

DAERA RELEASE DECEMBER 2017

AGRICULTURAL SURVEY RESULTS

THE results of the December 2017 NI Agricultural Survey have just been released by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

The total cattle herd in NI in December 2017 totalled 1,622,800 head, almost unchanged from the previous December. There were however some changes to the age and structure of the total herd.

There were 258,400 suckler cows on NI farms in December 2017, a two per cent decrease from December 2016 levels when there were 263,500 suckler cows in NI. Meanwhile there were 45,400 beef heifers in calf with their first calf in December 2017. This was a one per cent reduction from December 2016 levels.

While the beef cow herd has come under slight pressure during 2017 the dairy cow herd has held steady. In December 2017 there were 312,500 dairy cows on NI farms, up marginally from 312,000 in December 2016. The number of dairy heifers on NI farms in December 2017 totalled 60,000 head,

almost unchanged from December 2016 levels when there were 59,700 dairy heifers on farm.

There were 99,700 other cattle aged over 2 years on NI farms in December 2017, a nine per cent increase from December 2016 levels when there were 91,500 head on NI farms. Of these cattle 47,100 were male cattle intended for slaughter, up seven per cent from December 2016 levels.

There were also 36,800 heifers on NI farms intended for slaughter, a 13 per cent increase from December 2016 when there were 32,500 heifers for slaughter on NI farms. A further 15,800 heifers intended for breeding but not yet in calf were on NI farms in December 2017, a four per cent increase from year earlier levels.

In December 2017 there were 357,200 cattle on NI farms aged between 1 and 2 years old. This was up marginally from December 2016 levels when there were 356,500 cattle in this age category however it was notably higher than the 337,000 cattle in this age group in December 2015. This

increase by 20,200 head accounts for a six per cent increase over the two year period.

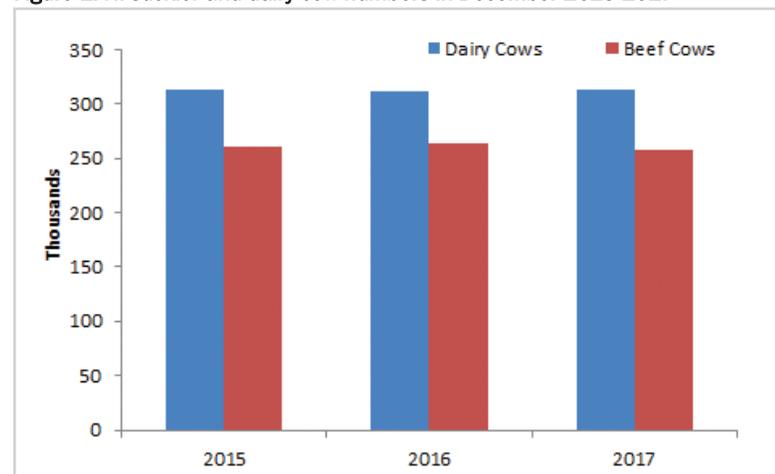
There were 280,800 cattle on NI farms aged between 6 months and 1 year in December 2017. While this was two per cent below the 285,600 animals in this age category in December 2016 it was well above December 2015 levels when there were 268,200 animals in this age category on NI farms.

The number of calves on NI farms aged under six months totalled 208,800 in December 2017. This was back marginally from the 209,900 recorded in December 2016 but well below December 2015 levels when there were 222,900 calves in this age category.

NI sheep flock

The NI sheep flock totalled 1,380,700 head in December 2017, a one per cent increase from December 2016 levels. This one per cent increase follows on from a 3.4 per cent increase in the sheep flock between December 2015 and December 2016.

Figure 1: NI suckler and dairy cow numbers in December 2015-2017



The NI breeding sheep flock totalled 927,700 head in December 2017, a two per cent increase from December 2016 levels. The number of ewes tuppied increased by three per cent to total 853,700 in December 2017. This increase in ewe numbers follows on from a one per cent increase between December 2015 and December 2016. There were 74,000 ewe lambs on NI farms in December 2017 that had been tuppied, a seven per cent

reduction from 80,000 head in December 2016.

