

# APHIS RECORDS MORE ABERDEEN ANGUS CATTLE ON NI FARMS

**D**URING 2018 Aberdeen Angus (AA) cattle accounted for 17 per cent of the total price reported prime cattle kill in NI. This proportion has been steadily increasing in recent years as indicated in Figure 1.

Positive market signals in the form of bonuses at point of slaughter have increased demand for AA cattle for finishing. This has increased the use of AA bulls in NI, particularly in the dairy herd where the smaller birth weight,

shorter gestations and a higher calf value are all advantageous to the dairy producer.

A total of 76,606 AA calves were registered in NI last year which

accounted for 22 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations. The number of AA calf registrations has increased annually since 2013 when 48,049 AA calves accounted for 15 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations in NI. With

the number of AA calf registrations increasing in recent years there has been a parallel increase in the number of AA cattle on NI farms.

At the end of December 2018 there were 8,971 AA cattle aged 25-30 months on farms in NI, an increase of 1,732 head or 24 per cent from December 2017 figures. There was also a notable increase in the number of AA cattle aged 19-24 months to 33,927 head in December 2018. This was up 3,684 head (+12 per cent) from December 2017 figures.

The number of AA cattle in the younger age cohorts has shown some signs of stabilising with 94,325 head aged under 18 months in December 2018. This was up three per cent from December 2017 levels.

Figure 1: Proportion of AA cattle in the NI kill has steadily increased 2015-2018

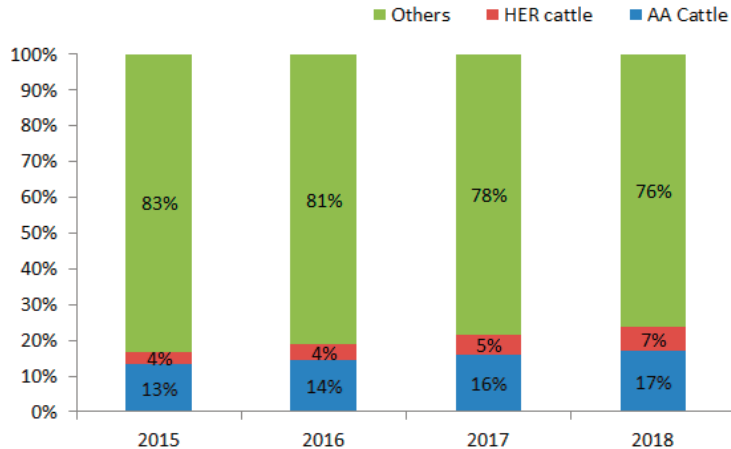
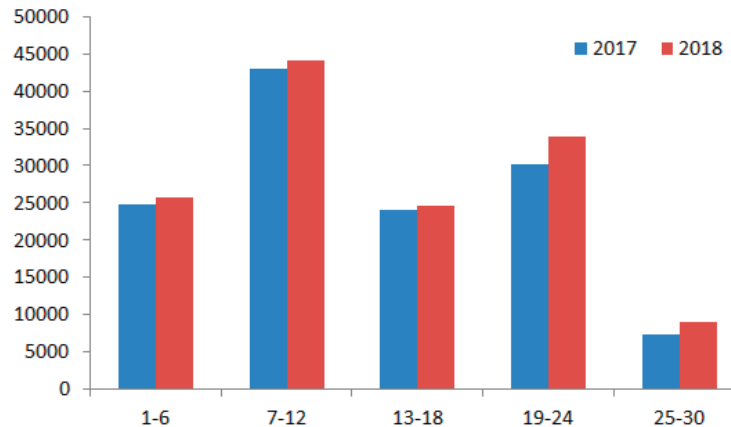


Figure 2: Breakdown of AA cattle on NI farms by age December 2017/2018



# UK MPS VOTE TO RENEGOTIATE BREXIT DEAL



ON Tuesday this week MP's voted in favour of Theresa May returning to Brussels to try and renegotiate the current Brexit deal. Earlier this month the Brexit deal the British PM has negotiated with the EU over the last two years was heavily rejected by MP's.

