

PRODUCING LAMBS THAT MEET MARKET SPECIFICATIONS

EARLIER this week LMC joined up with CAFRE, AFBI, UFU and NSA to deliver the biennial sheep conference in Greenmount and Omagh with a focus this year on 'Future Proofing your Sheep Enterprise'. Both events were very well attended and positive feedback has been received from those in attendance.

One important area of discussion was the production of lambs that meet market specification as achieving market specification will help producers to maximise returns from their sheep

enterprise. One key take away message from both meetings was the importance of good grassland management. This will help ensure lambs maintain a good daily live weight gain and has the potential to remove or reduce the need for concentrate feeding to finish lambs at certain times of the year.

The current specification from the major processors is for R grading lambs or better with a fat score of 2 or 3 and a carcase weight of 18-21kg. Processors also have a strong preference for lambs with FQ status with bonuses available

in some plants while other plants will not handle non assured lambs.

The importance of weighing lambs regularly and also handling them to assess conformation and fat class was also discussed. This will ensure that lambs are selected for slaughter as soon as they meet current market specifications. Finishing lambs at heavier carcase weights or with higher levels of fat cover increases production costs for the producer while providing no additional financial return.



Top quoted prices for R3 grading lambs in the plants this week are 350p/kg with plants paying up to 21kg. This puts the value of 21kg R3 grading carcase this week at £73.50. With plants paying to a maximum of 21kg it makes no economic sense to finish lambs at heavier weights as outlined in Figure 1. Reports from the plants have indicated a significant proportion of lambs are being killed at over the maximum weight with an average carcase weight last week of 21.7kg.

The importance of good husbandry and lamb management prior to slaughter were also outlined as these can cause damage to the carcase and have a detrimental effect on the value to the

processor. Bruising of lambs through poor handling and during transportation as well as the presence of abscesses due to poor needle practice were highlighted as particular issues.

Another key issue discussed was the cleanliness of animals being presented for slaughter. As food producers sheep farmers have an important role to play in presenting clean and dry sheep for slaughter. Lambs in dirty condition cannot be accepted for slaughter as dirty fleeces have a greater risk of carcase contamination. Dirty lambs will have to be clipped with an additional cost to the producer of approximately £0.50/head.

Figure 1: Finishing lambs at higher carcase weights provides no financial return to the producer.



DIRECT PAYMENTS EXCHANGE RATE SET

WHEN calculating Single Farm Payments in currencies other than the Euro the member state in question will use the average exchange rate set by the European Central Bank (ECB) during the month of September.

This week the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has confirmed that an exchange rate of €1= £0.89092 will be used to calculate 2019 Single Farm Payments. This rate will also be used to calculate the 2019 Young Farmer's Payment.

2019 Single Farm
Payment rate.

€1= £0.89092

On the basis of the new rate, it is estimated that the total net value of 2019 Direct Payments to local farmers will be reduced by £0.61 million from the estimated £286 million paid out in 2018. Despite the slight fall in the overall value of the Single Farm Payment this year the current exchange

rate has meant payments will be higher than pre-Brexit referendum levels in 2016 and 2015.

Direct payments from the EU account for approximately 80 per cent of farm income for local farmers. The payments in their current form are due to be phased out from 2021, as the UK leaves the EU and the Common Agricultural Policy however it is as yet unclear what format subsidy payments will take after this point.

There is certainly the possibility of less direct support at farm level and more exposure to world markets moving forward. With this in mind every effort should be made to improve efficiency at all levels of the supply chain as well as securing market access to valuable export markets.

In the short term a weaker sterling has made UK beef and lamb much more competitive on the EU market and this is being reflected by an increase in the level of both beef and lamb exports according to the latest available data from HMRC. In addition there has been a notable decrease in the volume of beef and being imported by the UK.

FQAS MART CLINICS TIMETABLE

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.



