

GBD DEBATE GATHERS FURTHER MOMENTUM

The recent profiling of a letter submitted to the Lancet journal by six leading academics - three of them Irish – following the publication of the 2019 Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study has ‘encouraged’ one of the GBD co-authors into an almost immediate reply.

The aforementioned letter queried the veracity of the conclusions contained within the 2019 GBD report. Its signatories included: Professor Patrick Wall, from University College Dublin; Professor Chris Elliot, from Queen’s University Belfast; Professor Alice Stanton; the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and Professor Frédéric Leroy, from Vrije University in Belgium.

All have been extremely vocal over recent months, venting their concerns about 896,000 deaths directly attributed to diets high in red meat consumption in the GBD study.

This represents a 3,500% increase in comparable deaths relative to the 25,000 mortality figure contained within the 2017 version of the same publication. Courtesy of his Lancet response, Christopher Murray writing on behalf of the GBD Risk Factors Collaborators admits that many of the analytical approaches used in the 2019 study are fundamentally different from those applied up to that point.

He also references the fact that a GBD study for 2020 is now in the process of development. Significantly, this will contain a five-star rating system, which will aid in the interpretation of the evidence contained within it. The idea is to define the risk function closest to the base level that is compatible with the available data.

Murray also confirms that the 2019 study did not contain separate estimates of risks for ischaemic stroke and haemorrhagic stroke. He added: “For GBD 2020, we have undertaken separate analyses for ischaemic stroke and for haemorrhagic stroke. “Based on the meta-regression of available studies, there is a clear protective relationship between red meat intake and haemorrhagic stroke, which will be reflected in the GBD 2020 findings.”

“This protective relationship was not identified in the GBD 2019 analysis because of the pooled approach to analysing ischaemic and haemorrhagic stroke data.”

Another fundamental theme contained within Murray’s letter to the Lancet is his referencing of the contribution made by red meat as a valuable source of protein in the diet.

He explained: “For a governing body developing dietary recommendations, these are important considerations. The role of GBD, however, is not to balance the totality of considerations but rather to follow the science on what level of exposure is associated with the lowest level of risk.

“Our diet analysis explicitly addresses the effect of red meat consumption in people over the age of 25 years. We estimate zero deaths attributable to red meat below that age. The results over age 25 years have no bearing on dietary recommendations for children.”

The themes contained within Murray’s letter were discussed at a recent meeting of the Global Meat Alliance (GMA). Northern Ireland was represented at the get-together by Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) Chief Executive Ian Stevenson and Director of Global Agriculture and Sustainability at Devenish, Professor John Gilliland.

“I welcome the very speedy response delivered by Christopher Murray to the points raised in the initial letter submitted to the Lancet by the six independent academics,” explained the LMC representative. “The red meat sector has fundamental and valid concerns regarding the main recommendations of the GBD 2019 study.

Ian Stevenson continued: “GBD is used by governments around the world to establish national nutritional guidelines. It is, therefore, vital that any conclusions contained within these studies are based on evidence that can be clearly verified by independent experts.

“This was not the case in the 2019 study. It will be interesting to see how the new five-star rating system will be employed in profiling the risk assessments included within the 2020 publication.”

The LMC chief executive also holds strongly to the view that the vital contribution that red meat can make to a balanced diet for people of all ages must never be over looked.

He concluded: “This basic nutritional fact has been proven time after time. And it is so important that future GBD studies take full account of this reality.

“I also believe that the current GBD-related debate taking place within the pages of the Lancet journal is helping to inform health and dietary professionals and regulators on the significant role that red meat does play within the diet of so many people worldwide.”

RURAL SUPPORT CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY IN STYLE

Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) Chief Executive Ian Stevenson attended the recent 20th anniversary celebrations for Rural Support, in his capacity as a trustee of the charity.

He commented: “How quickly the last two decades have passed. It’s hard to believe now that Rural Support was born out of the necessity created by the Foot and Mouth crisis of 2002. “Since then, the organisation has helped so many farming families in their time of need. The work of Rural Support has been identified as being of critical importance in helping people get through times of crisis in their lives. “The need for the charity to be supported into the future is obvious.”

Rural Support’s 20th anniversary celebrations were held recently at CAFRE’s Loughry campus. HRH Prince Charles was the guest of honour at the event. Rural Support provides a range of services for farmers and farming families. All are accessible courtesy of the organisation’s support line, online farm support hub and regular events.

Back in 2019 the organisation received the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service. The organisation has a very clear ethos: it wants to see a vibrant, healthy and resilient farming community thriving right across Northern Ireland.

The link between Rural Support and Prince Charles goes back several years with the charity now into its fifth year of running programmes to support Farm Resilience through the Prince’s Countryside Fund (PCF).

This aims to help farm businesses secure a viable and resilient future by offering workshops on subjects including practical cost management, managing your farmed environment, succession planning and planning for the future.

