

NI BEEF CALF REGISTRATIONS HIGHEST SINCE 2008

BEEF sired calf registrations in NI during 2015 totalled 338,378 head, an 8 per cent increase on the 312,818 registered in NI during 2014. This accounts for an increase of 25,560 registrations year on year and brings beef sired calf registrations in NI to their highest recorded levels since 2008.

The increase in beef sired registrations during 2015 can be attributed to an increase in both suckler and dairy cow numbers on NI farms, as recorded in the June 2015 Agricultural Survey. The number of dairy cows on NI farms in June 2015 reached record levels and totalled 311,500 head, a six per cent increase on the previous June. Meanwhile the number of suckler cows on NI farms increased by two per cent to 260,300 head in June 2015.

During ten of the twelve months in 2015 beef sired calf registrations were higher than the corresponding months in 2014. Beef sired calf births in Northern Ireland continue to follow a seasonal pattern with registrations peaking in the spring and early summer. During the period March to June 2015 a total of 168,992 beef sired calves were registered accounting for 50 per cent of total calf registrations in NI for 2015.

The increase in the number of beef sired calf registrations in NI has led to a notable increase in the number of young beef sired cattle on NI farms. During December 2015 there were 90,679 beef sired cattle on NI farms aged 0-6 months, a 9.7 per cent increase on the 82,662 beef sired cattle in this age category during December 2014. The number of beef sired cattle on NI farms aged 6-12 months during December 2015 was 226,456 head, a 7.9 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

The number of beef sired cattle aged 12-18 months totalled 102,868 head in December 2015, an increase of 10.8 per cent from December 2014 levels. Meanwhile the number of cattle in the 18-24 month age category was similar to December 2014 levels while the number of cattle in the 24-30 month age category were back by 3.9 per cent over the same period.

The number of prime cattle coming forward for slaughter in NI is expected to remain relatively steady during the first half of 2016 and increase thereafter when the increase in calf registrations over the last 18 months starts to impact on prime cattle supplies.

Beef sired breeds

The most popular beef sires used in NI continue to be Limousin and Charolais with 99,737 Limousin sired calves registered during 2015 and 86,226 Charolais calves registered. These accounted for 29.5 per cent and 25.5 per cent of total beef sired calf registrations respectively.

The third most popular beef sire used in NI continues to be Aberdeen Angus with 58,425 calves registered and this accounted for 17.3 per cent of total beef sired calf registrations during 2015. Meanwhile Simmental calf registrations totalled 25,968 head during 2015, Hereford registrations totalled 22,841 and Belgian Blue totalled 18,962. During 2015 these six breeds accounted for 92.3 per cent of the total beef sired calf registrations in NI.

Dairy origin beef calves

The dairy herd continues to act as a valuable source of calves for beef production on NI farms. During 2015 29 per cent of all beef sired calves registered in NI had dairy dams, a slight increase from 2014 levels when 27 per cent of beef sired calves were sourced from the dairy herd.

A total of 96,858 beef sired calves were registered to dairy cows in 2015,

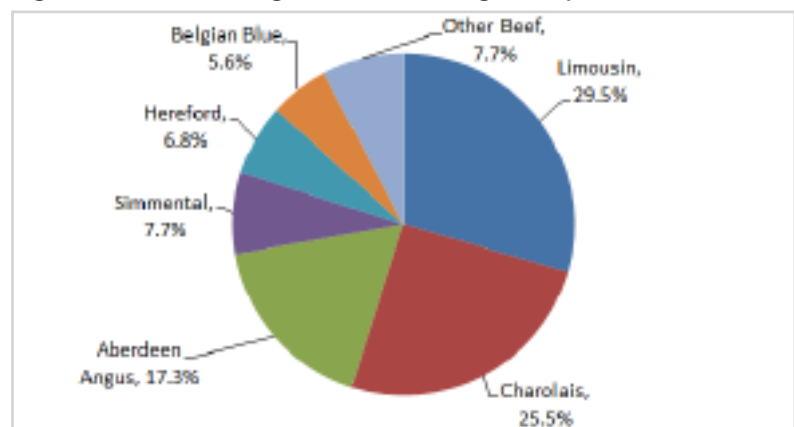
this represents a 14 per cent increase from the 84,966 beef sired calves registered to dairy cows during 2014. Aberdeen Angus, Limousin and Hereford continued to be the most popular beef sires used on dairy cows in NI.