During Autumn 2019 LMC has extended the FQAS liaison service to a larger number of marts following the success of this initiative in 2018. Terry will cover the majority of quality assured marts in Northern Ireland which will allow all members a chance to use this service in their local area.

It is well known that some producers can find a number of the scheme requirements, such as the completion of records, a little daunting. The Liaison Service is in place to assist farmers and to ensure that as many producers as possible can continue to benefit from being a member of the scheme.

The daily FQAS helpline that LMC also provides continues to be available alongside the enhanced number of mart clinics. Producers can use the service for any general enquiries in relation to FQAS membership, to help prepare for an inspection and also to help resolve any non-conformances identified during a farm inspection.

Table 1 shows the marts Terry will be attending during October 2019.

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.

Table 1: FQAS Clinics for October 2019

Mart	Day	Date
Crossmaglen	Saturday (Day)	05/10/2019
Saintfield	Wednesday (Day)	09/10/2019
Lisahally	Wednesday (Evening)	09/10/2019
Omagh	Monday (Day)	14/10/2019
Markethill	Tuesday (Day)	15/10/2019
Enniskillen	Thursday (Day)	17/10/2019
Downpatrick	Saturday (Day)	19/10/2019
Kilrea	Wednesday (Day)	24/10/2019
Ballymena	Friday (Day)	25/10/2019



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

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 30/09/19	Next Week 07/10/19
Prime		
U-3	312 - 320p	312 - 320p
R-3	306 - 314p	306 - 314p
O+3	300 - 308p	300 - 308p
P+3	252 - 262p	252 - 262p
Including bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	235 - 250p	235 - 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 28/09/19	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	321.2	330.1	315.9
R3	318.7	324.2	313.2
O+3	313.7	315.4	302.7

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 28/09/19	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220- 250kg	Wgt 250- 280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	150.2	161.2	175.3	184.4
P2	166.4	191.5	210.5	224.8
P3	210.0	215.0	229.8	234.0
O3	-	239.3	253.3	252.2
O4	-	-	255.0	253.9
R3	-	-	-	268.9

Deadweight Cattle Trade

BASE quotes from the plants for in-spec U-3 grade prime cattle have held steady this week at 312-320p/kg. The majority of plants quoted 318-320p/kg for steers and heifers this week. Quotes for O+3 grading cows have also held steady at 235-250p/kg. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Good supplies of prime cattle have continued to come forward for slaughter in NI with 7,977 prime cattle killed locally last week. This was an increase of 287 head from the previous week. Throughput of prime cattle during 2019 has totalled 255,220 head, a 3.9 per cent increase on the corresponding period in 2018 when 245,680 prime cattle were slaughtered. Cow throughput has also remained strong with 2,380 cows killed last week, an increase of 55 cows on the previous week. Cow throughput in NI plants during 2019 to date has totalled 68,879 head, a 9.2 per cent decrease on the 75,893 cows killed in the same period in 2018.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants last week totalled 273 head with a further nine prime cattle imported from GB. This brings the year to date prime cattle imports to 7,451 head, an increase of 4,607 head when compared to the same period in 2018 when 2,844 prime cattle were imported from ROI to NI for direct slaughter. Meanwhile exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 11 prime cattle and 60 cows. This brings prime cattle exports to 662 head during the year to date, a decrease of 785 head when compared to the same period in 2018.

The average steer price in NI last week was up 0.6p/kg to 315.1p/kg while the R3 steer price decreased by half a penny to 322.6p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week increased by a penny to 320.3p/kg while the R3 heifer price was up by 0.7p/kg to 326.4p/kg. The average young bull price in NI last week was back 1.5p/kg to 302.6p/kg while the R3 young bull price was back by 7.9p/kg to 312.5p/kg. The NI average cow price increased by 2.1p/kg last week to 226.3p/kg with the O3 cow price up 0.8p/kg to 252.1p/kg.

