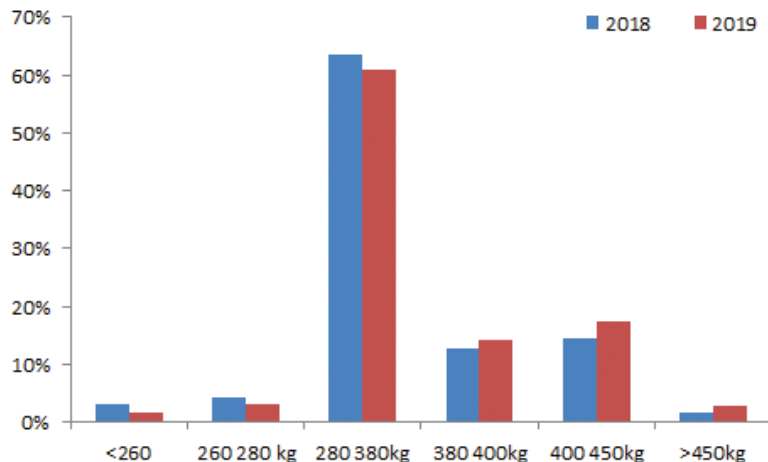


# CARCASE WEIGHTS CONTINUE TO INCREASE

THE average carcass weight of steers killed in local plants during the eight week period ending 26 May 2019 was 359.6kg. This is an increase of 350.3kg from the same period last year.

Figure 1 outlines a breakdown of price reported steers by carcass weight range. During 2019 to date 61 per cent of steers produced carcasses within the desired 280-380kg weight range with a further 14 per cent producing carcasses between 380-400kg. This was similar

**Figure 1: Price reported steers by carcass weight range during the eight weeks ending 26 May 2019 and the corresponding period in 2018**



to year earlier levels. However there has been a notable increase in the proportion of steers producing carcasses of over 400kg during 2019. During the eight weeks ending 26 May 2019 20 per cent of price reported steers produced carcasses of over 400kg, up from 16 per cent of carcasses in the same period in 2018.

Suckler origin steers accounted for 57 per cent of price reported steers during both the 2019 and 2018 time periods. During the 2019 period 50 per cent of

these steers produced carcasses within the desired 280-380kg weight range as outlined in Table 1. This was back from 55 per cent in the same period in 2018. Meanwhile the proportion of suckler origin steers that produced carcasses in excess of 400kg increased from 25 per cent in the 2018 period to 30 per cent in the 2019 period.

Beef sired steers from the dairy herd accounted for 31 per cent of price reported steers during the 8 weeks ending 26 May 2018, up from 28 per cent in the same period last year. The proportion of these animals meeting the 280-380kg weight range has remained steady at 76 per cent between the two periods. There was however an increase in the number of these animals producing carcasses over 400kg as outlined in Table 2.

Dairy sired steers accounted for 12 per cent of price reported steers during the 2019 period, back from 15 per cent during the same period in 2018. During the eight weeks ending 26 May 2019 76 per cent of these dairy origin steers met the 280-380kg carcass weight specification, up from 71 per cent in the same period in 2018.

Improved production conditions and

forage supplies on NI farms during 2018/19 when compared to 2017/18 will have contributed to this increase in average carcass weights. The high store cattle prices paid by beef finishers and a drop in beef prices will also have encouraged producers to push cattle into higher carcass weights to maximise returns at point of slaughter.

Producers are encouraged to produce prime cattle carcasses within the 280-380kg weight range as these meet the

**Table 1: Breakdown of price reported suckler origin steers by carcass weight range during eight weeks ending 26 May 2019 and corresponding period in 2018**

	<260kg	260-280kg	280-380kg	380-400kg	400-450kg	>450kg
2018	1%	2%	55%	17%	22%	3%
2019	1%	1%	50%	18%	26%	4%

**Table 2: Breakdown of price reported beef cross steers by carcass weight range during eight weeks ending 26 May 2019 and corresponding period in 2018**

	<260kg	260-280kg	280-380kg	380-400kg	400-450kg	>450kg
2018	3%	6%	76%	9%	6%	0%
2019	2%	4%	76%	10%	8%	1%

**Table 3: Breakdown of price reported dairy sired steers by carcass weight range during eight weeks ending 26 May 2019 and corresponding period in 2018**

	<260kg	260-280kg	280-380kg	380-400kg	400-450kg	>450kg
2018	11%	13%	71%	3%	2%	0%
2019	7%	10%	76%	5%	3%	0%

requirements of the largest range of retail and food service orders and provide the greatest return to the industry.

