

CATTLE TRADE

AVERAGE DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES (P/KG)								
Week Ending 29/03/25	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	658.6	626.6	701.2	690.6	688.0	692.7	693.7
	R3	654.3	621.5	703.4	687.9	683.9	684.2	688.3
	R4	653.0	624.8	698.3	691.0	682.4	688.6	692.0
	O3	642.4	618.6	683.6	669.7	660.6	661.8	665.5
	AVG	646.0	-	696.8	682.6	673.0	674.9	681.3
Heifers	U3	659.3	630.4	710.6	692.9	697.0	695.5	699.0
	R3	654.1	623.1	704.3	687.6	682.7	681.7	686.4
	R4	653.6	627.6	701.1	689.4	679.4	686.0	691.2
	O3	643.3	622.5	671.0	663.3	654.5	659.7	659.1
	AVG	646.8	-	698.1	678.4	668.8	666.8	677.5
Young Bulls	U3	653.5	620.3	694.9	683.0	673.2	701.8	685.9
	R3	639.1	614.4	694.1	669.5	676.9	676.3	678.9
	O3	631.1	599.4	660.6	643.1	654.4	635.0	651.9
	AVG	632.6	-	673.8	656.3	655.5	662.4	659.5
Prime Cattle Price Reported		6,107	-	5,217	6,687	7,548	4,578	24,030
	O3	540.3	554.0	536.7	532.2	532.2	531.5	532.7
	O4	541.3	556.3	544.4	536.9	522.9	532.7	531.3
	P2	493.3	528.6	489.6	487.6	485.6	492.0	488.0
	P3	512.0	543.1	510.9	505.8	501.9	512.6	506.7
Cows	AVG	492.0	-	534.1	510.7	493.9	494.1	502.5

Source: LMC, DAFM, AHDB.
Prices listed are for deadweight price reported animals only.
Prices are p/kg. Sterling to ROI prices are converted at 1 euro = 83.51p Stg.
AVG is the average price of all grades in the category (not just those listed).

CATTLE EXPORTS FOR DIRECT SLAUGHTER			
	2024	YTD 30/03/24	YTD 29/03/25
Exports to ROI Prime	158	40	18
Exports to ROI Cows	713	140	342
Exports to GB Prime	39	0	673
Exports to GB Cows	1	0	82

CATTLE IMPORTS FOR DIRECT SLAUGHTER			
	2024	YTD 30/03/24	YTD 29/03/25
Imports from ROI Prime	17,033	2,264	2,961
Imports from ROI Cows	9,082	1,699	2,077

CATTLE SLAUGHTERINGS			
	2024	YTD 30/03/24	YTD 29/03/25
Prime Cattle	385,013	93,839	95,080
Cows	118,734	29,238	29,842

CATTLE AVERAGE CARCASE WEIGHTS (KG)			
	2024	YTD 30/03/24	YTD 29/03/25
Prime Cattle	339.5	339.9	337.8
Cows	295.9	298.5	299.4

2024 and 2025 year to date figures are based on the same number of weeks in each year.
Source: DAERA.

SHEEP TRADE

NI DEADWEIGHT SHEEP BASE QUOTES			
(P/KG)	02/04/25	04/04/2025	
R3 Hoggets (to 23kg)	700 - 710	705 - 710	

Quotes from 3 major NI sheep plants.

HOGGET OUTPUT NI SHEEP SECTOR (HEAD)				
	2022	2023	2024	2025 (29/03/25)
ROI DS Exports	287,303	290,688	256,612	71,662
NI Slaughterings	448,166	476,091	431,461	83,031

Exports to approved ROI meat plants. Source: DAERA.

GB/ROI AVERAGE SHEEP PRICES				
(P/KG)	22/03/2025	Change	29/03/2025	Change
GB D/W Hoggets	730.5	↓ -8.2	727.7	↓ -2.8
ROI D/W Hoggets	711.2	↓ -9.9	730.8	↑ +19.6

Source: AHDB & DAFM.