In GB last week with the average steer price held steady at 324.1p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by half a penny to 331.4p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week was back 1.3p/kg to 324p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by half a penny to 330.9p/kg. In GB last week the average cow price was back by 2.3p/kg to 220.3p/kg, with the O3 cow price up marginally from last week to 249.4p/kg.

Deadweight prime cattle prices in ROI strengthened last week for the majority of reported grades. The R3 steer price increased by 4.6p/kg to the equivalent of 310.2p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by a similar margin to 319p/kg. The O3 cow price in ROI was back by the equivalent of 1.3p/kg from last week to 252.3p/kg, similar to the O3 cow price in NI.

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

W/E 28/09/19	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	321.7	318.8	342.2	332.5	329.4	330.9	333.5
	R3	322.6	310.2	342.1	333.0	326.6	325.2	331.4
	R4	319.4	309.5	346.0	338.6	325.1	326.5	335.6
	O3	316.5	293.1	322.1	310.2	303.4	306.0	310.3
	AVG	315.1	-	339.9	324.2	315.8	316.0	324.1
Heifers	U3	331.0	329.7	347.6	338.1	337.4	331.8	338.9
	R3	326.4	319.0	339.6	331.3	328.2	324.8	330.9
	R4	325.7	317.2	341.9	332.8	327.6	323.9	332.4
	O3	319.4	305.6	322.6	310.9	307.1	304.2	311.1
	AVG	320.3	-	340.3	324.6	316.4	312.9	324.0
Young Bulls	U3	316.4	301.8	333.1	317.5	328.8	320.7	326.2
	R3	312.5	292.3	325.9	315.8	315.7	305.9	317.1
	O3	296.5	274.4	291.5	280.0	280.6	272.1	281.8
	AVG	302.6	-	317.3	301.1	304.2	292.3	304.7
	Prime Cattle Price Reported	6,861	-	7,109	7,327	8,181	4,742	27,359
Cows	O3	252.1	252.3	248.5	250.8	250.0	247.5	249.4
	O4	253.9	252.1	252.5	250.1	250.5	239.8	248.4
	P2	216.1	230.0	211.1	204.2	209.2	213.2	209.5
	P3	232.9	242.6	226.6	217.6	224.8	221.7	223.4
	AVG	226.3	-	240.6	225.2	215.9	213.1	220.3

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=88.49p 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 LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 28/09/19	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	196	203	200	172	195	185
Friesians	137	148	141	117	135	127
Heifers	191	203	197	170	190	180
Beef Cows	145	189	160	120	144	130
Dairy Cows	106	116	110	65	105	85
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	200	226	215	165	199	185
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	200	220	210	170	199	188
Bullocks over 500kg	190	213	198	165	189	187
Heifers up to 450kg	190	206	200	160	189	175
Heifers over 450kg	185	195	190	165	184	174
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	275	340	310	180	270	225
Continental Heifers	240	300	270	140	235	185
Friesian Bulls	100	150	125	50	95	85
Holstein Bulls	75	145	100	5	70	35

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 30/09/19	Next Week 07/10/19
Lambs up to 21kg	345-350p	340-345p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 14/09/19	W/E 21/09/19	W/E 28/09/19
NI L/W Lambs	317.8	312.4	307.7
NI D/W Lambs	357.7	350.9	346.2
GB D/W Lambs	378.9	374.2	372.3
ROI D/W	-	-	380.3

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES for R3 grading lambs came under some pressure this week and ended the week ranging from 340-345p/kg up to 21kg. Similar quotes are expected for early next week. Lamb throughput in NI last week totalled 8,563 head, back 329 head from the previous week. Throughput for the year to date has totalled 278,970 a 2.3 per cent decrease from the 285,623 head killed in the corresponding period in 2018. Lamb exports to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 7,257 head this brings exports for the year to date to 221,785, a 10.5 per cent decrease from 247,773 head exported in the same period in 2018. The average deadweight lamb price in NI last week was 346.2p/kg, back 4.7p/kg from the previous week.

