

## BEEF AND LAMB SECTORS ACTIVELY COLLABORATING TO DELIVER SUSTAINABILITY IMPROVEMENT

Northern Ireland's livestock sectors have always taken a proactive stance, where the issue of climate change is concerned. This has been facilitated courtesy of the steps taken by the industry in its own right. However, close liaison domestically and internationally with like-minded industry bodies has also helped to further drive this process forward. As a result, our livestock sectors are already well down the road in terms of reducing the carbon intensity of their production and related processes. No doubt climate change legislation will be agreed for Northern Ireland at some stage in the near future. But independent of all this, the livestock industry knows that it must respond positively to the challenge of climate change. And this is exactly what it's doing.

The prize to be secured is that of delivering a sustainable future for farmers and everyone else involved in the livestock production, processing and retailing chain. And it's all about putting the consumer first. One of the most prominent national collaborations working to deliver a viable future for the beef industry is the UK Cattle Sustainability Platform (UKCSP). It is a multi-stakeholder group focussed on driving beef sustainability across all aspects of the value chain, from farm to fork. In turn, UKCSP is aligned to the work of the European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability (ERBS). Significantly, the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) is a member of both bodies. Commission chief executive Ian Stevenson sits on the board of ERBS. UKCSP is totally focused on delivering meaningful and demonstrable progress on beef sustainability across the agriculture sector. Its work is aligned to the ERBS outcome targets. The four priority areas for ERBS relate to livestock farming's interaction with the environment; the use of animal medicines; the improvement of animal health and welfare standards and the implementation of enhanced farm management practices. The targets set within these criteria are both quantitative in nature and demanding of the industry in terms of their attainment. Their measurability is further proof of the livestock sectors' commitment to secure real and positive change, where its response to climate change is concerned. In the context of the environment, the key outcome target is to secure an intensity reduction of 15% in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2025. Beyond this, the aim is to set a future target that recognises the positive role beef production can contribute to the mitigation of climate change through reduction strategies and sequestration. Where animal medicines are concerned, two targets have been set: the total usage of antibiotics below 10mg/kg Population Correct Unit (PCU) by 2023 and a reduction of 50% in the use of high priority-critically important antibiotics (HP-CIAs) within the same time frame. Three animal health and welfare targets have been set, the most tangible being that of driving on-farm target mortality rates below 1.5%. For systems with mortality rates above this target, a year-on-year reduction of 20% should be achieved. Another of the targets set in this context is the need to ensure that all animals are given pain relief (analgesics), following all surgical procedures and all forms of castration, dehorning and disbudding. The management-related targets have a clear focus on business planning and the need to improve health and safety practises on all farms. So much for the background.

Ian Stevenson recently presented to the membership of UKCSP, relating the progress that has been specifically made in Northern Ireland, where the attainment of the ERBS targets is concerned. And he had a very positive story to tell. One of the most pressing challenges confronting farming as a whole is that of accurately determining its carbon footprint. And, in this context, specific figures will have to be compiled at a whole farm level and allocated between each of its individual sectors. However, the good news for the livestock industries is that the existing Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBLFQAS) is being actively investigated as a key platform that can be used to help secure the information required to make an accurate determination of members' respective carbon footprints a feasible reality. Ian further explained: "FQAS is a unique resource, which can be used

as a means of securing additional information, regarding so many aspects of performance within the cattle and sheep sectors.

Image 1: UK Cattle Sustainability Platform Logo



"What's more, this data can be obtained in a straightforward manner, which does not significantly add to the administrative burden facing livestock farmers." The LMC representative also discussed the plans now in place by the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (CAFRE) to help secure the carbon footprint of various farming sectors here. He said: "Work with Dairy Council NI and the Northern Ireland red meat industry to this end is already underway. "Currently, CAFRE is working with its environmental business development groups, located across Northern Ireland. "Relevant data procurement and calculations have been carried out on more than 150 farms to date using the Agrecalc tool to produce a carbon footprint result. "There is also a significant number of beef, sheep and dairy farmers participating in Business Development Groups who undertake financial benchmarking. These farmers are being encouraged to take up the opportunity of carbon footprint benchmarking where data will be collected in tandem with the financial benchmarking data supplied by the farmers in question. "So, again, it is a case, of accurate carbon footprints being calculated in the most efficient and effective ways possible.

