

NI DEADWEIGHT CATTLE TRADE SHOWS STRONG IMPROVEMENT YEAR ON YEAR

The deadweight cattle trade in Northern Ireland has recorded higher prices and a greater number of cattle processed in local plants during April 2022 when compared to the same period in 2021. **Table 1** provides an overview and outlines the differences in key performance statistics for the beef industry in Northern Ireland during April 2022 and 2021.

Deadweight prices

The deadweight prices have improved across all types of cattle during April 2022 when compared to the corresponding period in 2021. The average cow price in Northern Ireland recorded a strong increase of 53.3p/kg to 324.9p/kg during April 2022. This equates to an increase of almost 20 per cent year on year.

Similarly, the R3 steer price in Northern Ireland during April 2022 increased by 36.8p/kg from the previous year to average 427.2p/kg. This is the equivalent of an additional £128.80 on a 350kg carcass.

Meanwhile the R3 steer price in Great Britain improved by 33.3p/kg to

average 442.5p/kg during April 2022 relative to the previous year bringing the differential between Northern Ireland and Great Britain to 15.3p/kg. This equates to a difference of £53.55 on a 350kg carcass.

The cattle trade in the Republic of Ireland continues to run behind both Northern Ireland and Great Britain. During April 2022 the average R3 steer price in ROI was 406.6p/kg which is up 58p/kg when compared to the corresponding period in 2021. This brings the differential between ROI and NI to 20.6p/kg during April 2022 which equates to a difference of £72.10 on a 350kg steer carcass.

Throughput

Total cattle throughput has increased significantly during April 2022 when compared to the same period in 2021.

During April 2022 prime cattle throughput totalled 29,651 head, up 17.4 per cent from the corresponding period in 2021. Prime cattle recorded a 0.3 per cent or 0.9kg increase in average weight to 346.2kg when compared to April 2021.

Meanwhile cow throughput increased by 1,732 head or 26.2 per cent during the period in 2022 when compared to the same period in 2021. Average cow carcass weight was back by 3.1 per cent or 9.7kg to 307.3kg.

Imports/Exports

Live cattle imports to Northern Ireland for direct slaughter from the Republic of Ireland consisted of 834 prime cattle and 338 cows during April 2022, back by 32.7 per cent or 570 head from April 2021. Meanwhile no cattle were imported in to Northern Ireland from Great Britain during this period. Prime cattle imports from the Republic of Ireland accounted for 2.8 per cent of Northern Ireland prime cattle kill during April 2022.

Calf Registrations

The number of calves registered on Northern Ireland farms during April 2022 totalled 61,914 head, up 576 head or 0.9 per cent from April 2021. Beef sired calf registrations increased by 0.5 per cent to total 50,978 head while dairy sired male registrations declined by 6.8 per cent from April 2021 to total 3,774 head.

Table 1: NI Beef Industry Key Performance Indicators April 2022 and 2021.

Finished Cattle Prices (p/kg)	April 2021	April 2022	% Change
Average Prime Cattle Price	380.6	416.9	+9.5%
Average Cow Price	271.6	324.9	+19.6%
Average R3 Steer Price (NI)	390.4	427.2	+9.4%
Average R3 Steer Price (ROI)	348.6	406.6	+16.6%
Average R3 Steer Price (GB)	409.2	442.5	+8.1%
NI Throughput			
Total Clean Slaughterings (Head)	25,246	29,651	+17.4%
Total Cow Slaughterings (Head)	6,615	8,347	+26.2%
Average Clean Carcass Weight (kg)	345.3	346.2	+0.3%
Average Cow Carcass Weight (kg)	317.0	307.3	-3.1%
Trade (Head)			
Live Imports for Direct Slaughter	1,742	1,172	-32.7%
Live Exports for Direct Slaughter	298	385	+29.2%
Calf Births Registrations (Head)			
Calf Births	61,338	61,914	+0.9%
Beef Sired	50,705	50,978	+0.5%
Dairy Sired (Male Only)	4,051	3,774	-6.8%
Euro / Stg Exchange Rate (€ / £)			
	86.5	83.7	-3.3%
All NI Figures Unless Otherwise Stated			

NI SHEEP MARKET: SPRING LAMB NUMBERS ON THE RISE

In the last few weeks the numbers of hoggets slaughtered in NI plants has continued to decrease in line with seasonal trends.