It is however equally important that processors give producers the correct market signals to produce these in-spec animals. Producers should liaise with the procurement staff of the individual plants prior to finishing cattle to ensure there is a market outlet for the type of cattle being produced.

# NI R3 HEIFER PRICES LOWEST IN BRITISH ISLES

THE R3 heifer price in NI last week was 344.2p/kg which was back by just over a penny from the previous week. As outlined in Figure 2 the R3 heifer price in NI last week was the lowest regional price in the British Isles.

The deadweight heifer trade has also come under pressure in GB with the average R3 heifer price back by a penny to 354.1p/kg last week. There was however a mixed performance in the deadweight heifer trade across the GB

regions (with reported prices back by between 1-3p/kg in Scotland, the Midlands and Northern England. Meanwhile the R3 heifer price in Southern England increased by 3.1p/kg to 357.3p/kg last week which brings the R3 heifer price in the region to the highest recorded level since January 2019.

In ROI last week the R3 heifer price increased by 4.2c/kg to 400.1c/kg. This is the equivalent of 354.1p/kg. The firming in the trade was even stronger

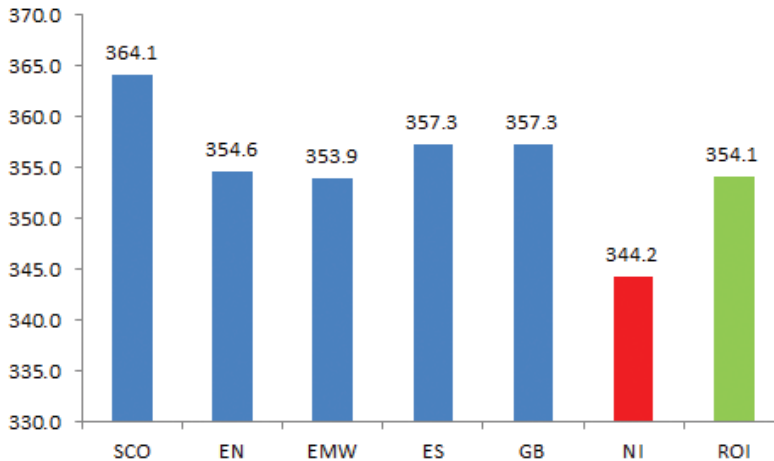
in sterling terms (+7.7p/kg) due to a weakening in the value of sterling against the euro. The exchange rate last week was €1 = 87.99p which is the strongest the euro has been against sterling since mid January this year.

The strong increase recorded in R3 heifer prices in ROI in the last two weeks combined with the shift in the exchange rate has moved deadweight prices in ROI well ahead of the prices available in NI for the first time since June 2018.

With a differential of 9.9p/kg between R3 heifer prices in NI and ROI last week the difference in the value of a 330kg carcass was £33. It is worth noting that two weeks ago the reverse was true with a 330kg R3 heifer carcass in NI worth £16 more than the equivalent animal in ROI.

The differential between the R3 heifer price in NI last week and the GB average was 13.1p/kg which equates to a £43 differential in the value of a 330kg carcass. In the corresponding week in 2018 the price differential was 5.7p/kg which is the equivalent of £19 in the value of a 330kg carcass.

Figure 2: R3 heifer prices in the British Isles by region w/e 26 May 2019 (p/kg)



# FQAS MART CLINICS JUNE 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. For further information call (028) 9263 3024.

LOCATION	DAY	DATE
Omagh	Monday	03/06/2019
Saintfield	Wednesday	05/06/2019
Markethill	Tuesday	11/06/2019
Enniskillen	Thursday	13/06/2019
Kilrea	Wednesday	19/06/2019
Ballymena	Friday	21/06/2019



## 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](mailto:bulletin@lmcni.com)  
Tel: 028 9263 3000

# WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



## CATTLE TRADE

### NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 27/05/19	Next Week 03/06/19
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	332 - 338p	330 - 336p
R-3	326 - 332p	324 - 330p
O+3	320 - 326p	318 - 324p
P+3	272 - 282p	270 - 280p
	Including bonus where applicable	
<b>Cows</b>		
O+3 & better	240 - 256p	240 - 252p
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.

### Deadweight Cattle Trade

THE deadweight cattle trade has remained steady in NI with base quotes from the major plants for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle this week ranging from 332-338p/kg. Quotes for next week are expected to range from 330-336p/kg. The trade for cows also remained steady this week with quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows ranging from 240-256p/kg. Quotes for next week are expected to range from 240-252p/kg.