The rejection of the negotiated deal between the UK Government and the EU in the House of Commons was primarily due to concerns around the Northern Irish backstop, the fallback plan to avoid any return to physical border checks on goods or people between the NI and ROI. Some MP's are worried that by agreeing to this backstop it could leave the UK tied to the EU's rules indefinitely.

Mrs May is now going to return to Brussels to try and renegotiate the backstop with alternative arrangements. When asked what alternatives there were to the backstop, Brexit Secretary Mr Barclay has said "There are a number of options, there are issues in terms of

having time limits, issues in terms of exit clauses, issues in terms of technology and this will be the nature of the negotiation with the European Union in the coming days."

It is as yet unclear what these proposed arrangements are or how they will be implemented in a way which will appease the concerns of officials in both the EU and the UK. Reports from the EU have indicated that it will not change the legal text agreed with the UK Prime Minister with the European Council President Donald Tusk saying: "The backstop is part of the withdrawal agreement, and the withdrawal agreement is not open for renegotiation."

Mr Tusk added the EU would, however, be willing to look at the political declaration again - the part of the deal that makes a pledge on the future relationship between the UK and the EU - and that the EU would "stand ready" to consider any "reasoned request" for an extension to the leave date of 29 March 2019.

It remains to be seen what changes, if any, the British Prime Minister can negotiate with the EU and if no resolution can be found then the UK is scheduled to leave the EU without a deal at the end of March 2019. Under this scenario WTO

rules on trading would come into place which would be significantly detrimental and disruptive to the NI red meat industry in particular.

Under WTO trading conditions Northern Ireland beef and sheep meat output could decline by 21%, with exports to the EU collapsing by over 90%. These are the findings of a report commissioned by LMC early last year. The report gauged the impact on the Northern Irish beef and sheep meat industry of moving from EU to World Trade Organization (WTO) trading conditions under two scenarios:

- 1) "WTO Equivalence" (where the UK and EU impose reciprocal tariffs on each other's imports based on the current EU Common External Tariff, as well as an assumption that there would be mutual recognition of veterinary and other technical standards) and
- 2) a unilateral "Open-Door" trade policy whereby the UK reduces its tariffs on imports from major agricultural producers but without any reciprocal agreements in place.

The full report can be accessed on the LMC website [www.lmcni.com](http://www.lmcni.com)

## FQAS MART CLINICS FEBRUARY 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
<b>Omagh</b>	Monday	04/02/19
<b>Markethill</b>	Tuesday	12/02/19
<b>Saintfield</b>	Wednesday	13/02/19
<b>Enniskillen</b>	Thursday	14/02/19
<b>Kilrea</b>	Wednesday	20/02/19
<b>Ballymena</b>	Friday	22/02/19



### 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 28/01/19	Next Week 04/02/19
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	338 - 344p	336 - 344p
R-3	332 - 338p	330 - 338p
O+3	326 - 332p	324 - 332p
P+3	280 - 292p	278 - 292p
Including bonus where applicable		
<b>Cows</b>		
O+3 & better	222 - 240p	222 - 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.

### Deadweight Cattle Trade

**B**ASE quotes from the major plants this week for U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 338-344p/kg with the majority of plants quoting 344p/kg for steers and heifers. Quotes for O+3 grading cows ranged from 222-240p/kg across the plants this week. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 7,261 head. This was up 325 head from the previous week and above the 6,949 killed in NI plants in the corresponding week in 2018. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 2,121 head, a similar throughput to the previous week and 284 cows below the 2,405 cows killed in local plants in the same week in 2018.

Cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 299 prime cattle and 56 cows while a further 26 prime cattle and 179 cows were imported from GB. Exports to ROI for direct slaughter last week included 19 prime cattle and 140 cows while no cattle were exported from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The deadweight prime cattle trade in NI strengthened last week for the majority of grades. The average steer price in NI last week was 343.1p/kg up by 1.9p/kg from the previous week, while the R3 steer price increased by 1.4p/kg to 350.5p/kg. The average NI heifer price strengthened last week by 2.6p/kg to 344.7p/kg. The R3 heifer price last week increased by 3.3p/kg to 352.3p/kg when compared to the previous week. There was also an improvement in the young bull trade in NI last week with the average young bull price up by 2.7p/kg to 325.2p/kg while the R3 young bull price increased by 1.3p/kg to 335.3p/kg. The average NI cow price last week improved by 2.3p/kg to 223.5p/kg while the O3 cow price was back by 0.8p/kg to 236.4p/kg from the previous week.