"CAFRE advisors will be available to discuss the results obtained with farmers and tailor actions accordingly." Agrecalc is a carbon footprint tool developed by Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) Consulting together with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) researchers. It enables farm enterprises to identify and measure emissions, benchmark key performance indicators, identify mitigation strategies and monitor improvements. UKCSP members were also informed of the ongoing discussions at Stormont to legislate for climate change in Northern Ireland. Ian pointed to the current disconnect between many local politicians and agri food stakeholder organisations, regarding the actual climate change targets that farming and food would be expected to meet over the coming years. He further explained: "Proposals for a target of net zero emissions in Northern Ireland by 2050 have been backed at Stormont. "Agri-food and business groups had urged assembly members to back an 82% reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions for Northern Ireland, in line with farm minister Edwin Poots' Executive Bill. This was framed around UK Committee on Climate Change advice. "However, subsequent amendments to the bill have caused uncertainty for industry and farmers. The proposed legislation will be discussed further over the coming weeks. Turning to the agricultural policy reform proposals, recently published by Edwin Poots, Ian emphasised their overall objective of creating a profitable, productive, environmentally sustainable and resilient agri-food sector. Where the use of animal medicines is concerned, the LMC's chief executive confirmed that Northern Ireland had an extremely positive story to tell. "In terms of total antibiotic usage, the beef sector has already reached the ERBS target for 2023," he said: "And dairy is on track to meet the target set within the allotted time

frame. Ian added: "Both dairy and beef are already meeting the target set for critically important antibiotics." But all of this must be built on for the future. The current data is based on information sourced from 20% of the cattle population in Northern Ireland. "Whilst this is a very representative sample we want to try and expand the amount of available data in this area. LMC is working closely with other key stakeholders on the development of a whole farm antibiotic usage benchmarking tool." Ian discussed the ERBS health and welfare targets, in the context of the progress made here in Northern Ireland to date. He commented: "No official mortality baseline has been set as yet. However work continues to improve animal health, particularly through the work of Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland.

"Northern Ireland is home to the UK's most advanced BVD eradication scheme. Significantly, there has been a disease reduction of 73% recorded in herds that have had BVD positives since 2017. "Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland also co-ordinates Johnes' Disease control, Farm Infection Risk Management, Parasite control and Sheep Health." UKCSP members were also informed of the housing standards operating on local farms. Ian commented: "NIBL FQAS is planning to introduce new standards as part of its 2022 standards review to prohibit tethered housing systems. "Where pain relief is concerned, NIBL FQAS is also planning to introduce new standards in line with the use of analgesics for common veterinary procedures. This will bring Northern Ireland fully in line with Red Tractor standards in this area." Turning, finally, to the subject of farm management standards, the LMC representative referenced a number of successful initiatives that are helping to deliver improved business sustainability and farm health & safety at a local level.

Image 2: LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson



These include the work of CAFRE, which is working with over 1,300 local farms to benchmark their businesses. "The Food Futures' initiative developed by the Agri-Food and Biosciences' Institute (AFBI) in tandem with Queen's University Belfast is another important local project developing a platform for industry to use to capture, credit and drive behavioural change to enhance the sustainability of Northern Ireland Agri-Food production. "In addition, Rural Support is currently piloting a Farm Family Key Skills farm business sustainability programme which will not only focus on farm business management and the environment but also the farm family involved in the business. "This will see 50 farm families receiving direct support to critically assess their business performance and identify achievable goals to build business sustainability into the future. Ian Stevenson concluded: "Improvement of farm safety standards were given a renewed focus by NIBL FQAS back in 2018 with a new farm safety considerations section in the product standard of the scheme. In addition, a tremendous amount of work has been carried out in this area by the Farm Safety Partnership, since its establishment back in 2012. "The organisation is currently working through its fourth farm safety action plan. It must be noted that during its third plan, which took effect during the period 2017 - 2020, farm fatality rates fell by 24%."