Prime cattle throughput in NI plants last week totalled 6,881 prime cattle back 118 head from the previous week. In the same week in 2018 6,122 prime cattle were slaughtered in local plants. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,569 head, an increase of 149 cows from the previous week. In the corresponding week last year 1,807 cows were slaughtered in local processing plants.

Imports of prime cattle for direct slaughter from ROI last week totalled 121 head with 21 cows also imported. Imports from GB for direct slaughter last week consisted of 20 prime cattle and 12 cows. Exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week comprised of 5 prime cattle and 95 cows while reports indicate that no cattle were exported to from NI to GB for direct slaughter last week.

There was a mixed deadweight trade in NI last week with the average steer price up by almost a penny to 337.3p/kg while the R3 steer price was back by a similar margin to 342.6p/kg. In the same week last year the R3 steer price was 370.1p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 339.6p/kg, up 1.5p/kg from the previous week, while the R3 heifer price was 344.2p/kg, back just over a penny from the previous week. In the same week last year the R3 heifer price was 369.5p/kg. The average cow price and O3 cow price both recorded increases of 2.2p/kg last week to 247.7p/kg and 259.7p/kg respectively when compared to the previous week. In the same week in 2018 the O3 cow price was 299.4p/kg.

In GB last week there was a mixed trade across the regions for prime cattle. The average steer price and average R3 steer price last week both held steady at 349.4p/kg and 357.5p/kg respectively. There was an increase in R3 steer price reported in Northern England (+1.9p/kg) with a marginal increase in Southern England (+0.2p/kg). Meanwhile the R3 steer price decreased in Scotland (-0.9p/kg) and the Midlands and Wales (-0.3p/kg). The average heifer price in GB last week was back by 0.6p/kg to 350.7p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back by almost a penny to 357.3p/kg. There was an increase in R3 heifer price in Southern England (+3.1p/kg) with declines reported in Scotland (-3.1p/kg), Northern England (-1.9p/kg) and Midlands and Wales (-1.4p/kg).

In ROI the deadweight cattle trade for prime cattle continued to firm and this combined with a stronger euro against sterling resulted in notable increases in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI increased by 7.3p/kg to 344.4p/kg, while the R3 heifer price increased by 7.7p/kg to 354.1p/kg. This places the R3 heifer price in ROI 9.9p/kg higher than the same price in NI. The O3 cow price in ROI reported an increase of 5.9p/kg to 272.8p/kg last week, 13.1p/kg higher than the O3 cow price in NI.

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

	W/E 25/05/19	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	343.1	351.3	363.9	358.0	360.5	360.4	360.7
	R3	342.6	344.4	364.8	358.0	354.3	354.0	357.5
	R4	340.3	345.9	369.3	359.0	350.5	355.5	358.6
	O3	336.3	330.6	351.7	337.3	327.3	332.1	336.9
	AVG	337.3	-	362.5	349.4	342.1	343.9	349.4
Heifers	U3	349.0	366.1	373.6	361.1	365.2	364.3	366.3
	R3	344.2	354.1	364.1	354.6	353.9	357.3	357.3
	R4	343.4	353.6	368.6	355.2	356.3	354.8	358.8
	O3	335.5	338.6	347.8	337.2	326.1	340.5	338.2
	AVG	339.6	-	364.9	347.7	344.5	345.4	350.7
Young Bulls	U3	333.2	341.4	362.5	349.5	355.2	355.2	354.6
	R3	334.1	332.6	355.6	342.1	345.2	347.0	346.1
	O3	317.3	315.7	324.7	310.4	309.5	318.0	313.3
	AVG	322.6	-	351.8	334.9	327.8	330.4	334.8
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6,317	-	7,047	7,032	7,787	5,450	27,316	
Cows	O3	259.7	272.8	279.1	267.0	267.4	270.0	269.4
	O4	266.9	274.2	280.6	270.4	268.5	265.2	269.8
	P2	227.7	249.5	222.6	223.8	224.3	235.4	227.2
	P3	242.2	267.8	246.1	239.4	244.0	252.3	245.7
	AVG	247.7	-	272.8	253.2	238.7	244.8	247.1

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=87.99p 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

### REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 25/05/19	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	343.0	348.7	333.7
R3	340.6	342.8	334.6
O+3	332.8	336.5	325.2

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 25/05/19	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220- 250kg	Wgt 250- 280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	158.8	169.3	188.8	225.3
P2	177.5	198.4	226.9	238.9
P3	186.0	231.1	229.6	245.6
O3	-	238.5	237.0	261.5
O4	220.0	250.0	260.0	267.2
R3	-	-	-	282.6

### LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 25/05/19	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Steers	197	204	200	182	195	190
Friesians	152	156	154	131	141	135
Heifers	200	212	205	181	198	188
Beef Cows	155	200	165	125	154	140
Dairy Cows	110	124	116	60	108	85
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Bullocks up to 400kg	240	277	255	215	239	228
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	220	250	235	200	219	210
Bullocks over 500kg	200	212	206	170	199	185
Heifers up to 450kg	225	274	235	195	224	210
Heifers over 450kg	200	212	206	170	199	185
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>						
Continental Bulls	310	550	340	200	305	255
Continental Heifers	265	370	300	125	260	200
Friesian Bulls	125	190	145	60	120	90
Holstein Bulls	80	135	100	5	75	40

# SHEEP TRADE

## SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 27/05/19	Next Week 03/06/19
Lambs up to 21kg	420-425p	425-430p

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 11/05/19	W/E 18/05/19	W/E 25/05/19
NI L/W Lambs	453.3	398.4	394.4
NI D/W Lambs	473.6	454.8	419.5
GB D/W Lambs	514.2	508.1	498.2
ROI D/W	463.4	451.5	425.2

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

**B**ASE quotes for R3 grade lambs improved as the week progressed to 420-430p/kg up to 21kg across the local NI plants. Quotes for next week are expected to range from 425-430p/kg up to 21kg. Throughput of lambs killed in local plants last week reported an increase of 1,629 head to total 6,597 head. Exports of lambs to ROI for direct slaughter also increased last week with 2,931 lambs exported to southern processing plants compared to 1,981 head exported during the previous week. The average NI deadweight lamb price was back by 35.3p/kg to 419.5p/kg last week. In ROI last week the average sheep price was the equivalent of 425.2p/kg, back 26.3p/kg from the previous week.

## This week's marts

**T**HE trade across the marts this week improved while the number of lambs passing through the rings has also increased from previous weeks. In Swatragh last Saturday 220 lambs sold from 370-426p/kg compared to 325 lambs the previous week selling from 350-416p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 660 lambs sold from 390-428p/kg compared to 417 lambs last week selling from 385-420p/kg. In Saintfield this week 433 lambs sold from 390-420p/kg compared to 203 lambs selling from 367-400p/kg. In Ballymena this week 647 lambs sold from 380-416p/kg (avg 390p/kg) compared to 420 lambs last week selling from 370-419p/kg (avg 384p/kg). In Armoys this week 214 lambs sold from 370-412p/kg. The ewe trade has reported top prices ranging from £89-129 across the marts.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 24/05/19		Lambs			
To: 30/05/19		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	180	350	400	-
Saturday	Swatragh	220	370	426	-
	Omagh	209	353	421	-
Monday	Massereene	660	390	428	-
	Kilrea	150	400	423	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	433	390	420	-
	Rathfriland	304	390	421	410
	Armoys	214	370	412	-
Wednesday	Ballymena	647	380	416	390
	Enniskillen	175	385	405	-
	Markethill	580	385	419	-

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## BALMORAL SHOW PROVIDES TREMENDOUS PLATFORM FOR BEEF AND LAMB

REFLECTING on what he regarded as a very successful Balmoral Show, LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson said that the event provided a vehicle for local agriculture to profile many of the projects that are now underway to drive practical and technical improvements within the industry.

"The launch of the Northern Ireland Sheep Programme is a case in point," he said. "Co-ordinated in partnership between Dunbia, CAFRE and the Irish Farmers' Journal, it will help drive technical efficiency within the sector."

"There's so much that farmers can do to improve the output and sustainability of their businesses. These are decisions and plans that they can fully implement themselves with the help of the proper advice. I think it significant that CAFRE has allocated Senan White the role of co-ordinating the new programme."

Ian continued: "This year's show provided a tremendous platform for a host of organisations to profile the

valuable advice and support that they can give when it comes to health and safety matters on farms and farmer well-being.

"Farming is a very lonely profession. Producers work long hours on their own and very rarely have the opportunity of meeting other people at their place of work. So, it's important for agriculture, as a whole, to provide whatever supports are needed to help farmers overcome feelings of isolation."

"Farmers coming on to the LMC stand were keen to discuss a wide range of topics, from cattle and sheep prices through to the implementation of the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme. Not surprisingly, Brexit was a keenly debated issue as was the issue of the anti-meat agenda. Many farmers are aware of the views expressed by both vegetarians and vegans on the role of animal protein in the diet. But, in equal measure, they are happy with the views expressed by meat industry leaders on the issue."

The LMC Chief Executive noted the calls made at the show for the establishment of a body which would specifically promote locally produced food outside the UK, adding: "We have always supported the development of a strategic agri-food marketing body for Northern Ireland."