There were 389,700 lambs under one year on NI farms in December 2017, back one per cent from year earlier levels but well above the 346,500 recorded on NI farms in December 2015. The majority of the lambs on NI farms in December 2017 will have been carried into 2018 to be killed as hoggets.

REMINDER TO PRESENT CLEAN LIVESTOCK FOR SLAUGHTER

BEEF and sheep producers in NI are being reminded of the importance of presenting clean livestock for slaughter in local abattoirs. While avoiding dirty livestock can be difficult due to winter weather conditions producers are encouraged to ensure animals are dry and as clean as possible.

The Clean Livestock Policy, set out by the Food Standards Agency, states that abattoirs are strictly not allowed to slaughter dirty animals and it is therefore very important for both producers and the supply chain that animals are received as clean as possible. This policy is in place as a food safety measure to prevent the potential transfer of pathogens such as E-coli and salmonella present on dirty animals to carcasses.

Animals are assessed at arrival to the processing plants to determine whether they are clean enough to be slaughtered. The operator may need to retain dirty animals in the lairage to be cleaned up, which can result in delay and extra costs for both producers and abattoir operators.

Both cattle and sheep may be clipped prior to housing and sale. However clipping cattle is dangerous without proper handling facilities and producers should only attempt

to clip them if they have facilities which meet the required safety standards.

Most cattle are wintered on concrete slats in Northern Ireland. Over or understocking results in dirtier cattle so this should be avoided. Dirt on hides can also be reduced by avoiding feeding low dry matter feeds such as wet silage, potatoes or fodder beet, ensuring that the total protein content of the diet is not excessive and feeding hay or straw in the period immediately before slaughter.

It is also important to keep cattle dry when moving to the meat plant. Stock should only be transported by competent persons, using well maintained and clean vehicles.

Sheep cleanliness is particularly affected by diet, housing, sheep health, weather conditions and soil type during grazing. Adverse weather and poor ground conditions lead to animals becoming dirty and it may be necessary to house animals for a period before slaughter to clean and dry them.

Producers should liaise directly with the procurement staff of the individual plants before presenting cattle and/or sheep for slaughter.

NIMEA PROCESSING PLANTS WILL NOT KILL BVD PI CATTLE AFTER 01 MAY 2018

THE BVD Eradication Scheme Order (NI) came into effect on the 01 March 2016 at the request of the NI cattle industry, making the tagging and testing of all new born calves for BVD compulsory. Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) is a production disease that impacts mainly at farm level and is endemic in Northern Ireland. The aim of the scheme is to reduce and ultimately eradicate BVD in Northern Ireland.

The presence of a BVD Persistently Infected (PI) animal in a breeding herd will, in one year, increase the risk of BVD PI calves being born in the following year. The early removal of these highly infectious animals is therefore critical to the success of BVD eradication.

The Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland (AHWNI) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs have announced further measures to reduce the spread of Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD). From 12 February 2018, AHWNI BVD statuses from the BVD Eradication Scheme have

been visible on APHIS. This change enables herd owners to view the BVD status of their cattle using APHIS and will help them prevent any mistaken movement of animals which have a positive BVD status.

APHIS movement restrictions have also been introduced. Cattle born on or after 01 March 2016 can only be permitted through a market, permitted directly to another herd or exported (including via an Export Assembly Centre) if they have tested negative for BVD. Cattle born before 01 March 2016 which are positive (BVDP), inconclusive (BVDI), dam of a persistently infected (PI) calf (DAMPI) or offspring of a PI (OFFPI) cannot be permitted to a market, permitted directly to another herd or exported (including via an Export Assembly Centre).

Any animal taken to a market when movement is not allowed will not be sold and must be returned to the herd from which it moved. Farmers are reminded to check the BVD status of previously purchased animals through their access to the

AHWNI database or on their APHIS herd list.

In addition to these movement restrictions an agreement has been reached with the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association (NIMEA) to ban PI cattle from slaughter plants. The ban, which comes into effect at NIMEA abattoirs from the 01 May 2018, has full support from other industry organisations and is a significant step towards eradicating BVD in Northern Ireland. Retaining PI cattle presents a significant disease risk and it is delaying the progress of the BVD Eradication Programme in NI.