The average steer price in GB last week increased by 1.2p/kg to 351.7p/kg while the average R3 steer price came back marginally to 358.9p/kg. The R3 steer price was back in Midlands and Wales (-0.7p/kg), Northern England (-1.3p/kg), and Southern England (-2.4p/kg) with an increase reported in Scotland (+3.3p/kg). The average heifer price in GB last week reported a slight increase to 351.3p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back by 1.6p/kg to 358.3p/kg from the previous week. The R3 heifer price was back in Scotland (-0.8p/kg), Northern England (-5.3p/kg), and Southern England (-3.5p/kg) with an increase reported in the Midlands and Wales (+0.6p/kg). Meanwhile in GB the cow trade also improved with the O3 cow price increasing by 1.2p/kg to 236.3p/kg, this is very similar to the O3 cow price in NI.

Reported prices for prime cattle in ROI last week came under some pressure and this combined with a weaker euro meant the majority of prices were back in sterling terms. The R3 steer price was back by 5.4p/kg to 322.4p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back by 4.3p/kg to 339.9p/kg. In ROI last week the O3 cow price decreased by the equivalent of 3.3p/kg to 236.6p/kg similar to the O3 cow price in NI.

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

W/E 26/01/19	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	348.7	329.9	365.4	362.9	359.0	361.9
	R3	350.5	322.4	365.8	359.9	354.4	358.9
	R4	351.0	323.2	366.5	367.7	353.7	362.4
	O3	341.5	308.2	347.1	342.9	329.1	339.4
	AVG	343.1	-	362.6	355.9	341.3	351.7
Heifers	U3	356.1	345.7	368.3	366.5	361.5	365.0
	R3	352.3	333.9	361.8	357.6	357.7	358.3
	R4	349.2	334.4	365.3	361.4	357.1	359.8
	O3	345.7	319.5	344.6	338.7	330.5	337.0
Young Bulls	AVG	344.7	-	362.8	354.1	343.8	351.3
	U3	340.3	315.7	359.4	344.2	347.8	349.2
	R3	335.3	307.2	348.7	338.2	338.0	340.5
	O3	322.5	291.5	308.3	311.6	305.1	310.0
Prime Cattle Price Reported	AVG	325.2	-	330.7	316.6	320.0	321.0
	6,338	-	7,170	7,198	7,855	4,619	26,842
Cows	O3	236.4	236.6	229.5	236.4	239.9	236.3
	O4	240.4	237.7	237.0	235.9	236.5	235.5
	P2	197.6	212.3	195.5	189.3	187.6	190.0
	P3	213.1	227.5	203.3	204.7	209.1	207.6
	AVG	223.5	-	229.1	216.6	210.0	212.6

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=87.44p 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

### REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 26/01/19	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	348.1	355.4	340.2
R3	346.1	348.5	335.5
O+3	336.5	340.8	328.2

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 26/01/19	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220- 250kg	Wgt 250- 280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	132.6	147.1	158.9	177.0
P2	158.6	176.2	197.2	207.7
P3	152.7	197.6	209.3	216.2
O3	210.0	220.0	236.3	236.6
O4	-	-	221.8	241.0
R3	-	-	-	259.7

### LATEST LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 26/01/19	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Steers	204	218	210	178	200	187
Friesians	155	162	159	143	150	147
Heifers	204	218	209	175	199	185
Beef Cows	146	183	155	120	145	130
Dairy Cows	105	131	115	75	104	90
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Bullocks up to 400kg	230	263	245	210	229	220
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	220	278	235	200	219	210
Bullocks over 500kg	200	222	211	180	199	190
Heifers up to 450kg	220	261	230	190	219	205
Heifers over 450kg	205	233	215	170	204	190
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>						
Continental Bulls	340	420	370	235	335	285
Continental Heifers	250	365	310	140	245	200
Friesian Bulls	130	180	155	50	125	85
Holstein Bulls	100	180	135	20	95	60