"This could facilitate existing agencies such as LMC, the Dairy Council, the Northern Ireland Pork & Bacon Forum, Food NI and Invest NI to work together in a co-ordinated manner with government to help leverage support and to help raise the profile of the excellent quality food we produce here in Northern Ireland on an international scale."

He continued: "Currently LMC has a key role in promoting locally produced beef and lamb within the UK. We also facilitate new market access for red meat produced in Northern Ireland at a number of levels and it is very encouraging that our work with partners in government and in industry has resulted in the advancement of an

official inspection of UK beef controls by Chinese authorities to next week.

"New markets help deliver a better carcass balance return for processors which in turn helps to deliver more sustainable prices at farm level

"The role model represented by

Scotland Food and Drink is one which Northern Ireland could learn from. It is a body which allows the various stakeholders within the Scottish food and drink sector to act collaboratively when it comes to driving new market opportunities and profile for the industry as a whole."

Image 1: Secretary of State, Karen Bradley visited the LMC stand at Balmoral Show



## AFRICAN SWINE FEVER TO SHAPE GLOBAL MEAT MARKET IN 2019

ACCORDING to LMC Economist, Seamus McMenamin, there has been a slow and steady growth in global meat production over the last few decades. However, this will come to an end during 2019 with meat production forecast to decline by 0.2 per cent to 337 million tonnes according to the latest Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) outlook report.



He added: "This downward shift in global meat production is expected on the back of a five per cent decline in overall meat production in China and a small decrease in production in Australia. There are however, increases in production expected in all other major meat producing regions, especially in the USA, Brazil, Mexico, India, the EU, the Russian Federation and Pakistan."

Seamus went on to point out that a serious outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in China will have huge impacts on production, consumption and trade of pork but also of all meat products. In

his opinion, this is the single biggest factor shaping the world meat market outlook for 2019.

He added: "As a result of ASF, global pork production is expected to decline by four per cent in 2019. Some of this decline will be offset by an increase in the production of other meats, particularly poultry which is forecast to increase global production by 2.8 per cent during 2019."

"The relatively short production cycle for poultry meat allows producers to react more quickly to shifts in global demand.

"The impact of ASF in China will also have a positive impact on global demand for beef and sheep meat as these meats will help to fill some of the gaps in protein demand which are emerging from the reduced availability of pork."

"However, due to longer production cycles there will only be a limited uplift in production in response to this increased demand. The FAO outlook report forecasts the level of growth for both beef and sheepmeat to be less than one per cent during 2019."

Seamus pointed out that global trade of meat is forecast to exceed 35 million tonnes in 2019, up 4.8 percent from 2018 levels. He commented: "Most of this increase is driven by a 20 per cent increase in meat imports by China due to the impact of ASF but also a growing per capita demand for meat. Meanwhile imports by Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, Vietnam and Russia are also forecast to increase in 2019."

## IN MY OPINION: RICHARD HALLERON

FARMERS should take heart from the fact that leaders of the red meat industry are calling for beef and lamb produced here in Northern Ireland to have a greater profile on international markets.

These calls should be heeded by all the relevant policy and decision makers within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Department for the Economy (DfE). But there is another dimension to all of this. The reality is that all the main threats to our red meat sector are truly international in nature.

The MERCOSUR countries of South America have made no secret of their intention to put more beef on to EU markets. And, if Brexit becomes a reality, no doubt the likes of Australia - with its very large red meat industry - will be quick off the blocks, seeking to do a free trade deal with the UK.

The UK currently sits close to the top of the pile, when it comes to the prices paid for steak and other premium cuts of beef. And, for this, we here in Northern Ireland should be eternally grateful. The problem is that such circumstances will always attract international meat suppliers in their droves. And the more open the UK becomes in terms of its trading policy, the more pressure this will put on our own meat processors to extract added value from the UK market place for UK origin beef.

Arguing over price often tends to be a futile process. However, what we can stand over is the

superior production standards that we achieve here in Northern Ireland on a day-to-day basis, where beef and lamb concerned.

This is the core message which all our stakeholder representative groups must communicate whenever the opportunity arises. It's an approach that will serve two purposes. First-off it will highlight the quality of our produce from an export sales point of view. But, at the same time, it will also make it clear to those countries wishing to supply the UK with meat, that they must have the same credentials. Simply offering cheap produce will not cut it.

The other major player within this scenario is the UK government. Ministers must be reminded that, under no circumstances, will local farmers be expected to reach certain quality standards while, at the same time, competing with imports that fall far short of these criteria. Such an approach to business would be inherently unfair.

Image 2: Farmers should take heart that industry is calling for greater profile of local beef and lamb



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