

TIGHTENING IN PRIME CATTLE NUMBERS

PRIME cattle slaughterings have been very strong in Northern Ireland in recent weeks with 45,993 head killed during the last six weeks. This is an increase of 3,381 head or eight per cent from the same period in 2018.

This increase in prime cattle throughput combined with heavier carcass weights has increased the volume of beef coming onto the market and has contributed to the downward pressure on the beef trade in recent times.

However reports from some of the major beef processing plants have indicated a tightening in the availability of prime cattle for slaughter. Throughput of prime cattle in local plants last week was back by 335 head from the previous week to total 7,406 head.

This reduction in the availability of beef cattle for slaughter is also being reflected in APHIS reports showing the number of cattle for beef production on NI farms at the end of October 2019.

There were 414,142 cattle aged 12-30 months intended for beef production on NI farms at the end of October 2019. This figure includes all beef

sired cattle and dairy sired males. This is a 4.6 per cent decline from the corresponding period in 2018 and 5.7 per cent below October 2017 levels. The continued downward pressure on suckler cow numbers and calf registrations during 2017 and 2018 have played a key role in this trend.

As indicated in Figure 1 there has been a decline in the number of cattle for beef production on NI farms in the 12- 18 month, 18-24 month and 24-30 month age categories in October 2019. The number of cattle in the lower age cohorts however has steadied with calf registrations over the last few months showing some signs of stabilising.

October 2019
Cattle aged 18-24 months on NI farms

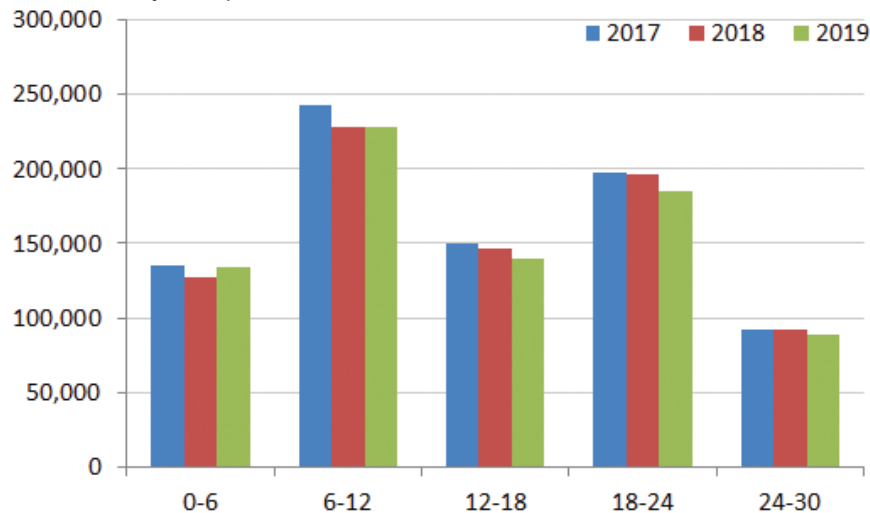
Beef sired males: 78,861 -6.2% yoy

Beef sired females: 95,536 -5.4% yoy

Dairy sired males: 10,227 -6.6% yoy

Cattle in the 18-24 month age bracket will provide the bulk of prime cattle throughput for local

Figure 1: Cattle for beef production on Northern Ireland farms at the end of October 2017-2019 (Beef sired cattle and dairy males) Source: APHIS



processors over the next six months and there has been a notable decline in the number of cattle in this age cohort in particular when compared to previous years.

slaughter may help to stabilise the local deadweight trade. While current prices remain well below previous years there have been some signs of improvement with some plants increasing base quotes towards the end of this week.

This tightening in the availability of prime cattle for

FQAS MART CLINICS TIMETABLE NOVEMBER 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.

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.