Producers with PI cattle currently on farm are encouraged to remove them as soon as possible as they pose a significant disease risk to both the producers own herd and to neighbouring herds. Animals can either be humanely destroyed and disposed of through the fallen stock scheme or if they are at least 12 months of age then they can be presented for slaughter in NIMEA plants before 01 May 2018.



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
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phone weekly

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CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 19/02/18	Next Week 26/02/18
Prime		
U-3	348 - 354p	348 - 354p
R-3	342 - 348p	342 - 348p
O+3	336 - 342p	336 - 342p
P+3	290 - 306p	290 - 306p
Including bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	260 - 280p	260 - 280p
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 17/02/18	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	359.4	362.2	344.9
R3	355.4	355.1	342.8
O+3	346.0	346.6	334.7

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 17/02/18	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	181.7	195.9	210.8	227.2
P2	206.2	221.6	247.4	255.6
P3	227.9	242.1	260.4	263.3
O3	230.0	250.0	274.4	285.3
O4	-	253.2	276.5	288.0
R3	-	-	-	305.6

Deadweight Cattle Trade

BASE quotes for U-3 grade cattle from the major NI plants have remained steady this week ranging from 348-354p/kg for steers and heifers. Quotes for early next week are expected to range from 348-354p/kg with the majority of plants quoting 350-352p/kg for both steers and heifers. The trade for good quality O+3 grade cows have remained steady over several weeks with the quotes ranging from 260-280p/kg.

The plants have reported steady supplies of cattle coming forward for slaughter with the prime cattle throughput last week totalling 6,996 head. This was an 87 head decrease on the previous week and a 387 head increase on the same week last year. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 2,147 head an increase of 100 head on the previous week.

Imports for direct slaughter from ROI included 33 prime cattle and 47 cows last week while a further 3 prime cattle and 124 cows were imported from GB. Exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 50 prime cattle and 149 cows while a further 13 prime cattle were exported to GB.

The average steer price in NI last week was 349.5p/kg, a slight weakening on the previous week of 0.5p/kg. The average R3 steer price was up marginally by 0.5p/kg to 358.4p/kg. The overall average heifer price was back 0.7p/kg to 350.9p/kg from the previous week. The average R3 heifer price was back by 1.4p/kg to 356.8p/kg from 358.2p/kg the previous week. There was a notable increase in the U3 young bull price to 345.7p/kg, up 6.6p/kg from the previous week. The cow trade firmed in NI last week with the average cow price up by 4.9p/kg to 267.3p/kg. Meanwhile the O3 cow price increased by 2.2p/kg to 284.2p/kg, up from 282.4p/kg during the previous week.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle also continued to come under pressure in Scotland and Northern England last week. The R3 steer price in Scotland was back 1.6p/kg to 371.2p/kg, while in Northern England it is back 5.3p/kg to 360.8p/kg. The overall average steer price in GB was back 0.6p/kg to 355.0p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week was up marginally by 0.2p/kg to 358.6p/kg. This puts the differential between NI and GB average R3 heifer price at 7.7p/kg while the R3 steer price differential was 5.5p/kg. The O3 cow price increased in GB by 2.9p/kg to 276.5p/kg. This puts the NI price for O3 grading cows 7.7p/kg higher than the equivalent price in GB.

The deadweight cattle trade in ROI last week held firm. The R3 steer price was up the equivalent of 2.1p/kg to 342.9p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price also recorded a 2.1p/kg increase to 354.1p/kg. The price differential between ROI and NI was 15.5p/kg for R3 grading steers and 2.7p/kg for R3 grading heifers. The euro increased slightly against sterling last week with €1= £0.89.