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM
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NI AVERAGE NON-PREMIUM CATTLE PRICES (P/KG)							
Week Ending 29/03/25	Steers	Change	Heifers	Change	Young Bulls	Change	
U-3	656.8	↑ +11.3	658.2	↑ +13.2	649.0	↑ +19.5	
R-3	650.7	↑ +13.7	650.7	↑ +13.3	640.2	↑ +14.2	
O+3	644.0	↑ +13.9	645.1	↑ +14.9	632.7	↑ +11.4	
P+3	601.3	↑ +9.5	598.6	↑ +16.4	616.5	↑ +38.3	

Prices exclude animals paid at a premium p/kg as notified by price reporting plants. Blank cells indicate no animals within the grade were reported during the period or no price comparison can be made with the previous period.

NI AVERAGE COW PRICES (P/KG)								
Week Ending 29/03/25	<220kg	Change	220-250kg	Change	250-280kg	Change	>280kg	Change
P1	408.5	⬆️ +6.2	423.4	⬆️ +13.6	442.0	⬆️ +11.8	455.9	⬆️ +11.4
P2	443.7	⬆️ +13.1	468.2	⬆️ +5.1	492.5	⬆️ +22.8	503.7	⬆️ +13.4
P3	411.7	⬆️ -35.3	496.9	⬆️ +20.0	495.4	⬆️ +1.1	515.9	⬆️ +15.7
O3	521.0	⬆️ +47.4	520.3	⬆️ +40.3	556.2	⬆️ +47.2	540.3	⬆️ +18.5
O4	-		-		508.6	⬆️ -27.7	542.2	⬆️ +22.6
R3	-		-		-		568.7	⬆️ +13.9

Blank cells indicate no animals within grade were reported during the period or no price comparison can be made with previous period.

Last week in local plants prime cattle throughput totalled 7,484 head, bringing total prime cattle slaughterings during Q1 to 95,080 head. This is a 1 per cent increase from the 93,839 head processed during the corresponding period of 2024. Direct slaughter imports from ROI totalled 2,961 head during the period and accounted for 3 per cent of prime cattle slaughtered locally. Comparatively, during the same period of 2024 these cattle totalled 2,264 head and accounted for 2 per cent of NI prime cattle throughput.

Cow throughput locally during Q1 of 2025 totalled 29,842 head, a year on year increase of 604 head or 2 per cent. ROI cow imports for direct slaughter increased from 1,699 head during Q1 2024 to 2,077 during Q1 2025, to account for 7 per cent of the local cow kill.

Last week in NI 656.8p/kg was paid on average for U-3 steers (excluding premiums) and 658.2p/kg for heifers. The deadweight cattle trade continued to steadily increase this week with improved base quotes of 646p/kg received by LMC for in-spec U-3 steers and heifers. Base quotes for O+3 cows moved to 525p/kg, and stronger quotes for all types of cattle have been received for early next week.

Hogget throughput in NI plants last week totalled 6,234 head, a 500 head increase from the previous week. During Q1 83,031 hoggets were slaughtered locally, a decline of 25,431 head or 23 per cent from the 108,462 hoggets slaughtered during the corresponding period of 2024.

Direct slaughter hogget exports to ROI also increased last week to total 7,135 head, the highest weekly level exported during 2025 to date. Hogget exports during 2025 are also back by a quarter from year earlier levels to 71,662 head. Last week the ROI average deadweight hogget price strengthened by the equivalent of 19.6p/kg to 730.8p/kg, while the GB trade softened 2.8p/kg to 727.7p/kg.

A strong demand for hoggets continued in local marts this week with similar numbers on offer. Base quotes ended the week at 700-710p/kg with quotes received for early next week indicating a further strengthening in the trade. Producers are encouraged to price around and consider various outlets when selling stock.

NI CATTLE MART LIVEWEIGHT PRICES (P/KG)							
Week Ending 29/03/25	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY			
	FROM	TO	AVG	FROM	TO	AVG	
Finished Cattle							
Steers	400	456	417	325	399	354	
Friesians	306	354	327	260	298	282	
Heifers	350	470	385	285	349	315	
Beef Cows	350	444	375	250	349	295	
Dairy Cows	235	325	255	140	234	185	
Store Cattle							
Steers up to 400kg	470	553	490	360	469	400	
Steers 400kg - 500kg	400	502	440	300	399	340	
Steers over 500kg	400	475	420	300	399	335	
Heifers up to 450kg	380	458	415	280	379	330	
Heifers over 450kg	350	437	390	250	349	300	
Dropped Calves (£/head)							
Continental Bulls	495	860	590	370	490	430	
Continental Heifers	475	760	525	370	470	410	
Friesian Bulls	240	320	270	120	235	165	
Holstein Bulls	95	160	110	-	-	-	

Average prices supplied by Ballymena Livestock Mart.