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 November 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 November 2019

Mart	Day	Date
Omagh	Monday (Day)	04/11/2019
Saintfield	Wednesday (Day)	06/11/2019
Markethill	Tuesday (Day)	12/11/2019
Enniskillen	Thursday (Day)	14/11/2019
Kilrea	Wednesday (Day)	27/11/2019
Ballymena	Friday (Day)	29/11/2019

ARTICLE 50 EXTENSION GRANTED BY THE EU

EARLIER this week the EU-27 accepted the UK's request to delay Brexit for the third time by extending the Article 50 process until Jan 31, 2020. Article 50 is the part of the Lisbon Treaty which sets out what happens when a country decides it wants to leave the EU and allows an initial two-year period for negotiations on the terms of exiting.

The leaving process was triggered by then Prime Minister Theresa May on 29 March 2017, giving an original exit date of 29 March 2019. However this date has since been extended twice, first to 12 April 2019 and then again until 31 October 2019, after Mrs May's deal was rejected in successive votes in the House of Commons.

With Brexit now delayed until 31 January 2020 British MP's have voted to hold a general election on 12 December 2019 and given the repeated delays to the UK's departure from the EU, Brexit is likely to dominate the main political parties' campaigns.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson does not have a majority in parliament and his government would have struggled to pursue its agenda so by calling a General Election he is hoping to break the Brexit stalemate. With the three month extension to Brexit now in place and the 'no deal' option off the table opposition parties have voted in favour of a national poll.

Image 1: Brexit has now been delayed for the third time until 31 January 2020



FQAS Helpline

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

Answerphone Service

Factory Quotes & Mart Results
Updated 5pm Daily
Tel: 028 9263 3011

Text Service

Free weekly price quotes sent to your mobile phone
Email: bulletin@lmncni.com
Tel: 028 9263 3000

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 28/10/19	Next Week 04/11/19
Prime		
U-3	312 - 320p	316 - 320p
R-3	306 - 314p	310 - 314p
O+3	300 - 308p	304 - 308p
P+3	252 - 262p	256 - 262p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	235 - 250p	230 - 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.

Deadweight Cattle Trade

The NI deadweight trade for prime cattle firmed at the lower end this week with base quotes for U-3 grade prime cattle ranging from 316-320p/kg. The majority of plants are quoting in the region of 318-320p/kg for steers and heifers. Quotes for O+3 cows generally held steady at 230-250p/kg across the major processors. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 7,406 head which was back 335 head from the 7,741 head killed during the previous week. Throughput was similar to the 7,393 head killed in the same week in 2018. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 2,486 head a decrease of 348 cows from the previous week.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 285 prime cattle and 68 cows while 97 cows were imported from GB for slaughter in local plants. Exports to ROI last week for direct slaughter included eight prime cattle and 51 cows while no cattle made the journey from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The average steer price in NI last week increased by 1.5p/kg to 316.1p/kg with the R3 steer price increasing by just over a penny to 324.9p/kg when compared to the previous week. The average heifer price in NI last week was 320.1p/kg, up 2p/kg from the previous week with the R3 heifer price increasing by 3.9p/kg to 327.5p/kg. The average price for young bulls increased by just over a penny to 299.9p/kg while the R3 young bull price decreased by 0.8p/kg to 311.5p/kg. The average NI cow price came back last week by 1.8p/kg to 223.4p/kg, while the O3 cow price increased by 2.6p/kg to 251p/kg.