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

	W/E 17/02/2018	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	360.1	352.5	372.0	365.7	367.4	368.6	368.3
	R3	358.4	342.9	371.2	360.8	360.4	360.9	363.3
	R4	356.2	344.6	372.7	371.3	361.6	363.4	368.4
	O3	346.4	327.3	343.5	332.6	333.7	336.2	336.3
	AVG	349.5	-	367.8	354.9	348.1	347.5	355.0
Heifers	U3	362.6	366.2	378.2	371.7	376.0	371.3	375.1
	R3	356.8	354.1	370.0	364.7	364.7	361.3	365.5
	R4	356.5	354.8	372.4	366.9	364.3	362.5	366.9
	O3	352.0	339.1	343.1	335.2	336.3	348.0	340.7
	AVG	350.9	-	370.4	356.8	354.6	351.2	358.6
Young Bulls	U3	345.7	344.6	366.8	358.3	360.8	345.3	359.7
	R3	342.8	334.0	359.6	343.1	353.6	347.4	350.1
	O3	327.2	319.9	324.4	301.6	312.8	320.2	312.1
	AVG	328.9	-	337.9	322.2	327.0	311.2	325.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported		6420	-	6826	7394	7157	4459	25836
Cows	O3	284.2	287.7	274.9	273.0	279.7	273.4	276.5
	O4	287.4	288.9	277.7	274.4	283.2	271.3	278.3
	P2	245.0	259.3	217.2	230.2	232.6	233.8	230.7
	P3	261.6	279.0	241.6	249.3	248.6	254.1	249.1
	AVG	267.3	-	265.4	251.6	253.1	244.8	252.6

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=88.81p 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 17/02/18	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	208	221	215	185	207	195
Friesians	155	170	164	136	154	143
Heifers	208	223	213	180	204	192
Beef Cows	150	190	165	120	149	135
Dairy Cows	115	157	135	75	114	95
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	250	299	260	210	249	225
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	215	249	238	180	214	200
Bullocks over 500kg	210	245	220	180	208	190
Heifers up to 450kg	220	258	240	180	218	200
Heifers over 450kg	205	223	215	165	204	185
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	300	490	350	200	298	250
Continental Heifers	225	305	260	120	222	170
Friesian Bulls	160	240	185	85	158	120
Holstein Bulls	130	235	165	30	128	75

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 19/02/18	Next Week 26/02/18
Hoggets >22kg	440-455p	435-460p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 03/02/18	W/E 10/02/18	W/E 17/02/18
NI L/W Hoggets	370.3	382.3	399.5
NI D/W Hoggets	406.7	412.9	439.0
GB D/W Hoggets	426.7	442.6	461.4
ROI D/W	416.7	429.2	448.3

Deadweight Sheep Trade

THE deadweight hogget trade remained strong in NI this week with quotes from the NI plants of 440-455p/kg for R3 grading hoggets up to 22kg. Quotes for next week are expected to range from 435-460p/kg up to 22kg. The processors are reporting a small decline in the supply of hoggets coming forward for slaughter. Last week 5,780 hoggets were slaughtered across local plants, a marginal fall of 135 hoggets from the previous week. The number of hoggets exported from NI to ROI last week for direct slaughter totalled 8,060 head, with a further 1,693 ewes/rams also exported. The deadweight hogget price in NI last week increased strongly by 26.1p/kg to 439.0p/kg. The hogget price also reported an increase of 19.1p/kg in ROI to 448.3p/kg.

This week's marts

A strong trade was also reported across many of the marts this week with prices continuing to increase. In Omagh last Saturday 861 hoggets sold from 404-469p/kg compared to 754 hoggets selling from 385-426p/kg the previous Saturday. On Monday Massereene reported 1,267 hoggets selling from 410-454p/kg an increase of 741 hoggets from last week. In Rathfriland this week 493 hoggets sold from 397-454p/kg with an average price of 420p/kg, a 6p/kg increase on last week's average price of 414p/kg. On Wednesday in Ballymena 2,201 hoggets sold from 380-463p/kg with an average price of 404p/kg, up 4p/kg from last week. In Markethill this week 1,100 hoggets sold from 395-430p/kg compared to 950 hoggets selling from 400-450p/kg last week. Ewe numbers from the marts have remained steady this week with top prices ranging from £90-£140.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 16/02/18		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 22/02/18		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	248	379	429	-
Saturday	Omagh	861	404	469	-
	Swatragh	592	406	442	-
Monday	Massereene	1267	410	454	-
	Kilrea	400	400	440	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	422	405	468	-
	Rathfriland	493	397	454	420
Wednesday	Ballymena	2201	380	463	404
	Enniskillen	825	390	438	-
	Markethill	1100	395	430	-
	Armoey	342	400	422	-

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