Image 1: HRH The Prince of Wales meeting Rural Support Trustees Ian Stevenson and Dr Rebecca Orr; Manager of the Northern Trust’s Farm Families Health Checks Programme, Christina Faulkner and ABP Food Group’s Liam McCarthy)



Ian Stevenson made particular reference to the ‘Life Beyond Programme’, which is now offered by Rural Support. Launched in 2021 and championed by UFU President Victor Chestnutt, this valuable initiative provides a unique combination of support measures, for farm families coping with bereavement or the impact of a serious injury to a family member. The service offers farm business, financial and technical mentoring support, alongside emotional health, and bereavement counselling, including trauma support, when needed.

Life Beyond will also work with farmers and their families where there is a terminal diagnosis within the family, in order to help them plan and to give them space to spend with their loved ones. This support will operate alongside peer-to-peer group activities tailored to meet the specific needs of widows/widowers, parents, siblings, family members.

Specific support services for farm accident survivors and their families is also available. In addition, there is also access to digital resources online through the Northern Ireland Farm Support Hub. All support is free of charge and will be provided over a 12-month period and beyond if needed. The services provided have the specific aim of helping families to navigate their experiences and move forward in their new normal.

Ian Stevenson commented: “The scope of the work undertaken by Rural Support is phenomenal. A case in point is the close association between Rural Support and the Farm Families Health Checks Programme. “This work has the clear aim of raising awareness of various health conditions, which could be prevented in the farming and rural communities.”

He continued: “Farmers struggling with poor physical and mental health represent some of the biggest, yet unspoken challenges in the farming industry. “Many farmers feel reluctant to visit their GP. They feel they do not have the time or that the farm will not be able to function without them.

“Since farming can be a very lonely and isolating occupation, farmers can struggle on regardless and signs and symptoms of poor health can go unnoticed by friends and family. Unfortunately, the stress levels within agriculture continue to grow.”

Ian concluded: “It is testimony to the work undertaken by Rural Support that the organisation is so widely commended within the farming and rural sectors. “The need for the charity has never been greater. One of the organisation’s greatest strengths is its clear commitment to provide tailored support to farmers and their family members when required.

“LMC has actively supported Rural Support in the past and will continue to do so in the future. “I encourage farmers to contact Rural Support at any time. Staff there are always available to provide the independent help and guidance that is needed, no matter how big the problem may be. Tackling a situation early is much better than dealing with a crisis at a later date.”

To access the Rural Support hub resources for support and guidance visit:

www.ruralsupport.org.uk

Chat to Rural Support dedicated team call the free confidential support service for farmers and their families:

0800 138 1678

9am-9pm Monday to Friday

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 base quotes & mart results
Updated 5pm Daily
Tel: 028 9263 3011

Text Service

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

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 28/03/22	Next Week 04/04/22
Prime		
U-3	392 - 406p	392 - 406p
R-3	386 - 400p	386 - 400p
O+3	380 - 394p	380 - 394p
P+3	324 - 344p	324 - 344p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3	280 - 326p	280 - 326p

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 26/03/22	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	421.7	424.0	407.4
R3	416.6	417.2	405.4
O+3	408.5	409.3	392.6

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 26/03/22	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	232.3	253.4	259.4	270.3
P2	248.4	272.1	294.5	308.8
P3	245.5	291.8	308.9	317.6
O3	-	317.6	311.8	334.2
O4	-	-	351.4	333.3
R3	-	-	340.0	352.3

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the major NI beef processors ranged from 392-406p/kg for in spec U-3 grading steers and heifers this week. Producers should use these quotes as a starting point for negotiation with higher prices available, particularly for cattle that meet current market specifications. The cow trade has continued to remain strong with base quotes for good quality O+3 grading cows ranging from 280-326p/kg this week. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 7,716 head an increase of 884 head from the previous week. In the corresponding week last year 6,661 prime cattle were processed in local plants. Cow throughput in local plants increased by 143 cows last week to 2,189 head. In the same week last year 1,614 cows were processed locally.

Cattle imports to NI for direct slaughter from ROI last week increased to 223 prime cattle and 74 cows with no cattle imported from GB to NI for direct slaughter. Cattle exports out of NI to ROI last week included 30 prime cattle and 107 cows with a further 34 cows exported to GB for direct slaughter.

The deadweight cattle trade for prime cattle continued to improve overall in NI last week from the previous week. The average steer price remained firm at 407.9p/kg with the R3 steer price up by just over a penny to 418p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week increased by 3.5p/kg to 411.2p/kg while the R3 heifer price was up 1.2p/kg to 418.2p/kg. The cow trade in NI last week reported further improvements with the average cow price up by 6.2p/kg to 307.2p/kg while the O3 cow price increased by 5.2p/kg to 333.2p/kg from the previous week.

In GB last week the deadweight trade for prime cattle continued to strengthen across the region when compared to the previous week. The average steer price was up by 3.5p/kg to 420.9p/kg while the R3 steer price was up 3.7p/kg to 426.7p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 steer price in NI and GB at 8.7p/kg compared to a differential of 15.4p/kg in the same week in 2021. The average heifer price in GB last week was up 3.2p/kg last week to 420p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 5.3p/kg to 428.1p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and GB at 9.9p/kg compared to a differential of 16.8p/kg in the corresponding week in 2021. The cow trade also firmed in GB last week with the average cow price increasing 7p/kg to 334p/kg and the average O3 cow price increasing by a similar margin to 356.3p/kg.