The average GB steer price increased by 0.4p/kg to 321.9p/kg last week while the R3 steer price increased by a similar margin to 331.1p/kg. Across the regions the R3 steer prices reported a mixed trade last week with increases reported in Scotland (+1.8p/kg) and the Midlands and Wales (+2p/kg) while declines were reported in Northern England (-2.6p/kg) and Southern England (-1.4p/kg). The average heifer price in GB last week was up by 0.3p/kg to 323.2p/kg while the R3 heifer price decreased by 1.2p/kg to 329.1p/kg. R3 heifer prices reported decreases across all of the GB regions last week except for Northern England where the R3 heifer price was up half a penny to 332.3p/kg. The GB cow trade continued to come under pressure last week with the O3 cow price back by 4.4p/kg to 233.2p/kg, 17.8p/kg below the O3 cow price in NI.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle came under pressure in ROI last week as strong numbers of cattle continue to come forward for slaughter. The average R3 steer and heifer prices were both back by 3.1p/kg to the equivalent of 298.6p/kg and 307.4p/kg respectively. This puts the differential in R3 steers prices between NI and ROI at 26.3p/kg, with the differential in the R3 heifer price at 20.1p/kg last week. The O3 cow price reported a decrease of 5.1p/kg to 229.7p/kg last week which was 21.3p/kg below the equivalent price in NI.

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the major processors this week for R3 grading lambs remained in the region of 345p/kg up to 21kgs with 345-350p/kg up to 21kg expected for early next week. Lamb throughput in local plants last week totalled 8,580 head, up slightly from the previous week and similar to the 8,619 lambs killed in the same week in 2018. Lamb exports to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 8,600 head, a decrease from 8,720 lambs exported during the previous week. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week increased by half a penny to 340.1p/kg. In the corresponding week last year the deadweight lamb price in NI was 375.5p/kg. In ROI last week the average lamb price was the equivalent of 364.6p/kg, up 1.5p/kg from the previous week.

This week's marts

Smaller numbers of lambs passed through the sale rings this week with trade generally improving compared to last week. In Omagh last Saturday 1,235 lambs sold from 341-407p/kg compared to 1,054 lambs the previous Saturday selling from 352-427p/kg. In Massereene this week 926 lambs sold from 305-330p/kg compared to 1,155 lambs last week selling from 310-335p/kg. In Saintfield on Tuesday 525 lambs sold from 300-376p/kg compared to 741 lambs last week selling from 300-352p/kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday 1,802 lambs sold from 290-342p/kg (avg 308p/kg) compared to 1,850 lambs last week selling from 278-336p/kg (avg 299p/kg). Top reported prices for cull ewes ranged from £79-£88 across the marts.

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

	W/E 26/10/19	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	323.3	306.3	342.3	331.4	330.4	328.2	333.1
	R3	324.9	298.6	341.7	332.8	325.8	324.7	331.1
	R4	324.2	296.9	343.5	337.4	326.4	324.2	334.3
	AVG	316.1	-	338.4	323.0	313.2	312.7	321.9
Heifers	U3	328.5	316.6	348.2	339.4	336.2	333.5	339.4
	R3	327.5	307.4	338.0	332.3	325.2	322.4	329.1
	R4	326.3	304.7	342.9	334.2	328.3	323.6	333.0
	AVG	320.1	-	339.8	324.2	315.5	311.6	323.2
Young Bulls	U3	314.2	286.6	332.9	324.7	322.2	316.1	324.8
	R3	311.5	280.2	317.7	317.4	316.5	313.8	316.9
	O3	296.8	265.3	287.8	288.7	289.4	287.7	288.8
	AVG	299.9	-	313.8	303.1	304.6	286.9	304.4
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6,338	-	6,744	7,188	8,097	4,998	27,027	
Cows	O3	251.0	229.7	234.3	237.5	234.5	226.0	233.2
	O4	253.4	229.7	234.9	233.4	232.2	221.8	230.8
	P2	215.2	202.0	187.2	185.1	190.6	187.3	188.5
	P3	231.3	217.2	202.3	200.3	204.7	199.7	202.7
	AVG	223.4	-	221.8	205.4	198.0	189.5	200.6

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.26p Stg
(ii) Shading indicates a lower price than the previous week.
(iii) AVG is the average of all grades in the category, not just those listed

LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 26/10/19	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	201	208	204	175	200	187
Friesians	139	143	141	114	131	124
Heifers	180	188	184	160	178	170
Beef Cows	145	183	160	120	144	135
Dairy Cows	103	116	108	60	102	80
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	200	228	214	160	199	180
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	200	213	206	160	199	182
Bullocks over 500kg	180	195	190	160	179	170
Heifers up to 450kg	195	223	205	165	194	180
Heifers over 450kg	180	191	185	155	179	168
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	320	410	350	200	315	260
Continental Heifers	285	360	310	180	280	230
Friesian Bulls	140	250	170	60	135	100
Holstein Bulls	60	135	100	10	55	35

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 28/10/19	Next Week 04/11/19
Lambs up to 21kg	345p	345-350p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 12/10/19	W/E 19/10/19	W/E 26/10/19
NI L/W Lambs	313.0	316.6	315.4
NI D/W Lambs	343.1	339.6	340.1
GB D/W Lambs	371.3	374.3	373.5
ROI D/W	374.4	363.1	364.6

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 25/10/19		Lambs			
To: 31/10/19		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	385	282	333	-
Saturday	Swatragh	580	290	344	-
	Omagh	1235	341	407	-
Monday	Massereene	926	305	330	-
	Kilrea	420	307	366	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	525	300	376	-
	Rathfriland	728	309	388	320
Wednesday	Ballymena	1802	290	342	308
	Enniskillen	422	300	347	-
	Armoy	264	298	330	-
	Markethill	820	300	330	-

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM

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NI BEEF POISED FOR EXPORT TO CHINA

ACCORDING to Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) Chief Executive, Ian Stevenson, beef from Northern Ireland could be on its way to China before the end of this financial year.

He said: "The end game has been reached in terms of the UK and China agreeing all the required technical details, which will allow direct access to the Chinese market for beef exports from Northern Ireland.

"Tremendous progress has been made over recent months in bringing the various strands of the new agreement together.

"This is testimony to the very professional approach taken by UK officials on these very technical matters. If it proves impossible to get all the required details settled before the end of 2019, it's almost certain that matters will be fully resolved before the end of the current financial year."

Ian believes that Brexit will not impact on the new import arrangements put in place by China, regarding beef from Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

"These are negotiations that have been taking place between the two individual countries stretching back over seven years," he confirmed.

The LMC representative explained that demand for beef in China looks set to grow significantly during the period ahead.

He added: "The impact of African Swine Fever has served to reduce pork output in China by an estimated 24 million tonnes in 2019.

"However, demand for animal protein in the country remains high and this is reflected across all species, so the potential to grow sales of beef is obvious. The same principle holds for all those countries in South East Asia that have also been badly impacted by

African Swine Fever."

Ian went on to point out that beef exports to China will allow local exporters to make better use of the entire carcass.

"This is good news for meat exporters and their supplying farmers," he commented.

LMC and Invest NI recently worked together on a seminar in Belfast, which allowed a wide range of local meat exporters to gauge the potential of the Chinese market moving forward. The event provided analyst Yi Chen, from the market research organisation GIRA, with the opportunity to discuss the buying habits and practices of Chinese consumers.

Ian continued: "Most UK pork exporters are already well established in the Chinese markets. So their beef counterparts will hopefully soon be following in their footsteps.

"We already know that, where beef is concerned, the strongest demand in China will be for cuts that suit Chinese styles of cooking such as hot pots. LMC attended a recent Global Britain Export conference hosted by AHDB in London. At that event, the US Meat Export Federation told delegates that the key to successfully launching in the Chinese market is to get a good quality local

distributor, to get your business known by attending trade shows in China and to understand how your products will incorporate into local cuisines.

"It is important to build on the opportunities that China can offer on behalf of beef farmers throughout Northern Ireland."

Image 1: Beef produced in Northern Ireland could arrive in China before the end of the financial year



ON-FARM HEALTH AND SAFETY REMAINS A PRIORITY FOR LMC

LMC Chief Executive, Ian Stevenson, has confirmed that the organisation remains totally committed to improving health and safety standards on local farms. His comments follow a meeting of all the affiliate organisations making up the Farm Safety Partnership (FSP).