Dairy sired male calves also provide the NI beef industry with animals to finish as beef. The number of dairy sired male calf registrations in NI during 2015 was similar to the previous year with a total of 89,447 head registered. Exports of calves out of NI for further production are predominantly dairy sired male calves exported to mainland Europe and

during 2015 calf exports from NI totalled 19,916 head. This was a reduction from the 24,729 calves exported during 2014.

With lower exports the number of young dairy sired male cattle on NI farms has subsequently increased during 2015 when compared to 2014 levels. In December 2015 there were 25,577 dairy sired male calves on NI farms, a 5.5 per cent increase on December 2014 levels. Meanwhile the number of dairy sired male cattle aged 6-12 months increased by 34.2 per cent to 23,959 head in December 2015 when compared to year earlier levels.

Figure 1: Beef sired calf registrations in NI during 2015 by breed



NI BEEF INDUSTRY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DECEMBER 2015

DURING December 2015 the average steer price in NI was 307.2p/kg. This was 39.8p/kg lower than the corresponding month in 2014 when the average price was 347p/kg and represents an 11.5 per cent decline year on year. The R3 steer price in NI recorded a similar decline with an R3 steer price during December 2015 of 316.5p/kg. This was 42.4p/kg lower than December 2014 when the R3 steer price was 362.5p/kg.

Deadweight prices have also come under pressure in GB although not to the same extent as recorded in NI. During December 2015 the R3 steer price in GB was 345.4p/kg compared to 362.5p/kg in December 2014. This decline by 17.1p/kg represents a 4.7 per cent decline year on year. The differential in prices between NI and GB widened from 3.6p/kg in December 2014 to 28.9p/kg in December 2015. It is however worth noting that this differential has narrowed in recent weeks.

In ROI during December the average R3 steer price was the equivalent of 275.7p/kg compared to 302.1p/kg in December 2014. This accounts for an 8.7 per cent decline year on year. However in euro terms the R3 steer price in ROI has remained fairly steady year on year. In December 2015 the R3 steer price in ROI was 379.7c/kg, a one per cent decline from the 383.2c/kg paid in December 2014.

Throughput of prime cattle in NI during December 2015 totalled 25,697 head, a 7.8 per cent increase from the 23,838 head killed during December 2014. Cow slaughterings during December 2015 totalled 7,413 head compared to 7,039 head in December 2014. It is worth noting however that during December 2014 slaughter figures included the reduced slaughterings associated with Christmas week but December 2015 figures do not.

The average carcass weight of prime cattle during December 2015 was 344kg, an increase of 10kg from December 2014 when the average carcass weight was 334kg. Average cow carcass weights increased from 297.3kg in December 2014 to 303.2kg in December 2014.

Imports of cattle for direct slaughter in NI plants during December 2015 totalled 1,819 head, a notable decline from the 2,429 prime cattle imported during December 2014. Meanwhile exports for direct slaughter increased from 1,403 head in December 2014 to 1,798 head in December 2015. This increase by 395 head was primarily driven by an increase in exports of prime cattle from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

Sterling has continued to trade strongly against euro with €1= 72.6p during December 2015 compared to €1=78.8p in December 2014.