NI SHEEP MART LIVEWEIGHT PRICES (P/KG) HOGGETS				
31/03/2025 - 03/04/25	No	From	To	
Saturday	Omagh	254	623	741
	Swatragh	520	652	719
Monday	Kilrea	750	682	753
	Markethill	660	660	754
Tuesday	Saintfield	920	645	725
Wednesday	Rathfriland	300	628	710
	Ballymena	1454	620	740 (AVE 672)
	Enniskillen	402	625	689
	Armoyle	263	650	740

Average prices, where shown, are supplied by individual marts

FQAS MART DATES

Markethill – Tuesday 08 April

Ballymena – Friday 11 April

LMC Farm Liaison Officer Terry White will assist FQAS members with scheme queries and offer advice.

FQAS Helpline: 028 9263 3024

Protect your herd: safeguard your future

The Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) will shortly launch a targeted information campaign, highlighting the mitigation efforts that can be implemented to reduce the threat posed by animal diseases. Diseases increasingly threaten the health and performance levels achieved across Northern Ireland's livestock sectors.

The initiative comes at a time when the threat posed by the likes of Bluetongue, Schmallenberg, Foot & Mouth and, more recently, Avian Flu, is now very real and highly significant to cattle and sheep enterprises in many parts of the UK and Europe.

The only way to maintain the highest animal health standards here in Northern Ireland is for all livestock farmers to establish optimal levels of biosecurity.

And making this happen will be the focus of the upcoming LMC campaign.

It will feature prominently on both social and traditional media outlets over the coming weeks.

The initiative will deliver the information that livestock farmers need to maximise their herd and flock health standards

LMC's head of marketing and communication, Lauren Patterson commented "The threats posed by animal disease to our beef and lamb sectors are very real. At one level, the new campaign has been designed to deliver the advice and support farmers need in this context."

"But it has also been structured to encourage the active participation of farmers and other stakeholders in a conversation that will further profile the very real challenge that now exists in maintaining the highest levels of animal health here in Northern Ireland."

"This is an issue that impacts every farm business and has the potential to be devastating. We want to encourage all of our agri-food sector to consider the impact they may have on biosecurity and minimise the risk they or their actions may pose."

Primary school cookery demonstrations: fully booked out in one day

Recent years have seen LMC extending the scope of its Farm Quality Assured Beef and Lamb schools' cookery demonstrations. Children in primary schools now have the opportunity to learn about the value of red meat in a balanced, healthy diet.

And it's an initiative that has generated a tremendous dividend. This year's primary school's application period opened on March 18th with all available slots filled on the same day.

The 45-minute demonstrations, led by LMC's skilled cookery demonstrators, are available to Key Stage 2 classes across Northern Ireland.

LMC's Lauren Patterson takes up the story "We can't keep up with demand from primary school teachers. This, in itself, is a tremendous success. And one that LMC wants to build on. In practical terms this means expanding the resources that we need to deliver higher number of cookery demonstrations in the future." She added "Making this happen for the 2025/26 academic year will be our objective. The cookery demonstrations enjoyed by primary school pupils allows them to sample the beef and lamb dishes that are cooked for them. The children also have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Northern Ireland Beef



LMC Workshop at Banbridge High School

and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance scheme logo and the farm to fork story." Lauren Patterson again said, "The end result of this initiative has been the forging of a unique communication channel on the part of LMC with the consumers of tomorrow."

Over the last year, LMC has expanded its support for the primary education sector beyond the demonstrations with the launch of its primary school workbook which every child attending a demonstration receives.

In addition, a new poster series has been created, which includes information for children on farming and the environment, the farm to fork story, and the importance of a balanced diet.

Both resources are available to teachers free-of-charge and can be ordered online.

Significantly, teachers see the LMC as a totally trusted source of information when it comes to relating the actual facts regarding the role of red meat in the diet to children.