Total lamb/hogget throughput in local plants last week totalled 6,605 head, a similar number to the 6,617 lambs/hoggets killed during the previous week. Throughput remains lower than the corresponding week last year when 7,033 hoggets/lambs were killed in local plants. This accounts for 6.1 per cent decrease year on year.

Spring lambs accounted for just over 62 per cent of price reported lambs in NI last week. Reports have indicated that the lambs being presented for slaughter in local plants are generally of very good quality with 60.3 per cent of spring lambs achieving U grades last week. A further 37.7 per cent being awarded an R grade, and 91 per cent of the total spring lamb kill were the desired fat class 2 or 3.

The deadweight trade for lambs has remained firm with an R3 grading spring lamb price of 601p/kg last week.



This was up 5.7p/kg from the previous week when the R3 lamb price was 595.3p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2021 the R3 spring lamb price in NI was 648.4p/kg. This is a decrease of 47.4p/kg year on year which equates to almost £10 on the value of a 21kg lamb carcasse.

ROI continued to act as an important outlet for the NI sheep sector with 2,805 lambs/hoggets exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week. This is up by a slight 137 head from the 2,668 lambs/hoggets exported to ROI during the same week last year.

The volume of sheep meat handled by the NI processors during 2022 to date has totalled 3,316 tonnes, a four per cent increase on the same period in 2021. This increase in the volume of sheep meat handled by the local processors can be mainly attributed to the increase in sheep carcasse weights.

From January 2022 to date the average lamb/hogget carcasse weight was 23.2kg this is an increase of almost 1kg when compared to the same period in 2021 when the average lamb/hogget carcasse weight reported was 22.3kg.

The local processing plants in NI have a preference for lambs and hoggets which meet an R or U grade, a carcasse weight of 21/22kg, a fat class 2 or 3 and are farm quality assured.

Producers are encouraged to present lambs/hoggets that meet current market specification. This should place producers in a better position to negotiate a stronger price with processors.

BENEFITS OF FQA FOR SHEEP PRODUCERS

With supplies of spring lambs being presented for slaughter starting to increase, processors are keen to source FQAS approved lambs as it allows them to service the high value retail and food service markets in the UK. For many of these customers FQ status on lamb is a key requirement of their specification.

FQAS provides additional assurances on animal welfare, food safety, traceability and care for the environment, all of which are sought after by retailers.

When lambs are FQAS approved at slaughter. In addition producers with FQAS lambs will find it easier to secure sales than those presenting non-FQAS lambs, avoiding the need to hold finished lambs for longer periods so reducing costs. Buyers in the local marts are increasingly looking to purchase finished lambs that have FQ status and finishers buying lambs for a short keep will favour lambs with FQAS approved status or a large proportion of the required 60-day residency completed.

A further benefit of FQAS membership is that scheme membership is recognised by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and DAERA Service Delivery Group as having a lower risk and therefore there is a reduced likelihood of selection for a cross compliance inspection in this area when compared to non-FQAS members.



Achieving FQAS approved status allows sheep producers to keep their options open when marketing lambs. Producers slaughtering lambs in local plants may receive a financial bonus

Should you wish to apply for FQAS, or require any FQAS documentation, please call the FQAS Helpline on 028 9263 3024

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

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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 16/05/22	Next Week 23/05/22
Prime		
U-3	392 - 426p	392 - 430p
R-3	386 - 420p	386 - 424p
O+3	380 - 414p	380 - 418p
P+3	324 - 362p	324 - 366p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3	280 - 356p	280 - 356p

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

Quotes from the major processing plants for in-spec U-3 grade prime cattle strengthened mid-week to 392-430p/kg. The majority of plants are quoting 416-430p/kg for steers and heifers. However with firm demand for prime cattle producers are encouraged to shop around to get the best possible deal. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows continued to range from 280-356p/kg across the plants this week, with similar quotes expected for early next week.