NI Beef Industry Key Performance Indicators (December Snapshot)			
	Dec-14	Dec-15	% Change
Finished Cattle Prices (p/kg)			
Average Prime Cattle Price	347.0	307.2	-11.5%
Average Cow Price	210.1	202.0	-3.9%
Average R3 Steer Price (NI)	358.9	316.5	-11.8%
Average R3 Steer Price (ROI)	302.1	275.7	-8.7%
Average R3 Steer Price (GB)	362.5	345.4	-4.7%
Slaughterings			
Total Clean Slaughterings (Head)	23,838	25,697	7.8%
Total Cow Slaughterings (Head)	7,039	7,413	5.3%
Average Clean Carcass Weight (kg)	334.0	344.0	3.0%
Average Cow Carcass Weight (kg)	297.3	302.2	1.6%
Trade (Head)			
Live Imports for Direct Slaughter	2,429	1,819	-25.1%
Live Exports for Direct Slaughter	1,403	1,798	28.2%
Availability (Head)			
No. Cattle on the Ground*	374,068	382,857	2.3%
Beef Sired	329,539	339,478	3.0%
Dairy Sired (Male Only)	44,529	43,379	-2.6%
Calf Births Registrations (Head)			
Calf Births	22,593	23,852	5.6%
Beef Sired	14,363	15,865	10.5%
Dairy Sired (Male Only)	8,230	7,987	-3.0%
Euro / Stg Exchange Rate (€ / £)	78.8	72.6	-7.9%
* Aged between 12-30 mths (Beef + Dairy Male Only)			
All NI Figures Unless Otherwise Stated			



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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 04/01/16	Next Week 11/01/16
Prime		
U-3	304 - 310p	308 - 312p
R-3	298 - 304p	302 - 306p
O+3	292 - 298p	296 - 300p
P+3	218 - 260p	222 - 260p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	230 - 240p	224 - 235p
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

BASE quotes this week for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 304-310p/kg with the majority of plants quoting in the region of 310p/kg. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows this week firmed at 230-240p/kg across the plants. Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 4,112 head compared to 5,198 head killed in the corresponding week in 2014. Meanwhile a total of 897 cows were killed in NI last week similar to the 864 cows killed in the corresponding week in 2014.

Prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 79 head and accounted for just 2 per cent of the total prime cattle kill. In the corresponding week in 2014 263 prime cattle were imported from ROI for direct slaughter in NI and accounted for 5 per cent of the total prime cattle kill. Meanwhile exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 17 prime cattle and 94 cows compared to 42 prime cattle and 66 cows in the corresponding week in 2014. Due to the holiday period over the New Year there were no imports or exports between NI and GB for direct slaughter last week.

The average steer price in NI last week increased by 1.3p/kg from the previous week to 306.7p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 2.3p/kg to 318.2p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week also recorded an increase, up by 1.3p/kg to 311.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 1.8p/kg to 316.9p/kg. The average cow price in NI last week recorded a notable increase of 12p/kg to 201p/kg while the O3 cow price increased by 1.7p/kg to 224p/kg.

The average steer price in GB last week was back by 1.2p/kg to 335.5p/kg while the average R3 steer price was back marginally to 341.7p/kg. The differential in R3 steer prices last week between NI and the GB was 23.5p/kg which is the equivalent of £79 on a 330kg carcass. The differential between NI and GB has been gradually declining since late November when the differential was in the region of 30p/kg for R3 grade steers. Northern England saw the largest decline in deadweight steer prices last week with the R3 steer price back by 5.8p/kg to 340.2p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week decreased by 3.3p/kg to 336.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price remained steady at 341.7p/kg. The puts the differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and the GB average at 24.8p/kg which is the equivalent of £82 on a 330kg carcass.

Reports from ROI last week have indicated steady deadweight prices for prime cattle in euro terms and a firming of prices in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI was the equivalent of 282.3p/kg, up by 0.8p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 295.6p/kg, up by 1.7p/kg from the previous week. Cow prices in ROI last week reported increases with the O3 cow price up to 222.5p/kg. This was an increase of 5.8p/kg from the previous week and puts the O3 cow price in ROI 1.5p/kg lower than the equivalent price in NI.