# SHEEP TRADE

## SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 28/01/19	Next Week 04/02/19
Hoggets> 22kg	430-445p	435-445p

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 12/01/19	W/E 19/01/19	W/E 26/01/19
NI L/W Hoggets	399.0	403.2	414.1
NI D/W Hoggets	429.8	425.4	434.0
GB D/W Hoggets	433.2	431.7	430.4
ROI D/W	432.0	434.5	439.8

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

**B**ASE quotes from the plants for R3 grading hoggets this week ranged from 430-445p/kg up to 22kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. The plants have reported a decline in the throughput of hoggets with 5,423 killed locally last week. This was back 850 head from the 6,273 hoggets killed the previous week and also a 1,762 head decline from the 7,185 hoggets killed in the corresponding week in 2018. Exports to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 6,561 hoggets, a decrease of 2,057 hoggets when compared to the previous week. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week was 434p/kg, up 8.6p/kg. The ROI deadweight lamb price last week was the equivalent of 439.8p/kg, up 5.3p/kg from the previous week.

## This week's marts

**T**HE marts have reported a firm trade this week with a steady demand for good quality hoggets however as the week progressed the poor weather conditions impacted the numbers passing through the sale rings. In Kilrea this week 400 hoggets sold from 410-451p/kg compared to 400 hoggets last Monday selling from 399-421p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 486 hoggets sold from 390-460p/kg (avg 412p/kg) compared to 443 hoggets last week selling from 389-471p/kg (avg 405p/kg). In Enniskillen this week 322 hoggets sold from 419-461p/kg compared to 398 hoggets last week selling from 388-458p/kg. In Markethill this week 1,310 hoggets sold from 400-440p/kg compared to 1,085 hoggets last week selling from 410-464p/kg. Top reported prices for cull ewes generally ranged from £80-£130.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 25/01/19		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 31/01/19		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	230	375	435	-
Saturday	Swatragh	900	390	483	-
	Omagh	788	418	479	-
Monday	Massereene	812	400	437	-
	Kilrea	400	410	451	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	451	400	494	-
	Rathfriland	486	390	460	412
Wednesday	Ballymena	1765	380	463	410
	Enniskillen	322	419	461	-
	Armoy	130	400	435	-
	Markethill	1310	400	440	-

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## SECURING NEW MARKETS REMAINS A PRIORITY FOR THE RED MEAT INDUSTRY

**T**HE drive to secure greater market opportunities for Northern Irish beef and lamb in countries around the world continues to increase and representatives from the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) attended a recent seminar on this subject, hosted by Invest NI.

The event gave those in attendance an opportunity to assess how the attainment of market share for local food exporters can be achieved in the most effective way possible. LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson takes up the story:

“Northern Ireland’s red meat industry has a proven track record of supplying and servicing customers across the European Union with our quality beef and lamb products and, since the lifting of the worldwide ban on UK beef exports by EU vets in 2006, our industry has been pursuing market access to the widest possible range of global market places. We have already achieved a

number of key export success stories for red meat over recent years. The recent opening up of the Japanese market is a case in point.

“An agreement between the UK and Japan is now in place. But it’s not the only success story in this regard. Hong Kong is now one of our most important third country markets for red meat from Northern Ireland outside of the European Union.”

Ian added: “Looking to the future, access to the Chinese market remains a key objective. One very positive development in this regard is that China has lifted its BSE export ban, regarding potential beef imports from the UK. We now need to build on this for the future.”

According to the LMC’s Chief Executive, securing better access to world markets will allow Northern Ireland’s red meat companies to secure the best possible return for each part of the carcass they process. “In turn, this will allow the

processors to pay stronger returns to farmers,” he further explained.

The securing of new export markets for beef, lamb, pork and animal genetics emanating from the UK is co-ordinated by the UK Export Certification Partnership. Industry funding and support is provided by the LMC and other levy bodies in the UK, including the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board.

“We work very closely with AHDB on a range of export related matters,” Ian continued. “It is good news that our regional business development agency Invest NI is also working closely with AHDB to bring additional expert knowledge and insight to our local export businesses. A case in point is the recent work undertaken to analyse consumer and retail trends, in nine key international markets. All these countries could be very important to Northern Ireland, where future beef and lamb exports are concerned.”

