bottle things up. Talk more openly about your health, feelings or concerns and make sure you pay attention to your health and well-being as it's your most valuable asset.