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

W/E 02/01/2016	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	316.1	290.0	361.4	347.4	343.7	349.3
	R3	318.2	282.3	353.6	340.2	337.2	341.7
	R4	314.3	283.7	354.5	354.5	335.7	347.6
	O3	303.7	272.8	337.7	314.4	305.3	316.6
AVG	306.7	-	352.6	342.9	320.0	320.4	335.5
Heifers	U3	319.8	305.2	363.9	349.3	351.9	353.7
	R3	316.9	295.6	352.0	339.7	338.0	341.7
	R4	313.7	295.7	354.1	344.0	334.2	342.7
	O3	307.9	284.9	333.3	306.3	296.4	311.7
AVG	311.1	-	353.4	336.6	324.0	322.4	336.1
Young Bulls	U3	306.9	277.4	349.4	324.5	334.8	333.0
	R3	303.6	272.9	347.2	316.0	323.3	324.4
	O3	288.0	262.2	302.7	284.0	284.4	297.9
	AVG	290.0	-	324.7	295.3	309.8	306.7
Prime Cattle Price Reported	3643	-	4501	4466	3334	2818	15119
Cows	O3	224.0	222.5	215.9	219.7	229.2	222.0
	O4	225.1	224.4	225.8	223.7	229.6	225.0
	P2	179.5	204.9	154.3	170.6	181.7	171.1
	P3	203.9	216.8	175.2	196.0	195.9	188.6
AVG	201.0	-	210.2	204.6	206.0	190.3	203.4

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=73.68p 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 02/01/16	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	314.8	319.2	306.5
R3	313.6	315.3	304.1
O+3	304.4	303.0	295.3

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

w/e 02/01/16	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220- 250kg	Wgt 250- 280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	124.1	134.1	144.8	167.4
P2	135.7	147.9	173.3	193.7
P3	-	178.8	202.4	207.0
O3	-	165.0	218.8	225.0
O4	-	-	206.9	226.6
R3	-	-	-	240.9

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 04/01/16	Next Week 11/01/16
Hoggets	335-340p > 22kg	340-345p > 22kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 19/12/15	W/E 26/12/15	W/E 02/01/16
NI Lambs L/W	297.9	307.8	308.2
NI Lambs D/W	328.4	329.6	332.6
GB Lambs D/W	362.1	367.6	374.5
ROI D/W	340.6	342.8	356.0

Deadweight Sheep Trade

THE deadweight sheep trade has remained firm this week with quotes ranging from 335-340p/kg up to 22kg. The major NI processors have reported a tightening in supplies of hoggets coming forward for slaughter with the shorter working week and throughput last week totalled 3,249 head. This was a difference of 2,192 head from the corresponding week in 2014 when 5,441 hoggets were killed in NI plants. Last week a total of 6,048 sheep were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter. The deadweight hogget price in NI last week increased by 3p/kg to 332.6p/kg while in ROI it increased by an equivalent of 13.2p/kg to 356p/kg.

This week's marts

A firm trade was reported across the marts this week with good numbers of hoggets passing through many of the sale rings. In Omagh last Saturday 768 hoggets sold from 307-337p/kg. In Swatragh last Saturday 505 hoggets sold from 303-328p/kg to an average of 315p/kg. In Massereene on Monday an entry of 802 hoggets sold from 305-338p/kg while in Rathfriland on Tuesday 732 hoggets sold from 285-353p/kg at an average of 320p/kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday a good entry of 1,623 hoggets sold from 290-337p/kg at an average of 311p/kg. The ewe trade has remained steady for good quality ewes with a top reported price of £94 in Massereene on Monday.

LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 19/12/15	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	191	212	203	150	185	166
Friesians	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heifers	182	206	192	150	178	165
Beef Cows	127	194	150	100	126	113
Dairy Cows	91	108	98	60	90	75
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	179	188	183	169	174	171
Bullocks over 500kg	172	184	177	159	169	166
Heifers up to 450kg	181	195	190	152	176	165
Heifers over 450kg	170	188	177	141	167	158
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	280	390	325	180	278	230
Continental Heifers	240	320	290	140	238	190
Friesian Bulls	110	160	135	40	108	70
Holstein Bulls	75	145	90	1	72	35

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 02/01/16		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 07/01/16		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	768	307	337	-
	Swatragh	505	303	328	315
Monday	Kilrea	490	298	328	-
	Massereene	802	305	338	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	771	295	332	-
	Rathfriland	732	285	353	320
Wednesday	Ballymena	1623	290	337	311
	Enniskillen	628	304	336	324
	Markethill	830	290	333	308
	Armoyle	612	300	325	312

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