He added: “LMC is actively involved with a number of organisations and stakeholder groups, which have a key role in delivering improved food safety, animal health and welfare standards in Northern Ireland. Enhancing these aspects of our farming industry is

crucially important as we strive to obtain new markets for locally produced beef and lamb. Priorities in this regard at the present time include the eradication of BVD and getting to grips with the Bovine TB challenge.”

**Image 1: Invest NI’s Grainne Moody and John Hood pictured with LMC’s Chief Executive Ian Stevenson**



### LMC RE-AFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO FARM SAFETY

**L**MC has highlighted the key farm safety standards, which producers must meet when securing Farm Quality Assurance (FQA) certification.



LMC is actively involved with the Northern Ireland Farm Safety Partnership. “The Commission fully supports the work of the Farm Safety Partnership in helping to make our farms safer places to live and work on. Elderly and young people are particularly vulnerable in this regard,” said Noel.

He added: “Farm accidents are not inevitable: they are avoidable. A single accident is one too many. LMC is totally committed to playing an active role in making NI beef and sheep farmers fully aware of the need to ‘think safe’ at all times.



“In this context, every effort is taken to promote meeting the highest possible health and safety standards within every farm business. This activity is fully backed up with the health and safety promotional work undertaken at events, such as Balmoral Show.”

“Improving farm safety is of critical importance to FQAS,” confirmed LMC’s newly appointed FQAS Manager Noel McNeill. “All producers must read and understand the importance of adhering to a number of key, safety-related elements of the FQAS standard. These are specifically geared towards promoting safe working on farm in the interests of protecting both humans and livestock.”

These specific requirements include the availability of suitable animal handling facilities, the proper placement of electrical installations, the use of appropriate animal bedding, the safe storage of slurries and manures, the proper securing of sheep dipping facilities and the appropriate storage of agrochemicals.

### IN MY OPINION.....RICHARD HALLERON VEGANS CAN’T HAVE IT ALL THEIR OWN WAY

**H**OW many vegans take nutritional supplements because they are not getting sufficient levels of crucially important minerals from their diet such as Vitamin B12, haem-iron and zinc? At a guess, I’d say that the number is pretty high.

Whilst people may choose to embrace veganism as a way of living, the past few days have seen me meet up with a number of livestock farmers, who are extremely concerned with what they regard as the inexorable rise of the vegan activist movement in the UK and Ireland.

I feel it is safe to conclude that these activists would not have survived had they been around a few thousand years ago, when all of mankind led a hunter-gatherer existence. Back then it was a case of kill, or be killed, with animal products representing the only source of food that could deliver all the nutrients needed by our early ancestors to stay alive.

But it’s all different now, of course. These activists can afford to criticise current farming systems on the back of the modern lifestyle, which they enjoy. But they should remember that all of the great industrial and technological breakthroughs achieved

by mankind have their origins in the agricultural revolution that started some 10,000 years ago. Had it not been for the intensification in farming practises that did take place, the opportunities to achieve all these other wonderful breakthroughs might never have happened.

No one can argue that modern farming practises are not intensive. But this does not stop farmers from caring for their animals in a totally meaningful way. For its part, agriculture in NI is one of the most regulated industries in the world and consumers should have total confidence in the way their food is produced.

**Image 2: Red meat is a rich source of Vitamin B12, haem-iron and zinc**



Farming is also a business. And on that basis alone, it is in every producer’s interest to ensure that his or her animals remain healthy and are

maintained under the highest possible welfare conditions. So, could I suggest, that the next time vegan interest groups think about criticising the livestock industry, they might consider spending a few days at a beef or sheep farm to experience first hand the high quality standards being implemented.

For its part, LMC does a tremendous job in promoting the nutritional values of locally produced red meat and the exemplary production standards achieved by our farmers. The Commission is equally active in the schools and interfacing with consumers of all ages in a very proactive manner. Moreover, its staff are totally open when it comes to discussing the farming practises carried out here in Northern Ireland. And, again, this is how it should be.

The core premise of the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) is that farmers should continually strive to improve the welfare and overall management standards achieved within their businesses. LMC has been to the fore in driving FQAS forward, primarily to ensure that consumer expectations are being met, where red meat is concerned. It would be appropriate for those following a vegan lifestyle to, at least, acknowledge this fact from time.



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