This week's marts

THE marts have reported steady numbers of lambs passing through this week with the liveweight trade generally back compared to previous weeks. In Massereene on Monday 923 lambs sold from 295-326p/kg compared to 911 lambs last week selling from 300-323p/kg. In Saintfield on Tuesday 802 lambs sold from 275-336p/kg compared to 661 lambs last week selling from 292-344p/kg. In Ballymena this week 1,130 lambs sold from 285-320p/kg (Avg 290p/kg) compared to 1,804 lambs last week selling from 290-326p/kg (Avg 298p/kg). In Enniskillen on Wednesday 387 lambs sold from 300-332p/kg compared to 483 lambs last week selling from 298-326p/kg. Top reported prices for cull ewes ranged from £74-102 across the marts this week.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 27/09/19		Lambs			
To: 03/10/19		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	491	292	310	-
Saturday	Swatragh	1100	310	330	-
	Omagh	1010	340	419	-
Monday	Massereene	923	295	326	-
	Kilrea	550	298	315	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	802	275	336	-
	Rathfriland	560	283	365	307
Wednesday	Ballymena	1130	285	320	290
	Enniskillen	387	300	332	-
	Markethill	920	300	318	-
	Armoy	312	280	325	-

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LMC TO ATTEND ANUGA FOOD FAIR

LIVESTOCK and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) Chairman Gerard McGivern and Chief Executive Ian Stevenson will attend this year's Anuga Food Fair in Cologne, Germany.

The event brings together the largest grouping of food companies, buyers and industry decision makers from around the world. It alternates on a biennial basis with the Sial event in Paris



“Many of our largest red meat processors will be represented at

Cologne this year, either in their own right or with the support of the Invest NI co-ordinated presence at the event,” said Ian Stevenson. “These include Linden Foods, the ABP Food Group, the Dawn Food Group, the Foyle Food Group and Hewitt Meats.”

“Invest NI partners with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) in profiling the UK meat industry at Anuga. The event attracts just short of 7,500 exhibitors from around the world and 165,000 visitors from 198 countries

Ian continued: “It is crucially important for Northern Ireland’s beef and lamb processors to be represented in Germany over the coming days. Export markets will always represent a very large proportion of their business. It’s also a case of maintaining links with existing domestic and export customers and forging relationships with others.”

The LMC Chief Executive admitted that

Brexit, in whatever form it might take, puts added pressure on local food processors to get a strong message out to the international market place that it really is a case of ‘business as usual’ when it comes to sourcing the highest quality beef and lamb from Northern Ireland.

Ian commented: “Networking is crucially important in this regard. A case in point is AHDB’s hosting of a British Meat Dinner on the evening of October 7. Both the Chairman and I will attend this event as, no doubt, will representatives from all of the main red meat processing businesses from Northern Ireland in attendance at the food fair.

“Anuga is one of the most important food industry events in the calendar. Companies from Northern Ireland have used it in the past as a valuable opportunity to meet new customers. And 2019 will see this momentum maintained.

He concluded: “The challenge of Brexit will make the attainment of new markets for beef and lamb produced in Northern Ireland even more relevant into the future. Through the work of the UK Export Certification Partnership, which LMC part funds, some additional export opportunities have opened up to our red meat exporters in recent years such as Hong Kong, Canada, South Africa and the Philippines and further new opportunities in China and USA will hopefully come to fruition very soon.

“This is why our presence at international food events, such as Anuga, is just so important. Northern Ireland’s red meat sectors have a very positive story to tell: we just have to get out there and communicate this reality.

“Attending Anuga also brings home just how large and diverse the world’s food markets are. As a consequence, we can never take it for granted that potential customers know all that they need to know about the beef and lamb

produced locally. Our competitors are always out there, communicating their messages. And we need to be doing the exact same thing on behalf of Northern Ireland’s red meat sector.”