### 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 21/02/22	Next Week 28/02/22
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	392 - 398p	392 - 398p
R-3	386 - 392p	386 - 392p
O+3	380 - 386p	380 - 386p
P+3	324 - 336p	324 - 336p
	Including bonus where applicable	
<b>Cows</b>		
O+3	280 - 300p	280 - 300p

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 19/02/22	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	411.2	413.0	393.0
R3	405.1	407.3	394.1
O+3	397.7	399.4	386.0

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 19/02/22	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	207.0	225.2	240.6	237.9
P2	224.6	246.5	271.0	284.0
P3	238.9	259.5	282.6	293.1
O3	-	281.5	306.2	311.6
O4	-	281.6	304.5	310.8
R3	-	-	-	327.8

### Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the plants this week for U-3 grading prime cattle ranged from 392-398p/kg with similar quotes expected early next week for both steers and heifers. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows generally remained firm at 280-300p/kg with similar quotes expected on Monday. Most of the plants are quoting at the top end of this range and producers are encouraged to shop around to get the best deal.

Throughput of prime cattle in local plants was down slightly last week with 7,599 head processed, back 42 head from the previous week. However, this is well up from the 6,547 prime cattle processed in local plants in the corresponding week last year. Cow throughput in NI last week fell 155 head from the previous week to total 2,252 head.

Imports of cattle from ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 136 prime cattle and 84 cows with no cattle imported from GB last week for direct slaughter in local plants. Exports of cattle from NI to ROI for direct slaughter consisted of 85 cows and two prime cattle with again no cattle being exported from NI to GB last week for direct slaughter.

The average steer price in NI last week remained fairly steady from the previous week at 397.8p/kg, with the NI R3 steer price also remaining steady at 406.8p/kg. Meanwhile, the average heifer price in NI last week was 401.1p/kg, up almost a penny from the previous week with the R3 The young bull trade in NI last week remained firm with the average price up 2.2p/kg to 381.6p/kg and the average R3 young bull price up 3p/kg to 394.4p/kg. Last week in NI the average cow price reported an increase of 2.8p/kg to 285.8p/kg with the O3 cow price up by 4.2p/kg to 310.2p/kg.

In GB last week the deadweight trade for prime cattle reported improvements across the grades. However, there were variations across the regions. Last week the R3 steer price remained steady from the previous week at 412.4p/kg. Across the regions the R3 steer price reported decreases in Scotland (-0.5p/kg), Northern England (-1.1p/kg) and Southern England (-0.4p/kg) with an increase of 1.4p/kg reported in the Midlands. The R3 heifer price in GB was 412.9p/kg, up 0.4p/kg from the previous week. Decreases were reported in Scotland (-2.8p/kg), the Midlands and Wales (-0.5p/kg) with the highest increase of 3.5p/kg reported in Northern England. Meanwhile last week the average cow price in GB was up almost 6p/kg to 289.8p/kg, with the O3 cow price up 8p/kg to 310.5p/kg.

The R3 steer price in ROI last week increased by just over a penny to the equivalent of 372.4p/kg, remaining 34.4p/kg behind current NI levels. The R3 heifer price in ROI reported an increase last week of 0.5p/kg to the equivalent of 376.1p/kg, 32.4p/kg behind the same price in NI. Last week the O3 cow price in ROI was up by 2.8p/kg to 312p/kg, 1.8p/kg above the same price in NI.