In ROI last week deadweight cattle prices strengthened in euro terms however a weakening in the euro against sterling has resulted in prices generally back in sterling terms from the previous week. The R3 steer price decreased by 0.4p/kg to the equivalent of 396.8p/kg with the R3 heifer price marginally back to 399.9p/kg. The O3 cow price in ROI reported a decrease of 0.8p/kg to the equivalent of 334.9p/kg last week, 1.7p/kg above the O3 cow price in NI.

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

	W/E 26/03/22	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	421.2	405.2	430.1	430.8	430.3	435.3	431.2
	R3	418.0	396.8	429.7	426.7	425.9	424.6	426.7
	R4	416.5	400.2	430.7	429.5	426.0	424.2	428.8
	AVG	405.2	385.9	418.1	410.0	406.4	404.6	408.3
Heifers	U3	423.6	410.9	437.5	436.7	437.7	439.8	437.9
	R3	418.2	399.9	432.0	429.7	427.3	424.4	428.1
	R4	415.6	403.3	433.6	429.0	426.5	423.4	429.3
	AVG	407.1	391.9	413.5	407.9	399.7	398.8	403.2
Young Bulls	U3	407.3	389.9	430.1	428.1	431.4	431.8	430.2
	R3	404.0	380.5	422.2	415.4	422.5	425.8	420.1
	O3	391.2	368.5	401.1	395.6	396.1	402.7	397.6
	AVG	391.8	-	411.9	411.2	394.6	411.1	404.3
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6,290	-	6,667	6,806	7,032	5,068	25,573	
Cows	O3	333.2	334.9	360.0	357.9	354.6	354.0	356.3
	O4	334.1	334.0	362.4	357.7	357.8	352.5	357.2
	P2	293.7	307.5	315.1	314.5	314.2	308.7	312.7
	P3	314.3	324.9	334.2	334.2	334.1	329.8	332.8
AVG	307.2	-	357.3	340.2	329.3	321.7	334.0	

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=83.39p 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 26/03/22	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)							
Steers		249	271	260	205	248	225
Friesians		179	206	185	147	178	162
Heifers		236	266	245	200	235	217
Beef Cows		190	243	200	135	189	165
Dairy Cows		140	173	148	100	139	120
Store Cattle (p/kg)							
Bullocks up to 400kg		250	333	270	200	249	228
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		225	268	245	190	224	212
Bullocks over 500kg		215	236	225	175	214	195
Heifers up to 450kg		220	260	240	180	219	210
Heifers over 450kg		220	253	230	175	219	195
Dropped Calves (£/head)							
Continental Bulls		345	540	390	250	330	300
Continental Heifers		300	480	340	185	295	240
Friesian Bulls		90	135	112	30	85	55
Holstein Bulls		50	120	85	2	45	30

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 28/03/22	Next Week 04/04/22
Hoggets up to 22kgs	560-570p	560-590p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 12/03/22	W/E 19/03/22	W/E 26/03/22
NI L/W Hoggets	514.9	518.3	521.9
NI D/W Hoggets	541.0	547.6	555.6
GB D/W Hoggets	565.1	566.9	566.0
ROI D/W	575.3	589.7	588.1

Deadweight Sheep Trade

The deadweight trade for hoggets strengthened as the week progressed with base quotes ending this week ranging from 560-590p/kg up to 22kg. Throughput of hoggets in NI plants last week totalled 7,283 head which was up 2,191 head from the previous week. ROI continues to act as an important outlet for NI with 7,365 hoggets exported for direct slaughter last week, up 2,922 head compared to the previous week. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week was 555.6p/kg, up 8p/kg from the previous week. In ROI last week the deadweight hogget price was down by the equivalent of 1.6p/kg to 588.1p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

The hogget trade has also improved across many of the marts this week. In Swatragh last Saturday 975 hoggets sold from 452-613p/kg compared to 845 hoggets the previous week selling from 432-549p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 429 hoggets sold from 502-540p/kg compared to 346 hoggets last week selling from 500-557p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 400 hoggets sold from 500-562p/kg compared to 280 hoggets last week selling from 500-581p/kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday 1,746 hoggets sold to an average of 520p/kg, an improved trade from the previous week when 1,950 hoggets sold to an average of 515p/kg. Top reported prices for cull ewes ranged from £178-282.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 26/03/22		Hoggets			
To: 31/03/22		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Swatragh	975	452	613	-
	Omagh	211	474	568	-
Monday	Kilrea	250	436	570	-
	Massereene	429	502	540	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	370	515	578	-
	Rathfriland	400	500	562	536
Wednesday	Ballymena	1746	500	577	520
	Enniskillen	425	525	561	-
	Armoy	294	495	570	-
	Markethill	990	530	600	-

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