Image 1: LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson will be attending this years Anuga food festival in Cologne



'RESILIENT FARMER' HIGHLIGHTS STRESSES OF FARMING

FARMING has become one of the loneliest professions on the planet. And when challenges for farmers arise – as they often do - it's the psychological toll they can play on those affected that can create the greatest challenges. But there is always light at the end of the tunnel. And this is a perspective on life that noted New Zealand farmer Doug Avery is only too happy to tell anyone who wants to listen to his story.

It's one of overcoming tremendous economic, environmental and social challenges to become one of New Zealand's most successful and sustainable farmers.

LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson said: "We are delighted that Doug is bringing his Shift Happens!- An Audience with the Resilient Farmer Tour to Northern Ireland.

"As part sponsors of the regional leg of Doug's tour, we would like to congratulate Rural Support for working in partnership with the Farming Community Network to have the foresight to host this at such a challenging time for the UK farming and food industry.

"I would encourage all farmers to take time out from their busy schedules to come to one of the regional events to hear what Doug has to say about how it's possible to transform your approach to personal and business challenges and how to build resilience for a successful future.

"Farmers, food businesses and their supply chains are all going through the mill at the

moment with the uncertainty of Brexit and how it will impact our industry going forward. Add into the mix volatile currency, weak markets, rising input costs, unsettled weather, animal disease challenges and ever growing workloads, it's not surprising that mental and physical pressures are taking their toll. Make sure and book your place at one of the most eagerly anticipated events of the year!"

The Shift Happens!- Resilient Farmer Tour is coming to:

The Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown, 07 October
The Mourne County Hotel, Newry, 08 October
The Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen, 09 October
The Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena, 10 October

Tickets cost £10 which includes a light supper and can be purchased at:

www.resilientfarmertour.co.uk

Image 2: 'Resilient Farmer' Doug Avery who will be touring Northern Ireland next week



RED MEAT EDUCATION REMAINS A KEY PRIORITY FOR LMC

THIS month marks the twentieth anniversary of LMC hosting cookery demonstrations in post-primary schools the length and breadth of Northern Ireland.

This commitment must be regarded as a tremendous success story. Last year schools requested to have 350 cookery demonstrations held for the benefit of their pupils. And demand continues to grow.

The demonstrations are vitally important in communicating directly with school children who are key influencers in the household meal choices of their parents. They are also tomorrow's consumers and shoppers and it is essential that they understand the benefits of including red meat as part of a healthy, balanced diet. What's more, the demonstrations are structured in a way that provides the children in attendance every opportunity to ask any questions they might have about beef and lamb.

It is also worthy of note that the demonstrations strongly reflect the curriculum followed in all schools. The needs of pupils from Year eight to Year 14 are fully reflected in the work undertaken by LMC with the schools. By taking this approach it is hoped that pupils will be encouraged to follow careers in the agri-food, hospitality, nutrition, health, veterinary or farming sectors.

LMC has also developed a wide range of resource materials with a strong food and nutrition focus. All of these can be found on the Commission's Food4Life website.

These are freely available to all schools and the

website is constantly updated with new material that will be of direct interest to teachers.

In many ways the cookery demonstrations represent the tip of a very large iceberg when it comes to assessing the commitment made by LMC to schools and the education of our young children. No doubt, beef and sheep farmers wonder if they are getting value-for-money when it comes to the payment of the LMC levy. However, even the briefest of reflections on the positive work the Commission is doing with schools should provide ample reassurance in this regard.

LMC would also like to take this chance to congratulate Cherrie Kenny on behalf of our staff and stakeholders following her recent retirement. Cherrie has provided 31 years of valuable service to the wider red meat industry through a variety of roles within LMC and has been a driving force behind LMC's Education Services in the last 20 years.

Image 3: Pictured celebrating 20 years of LMC's school cookery demonstrations are Terry White, Cherrie Kenny and Ian Stevenson



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