He said: "Everyone involved with FSP is totally committed to doing whatever is necessary in order to reduce the number of accidents happening on local farms. One farm death is one too many and the same can be said for serious injury. Accidents that lead to the incapacity of a farmer to work for more than 60 days will have a very debilitating effect on that business."

Ian continued: "We continue to see quite a number of serious farm incidents in Northern Ireland on an annual basis. Almost every one of these accidents could have been avoided. Farmers must invest in the proper health and safety measures that are appropriate for their businesses. They must also commit to developing a health and safety mindset.

"Education campaigns undertaken under the auspices of FSP have sought to heighten awareness of farm safety while also seeking to drive behavioural change. This work must continue. In our own case we have ramped-up the importance of the safety criteria built into the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme.

"Farmers are under tremendous pressure from all directions at the present time and it will take a holistic approach when it comes to providing the range of supports they need."

LMC was a sponsor of the recent Doug Avery Resilient Farmer tour, which allowed the New Zealand farmer to discuss how he overcame his battle with stress and depression with members of farm families from across Northern Ireland and how he has developed a successful and resilient farm business.

Ian Stevenson has recently been appointed to the board of Rural Support. The charity provides support through a helpline which offers a listening and signposting service for farmers and farm families. Callers to the helpline are of all ages and backgrounds and come from every part of Northern Ireland.

Ian commented: "The types of issues addressed by Rural Support include financial and debt problems, inheritance issues as well as physical and mental health concerns. Many of these problems arise in the wake of a farm accident. LMC will be working closely with Rural Support to develop our common goals in relation to health and wellbeing of farmers and their families."

LMC APPOINTS EDUCATION AND CONSUMER PROMOTIONS MANAGER

LAUREN Hyde, from Portadown in County Armagh, is LMC's new Education and Consumer Promotion Manager. She succeeds Cherrie Kenny, who retired at the end of September. Lauren is a Master's graduate in Food Industry Management from Harper Adams University College. Prior to this she completed a degree in Food, Nutrition and Wellbeing.

Lauren is no stranger to LMC, having completed an undergraduate placement year with the Commission back in 2016. In her new role she will be responsible for all schools-related work undertaken by LMC. She will also manage advertising and marketing activities. This work will include the co-ordination and development of initiatives such as Love Lamb Week, NI Beef Week, Open Farm Weekend, teachers' 'Red Meat Skills' workshops and Balmoral Show.

"I'm delighted to be back at LMC once again and I'm excited to be working on the wide range of initiatives LMC is involved in over the coming weeks and months," Lauren said.

"LMC recently celebrated 20 years of beef and lamb school cookery demonstrations and last year saw a record-breaking 350 demonstrations carried out in post-primary schools across Northern Ireland. Demonstrations for the current academic year are already underway and as ever, the demand from schools was extremely high. We're hoping that this academic year will see as many, if not more pupils and consumers of the future being educated on the importance of Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured (NIFQA) beef and lamb.

"The third year of our beef and lamb advertising

campaign began at the start of October focusing on TV, radio, outdoor, digital, online and social media. Feedback from last year's campaign was positive with consumer awareness of NIFQA beef products rising by five percentage points and lamb by four. I'm looking forward to seeing the current campaign unfold and I'm confident that we can build upon the success of our previous campaigns.

"As an organisation committed to educating consumers on the importance of NIFQA beef and lamb as part of a healthy balanced diet, we have just created ten new recipes. We're always striving to create new recipes that inspire consumers of all ages to enjoy our high quality, tasty and versatile NIFQA beef and lamb. I am also looking forward to getting involved in annual initiatives such as NI Beef Week, Love Lamb Week and Balmoral Show which are fantastic opportunities to showcase all the positive stories our industry has to offer."

Image 2: LMC's Education and Consumer Promotions Manager, Lauren Hyde



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