At their most fundamental level the cookery demonstrators deliver important messages to young people regarding the nutritional importance of farm quality assured beef and lamb, food safety, food hygiene, quality assurance, provenance, and cooking methods.

However, such is the relationship that exists between the schools' sector and the Commission that many teachers will now seek the advice of LMC when it comes to matters concerning the role of beef and lamb in the diet and how the subject of what actually constitutes a balanced diet can be best communicated in the classroom.

What's more all of this will come as extremely re-assuring news to beef and sheep farmers right across Northern Ireland.

Banbridge completes series of red meat skills' workshops for teachers

Banbridge High School recently hosted the last in the 2025 series of red meat skills' workshop for Home Economics and Food Science Teachers.

The Loughry campus of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) was the venue for the first two workshops in the series.

This annual initiative is hosted by LMC and provides the opportunity for sixty teachers, from across Northern Ireland to update their skills base where the preparation, handling and cooking of farm quality assured beef and lamb are concerned.

Specifically, the workshops showcase the versatility of Northern Ireland farm quality assured beef and lamb and encourage their use as a practical cookery lesson option and cover key topics in the CCEA Food and Nutrition syllabus such as Food Provenance and Sustainability. LMC's Lauren Patterson commented "We have received tremendously positive feedback from all of the participating teachers. And, again, we want to build on all of this for the future."

She added "This year's workshops had a key focus on the science of marinating beef and lamb. The events combined both the theory behind the science that underpins the inclusion of farm quality assured beef and lamb in a balanced diet while also adding to teachers' practical skills base'. All of the work undertaken fully complements the curriculum of the various food science and food nutrition courses delivered in schools across Northern Ireland from key stage 3 through to A Level."

The breadth of the work carried out by LMC with schools and directly with the teaching profession is helping to communicate the significance of the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme as a means of maintaining the highest standards within the beef and lamb sectors.

Quality assurance is also helping to deliver total transparency from farm to fork.

Farm Quality Assurance – ongoing review procedures are at the very heart of the scheme

LMC is confirming that ongoing review processes are at the very heart of the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBLFQAS). Moreover, farmers have a key voice in this process at all times.

Gillian Davis, LMC's Head of Quality Assurance, further explained "This reflects the make-up of the NIBL FQAS Industry Board."

The recent completion of the UK Farm Assurance Review (UKFAR) has highlighted the totally fit-for-purpose nature of NIBLFQAS.

Gillian Davis again "But change and improvement will always be required, where the operation of all schemes is concerned. NIBLFQAS will continue to provide seamless quality assured beef and lamb from Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK. However, NIBLFQAS Board Members will act to ensure that changes agreed to the scheme will be proportionate and reflect the nature of cattle and sheep farming practices followed here in Northern Ireland."

She added "Making NIBLFQAS more relevant for local farmers, reducing the burden associated with the actual inspection and certification processes, while also using new and emerging technologies, will be at the heart of the changes that members of the quality assurance board want to see enacted."

A case in point is the issue of compliance. Looking to the future, it should be feasible to look at risk-based inspections which reward farmers who have historically secured high levels of compliance across specific aspects of their farming operations on a consistent basis.

"Such an approach would allow for a simplification of the inspection process," Gillian Davis commented. "Changes to the NIBLFQAS certification procedures will always be made to ensure that the entire process is made more straightforward for beef and lamb producers. Making the scheme more evidence-based will also be a priority for the future. So, for example, inspectors will take the opportunity of spending more time making visual outcome-based assessments on farm rather than verifying documentation."

The UKFAR outlined nine strategic recommendations as well as 56 actional recommendations. All of this must be considered with our stakeholders, to identify which recommendations should be delivered in Northern Ireland, and which are realistic to deliver without further imposing cost on the industry.

But LMC is also aware that changes made to NIBLFQAS must complement the direction of travel followed by the other beef and lamb assurance schemes across the UK namely, Red Tractor, Quality Meat Scotland and Farm Assured Welsh Livestock.

The LMC representative concluded "A close working relationship already exists with the devolved nations, where the outworking of the four quality assurance schemes are concerned. And this will remain the case."



LMC Demonstrator Wenda Bristow with teacher and pupils from Derryhale Primary School



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