Prime cattle throughput last week totalled 8,110 head, up 1,081 head from the previous week when 7,029 prime cattle were killed locally. This is also up by 1,032 head from the 7,078 prime cattle killed in NI plants during the corresponding week last year. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 2,133 head, up by 140 cows from the previous week when 1,993 cows were slaughtered in NI plants. This is an increase of 541 cows compared to the 1,592 cows killed locally during the same week in 2021.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week consisted of 184 prime cattle and 94 cows. Meanwhile exports from NI for direct slaughter in ROI plants last week consisted of three prime cattle, 97 cows and eight bulls while exports to GB for direct slaughter continued at recent levels with 35 cows exported.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle has continued to firm in NI with the average steer price up by 1.7p/kg to 425.7p/kg last week. The R3 steer price last week was 435.8p/kg, up 2.1p/kg from the previous week and is the highest reported weekly R3 steer price to date in 2022. The average heifer price in NI last week was up 2.2p/kg to 428.8p/kg while the R3 heifer price was up also up by 2.2p/kg to 437.2p/kg. The cow trade remained firm in NI last week with the average cow price up by 6.7p/kg to 337.2p/kg and the O3 cow price up by 4.1p/kg to 362.5p/kg.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle in GB reported a mixed trade last week with the average steer price back by 0.6p/kg to 439.2p/kg while the average R3 steer price was up by 0.4p/kg to 445.3p/kg. The differential in R3 steer prices between NI and GB was 9.5p/kg last week or £33 on a 350kg carcass. The average heifer price in GB last week was back by a marginal 0.1p/kg to 439.2p/kg while the R3 heifer price reported an increase of 0.7p/kg to 446.5p/kg. Last week the differential between NI and GB R3 heifer price was 9.3p/kg or £30 on a 320kg carcass.

The deadweight trade has also continued to firm in ROI last week with the R3 steer price up by the equivalent of 9p/kg to 431.8p/kg. This puts the differential between ROI and NI for R3 grade steers at 4p/kg or £14 on a 350kg carcass. The ROI R3 heifer price increased by 10.8p/kg to the equivalent of 433.7p/kg this puts the ROI price at 3.5p/kg behind the NI R3 heifer price. The cow trade also firmed in ROI last week with the O3 cow price up 13.3p/kg to 376.8p/kg. This was 14.3p/kg higher than the equivalent price in NI, equating to an additional £40 on a 280kg carcass.

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

	W/E 14/05/22	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	440.5	438.7	447.7	450.8	451.5	452.0	450.4
	R3	435.8	431.8	445.2	448.6	444.9	442.8	445.3
	R4	434.0	436.1	445.8	453.5	444.0	445.3	447.8
	O3	422.9	424.5	431.4	430.1	426.5	423.1	427.3
	AVG	425.7	-	442.3	443.1	436.1	434.2	439.2
Heifers	U3	442.3	442.6	455.6	454.8	455.1	454.7	455.1
	R3	437.2	433.7	447.3	449.0	446.8	443.5	446.5
	R4	435.6	436.6	448.3	452.6	445.5	443.9	448.1
	O3	424.0	428.9	425.4	432.6	419.4	421.1	423.6
	AVG	428.8	-	445.7	445.3	433.9	432.1	439.2
Young Bulls	U3	430.3	431.0	446.1	447.6	447.0	445.2	446.6
	R3	423.4	421.8	437.9	438.5	442.4	438.1	439.8
	O3	406.1	404.4	413.9	417.1	414.5	409.3	415.3
	AVG	410.7	-	439.7	433.3	425.6	428.3	431.5
Prime Cattle Price Reported		6,857	-	6,736	7,091	7,956	5,268	27,051
Cows	O3	362.5	376.8	387.5	379.6	382.9	378.3	381.6
	O4	363.1	374.5	386.7	381.1	382.3	377.3	381.4
	P2	321.6	348.0	340.9	336.1	341.0	334.6	338.7
	P3	339.6	366.2	361.2	359.0	358.3	352.4	356.8
	AVG	337.2	-	380.5	365.3	356.9	349.7	359.8