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

	W/E 19/02/22	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	409.6	380.5	406.3	419.3	420.6	419.7	415.3
	R3	406.8	372.4	408.7	415.3	413.8	410.2	412.4
	R4	405.7	374.6	411.0	418.2	412.0	411.4	413.5
	AVG	397.8	-	405.4	410.9	404.8	401.9	406.0
Heifers	U3	412.7	386.8	414.6	424.9	424.3	422.0	420.7
	R3	408.5	376.1	410.1	414.6	414.7	410.3	412.9
	R4	404.6	378.4	414.4	416.6	414.3	410.0	414.3
	AVG	398.3	369.7	398.3	394.7	388.7	390.8	391.8
Young Bulls	U3	395.0	363.8	403.0	404.3	412.8	384.2	405.1
	R3	394.4	356.7	399.6	400.7	406.5	405.6	403.6
	O3	379.7	344.4	375.0	365.3	385.2	375.0	378.3
	AVG	381.6	-	390.6	380.6	390.6	378.9	387.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6,292	-	6,603	6,426	7,501	4,739	25,269	
Cows	O3	310.2	312.0	306.8	313.4	309.1	309.8	310.5
	O4	310.2	310.0	311.9	315.1	311.9	308.2	312.2
	P2	270.4	287.1	265.6	269.7	269.5	270.4	269.5
	P3	288.9	300.5	282.4	288.2	289.0	281.5	286.4
AVG	285.8	-	303.9	296.8	286.4	281.2	289.8	

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=83.67p 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 19/02/22	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>							
Steers		235	261	249	205	234	220
Friesians		179	203	186	154	177	171
Heifers		220	247	234	175	219	200
Beef Cows		180	225	195	130	179	157
Dairy Cows		131	173	141	100	130	115
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>							
Bullocks up to 400kg		267	307	282	220	266	240
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		241	281	260	210	240	225
Bullocks over 500kg		225	267	240	185	224	200
Heifers up to 450kg		255	319	275	200	254	220
Heifers over 450kg		220	264	240	165	219	200
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>							
Continental Bulls		350	460	400	245	345	290
Continental Heifers		300	400	350	180	295	235
Friesian Bulls up to 3 months		140	195	165	45	135	90
Holstein Bulls		120	185	145	1	115	65

# SHEEP TRADE

## NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 21/02/22	Next Week 28/02/22
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg	540p/kg	540p/kg

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 05/02/22	W/E 12/02/22	W/E 19/02/22
NI L/W Hoggets	512.6	494.9	491.2
NI D/W Hoggets	541.3	541.1	530.8
GB D/W Hoggets	587.4	587.9	586.0
ROI D/W	563.6	568.4	562.2

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes for R3 grade hoggets have come under pressure this week with quotes in the region of 540p/kg up to 22kg from local processors. Hogget throughput in NI plants last week totalled 7,231 back almost 700 hoggets from the previous week. However, this is well up from the same week in 2021 when hogget throughput in local plants totalled 6,744 head. A total of 5,862 hoggets were exported to ROI for direct slaughter last week. This is up 898 head compared to the previous week when 4,964 hoggets were exported. The deadweight hogget price in NI last week decreased by 10.3p/kg to 530.8p/kg, which is 31.8p/kg below the same week last year when the deadweight hogget price was 562.6p/kg. Meanwhile in ROI the deadweight hogget price decreased by 6.2p/kg to the equivalent of 562.2p/kg.

## Liveweight Sheep Trade

The marts have continued to report smaller numbers of hoggets passing through the sale rings this week. In Swatragh on Saturday 388 hoggets sold from 463-509p/kg compared to 830 hoggets selling from 413-495p/kg the previous week. In Kilrea on Monday 500 hoggets sold from 498-524p/kg compared to 400 hoggets selling from 497-518p/kg last week. On Tuesday in Rathfriland a similar trade reported of 300 hoggets selling from 487-526p/kg (avg 500p/kg) compared to 562 hoggets last week selling from 480-522p/kg (avg 500p/kg). This week in Armooy 464 hoggets sold from 482-527p/kg. Across the marts top reported prices for culled ewes this week ranged from £145-£258.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 19/02/22		Hoggets			
To: 24/02/22		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	187	479	538	-
	Swatragh	388	463	509	-
Monday	Kilrea	500	498	524	-
	Massereene	585	483	514	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	425	452	520	-
	Rathfriland	300	487	526	500
Wednesday	Ballymena	1637	460	544	495
	Enniskillen	548	492	535	-
	Armooy	464	482	527	-
	Markethill	850	550	555	-

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