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=85.33 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 14/05/22	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)							
Steers		260	282	270	210	259	228
Friesians		210	224	218	162	197	184
Heifers		243	275	250	205	242	220
Beef Cows		224	265	236	175	223	195
Dairy Cows		155	193	172	115	154	138
Store Cattle (p/kg)							
Bullocks up to 400kg		250	297	275	200	249	225
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		240	271	255	195	239	218
Bullocks over 500kg		240	284	250	190	239	215
Heifers up to 450kg		240	272	255	200	239	220
Heifers over 450kg		220	258	235	180	219	200
Dropped Calves (£/head)							
Continental Bulls		350	475	400	245	345	290
Continental Heifers		300	470	350	175	295	235
Friesian Bulls		150	250	195	75	145	105
Holstein Bulls		100	150	125	15	95	60

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 14/05/22	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	440.6	443.6	429.9
R3	434.5	436.6	423.2
O+3	426.1	428.7	411.2

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 14/05/22	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	254.2	273.8	279.2	300.5
P2	269.3	297.0	323.9	337.6
P3	269.4	322.1	335.8	345.1
O3	-	337.0	360.4	363.2
O4	-	-	352.8	363.6
R3	-	-	-	381.6

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 16/05/22	Next Week 23/05/22
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg	570-575p	570-575p
R3 Spring Lambs up to 21kg	610-635p	610-650p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 30/04/22	W/E 07/05/22	W/E 14/05/22
NI L/W Spring Lambs	582.8	571.9	581.6
NI D/W Spring Lambs	587.8	589.2	599.5
GB D/W Spring Lambs	655.0	659.4	676.4
ROI D/W	620.3	625.4	635.0

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the major NI plants for spring lambs this week were ranging from 610-635p/kg up to 21kg, with quotes of 610-650p/kg expected early next week. In the corresponding week last year the plants were quoting in the region of 620-640p/kg up to 21kg. Lamb/hogget throughput in NI plants last week totalled 6,605 head, similar levels to the previous week. This is back 428 head compared to the same week in 2021 when 7,033 lambs/hoggets were slaughtered in NI plants. Exports of lambs/hoggets to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 2,805 head, a decrease of 445 head from the previous week. The deadweight spring lamb price in NI last week was up 10.3p/kg to 599.5p/kg while in ROI the combined lamb/hogget deadweight price was up 9.6p/kg to 635p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

This week across the marts the number of lambs are continuing to increase along with a firm trade reported. On Saturday in Swatragh 540 lambs sold from 553-702p/kg compared to the previous Saturday when 370 lambs sold from 467-605p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 206 lambs sold from 600-624p/kg compared to 140 lambs selling from 578-605p/kg last week. In Saintfield this week 525 lambs sold from 595-640p/kg compared to 245 lambs last week selling from 580-620p/kg. On Wednesday in Ballymena a good entry of 853 lambs sold from 590-638p/kg (avg 605p/kg) compared to 502 lambs last week selling from 570-619p/kg (avg 590p/kg). The strong trade for cull ewes continues with top reported prices ranging from £174-£236 across the marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 14/05/22		Lambs			
To: 18/05/22		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	63	522	590	-
	Swatragh	540	553	702	-
Monday	Kilrea	280	588	630	-
	Massereene	206	600	624	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	525	595	640	-
	Rathfriland	441	600	651	629
Wednesday	Ballymena	853	590	638	605
	Enniskillen	185	585	622	-
	Armoy	84	580	625	-
	Markethill	460	610	657	-

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