

COP 26 – THE JOURNEY TOWARDS CARBON ‘NET ZERO’ IS ABOUT TO SHIFT INTO TOP GEAR

Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) chief executive Ian Stevenson believes there is scope for politicians at Stormont to agree on a way forward, which allows for discussion on a single climate change bill for Northern Ireland.

Specifically, this would require a meeting of minds between the Green Party’s Clare Bailey and farm minister Edwin Poots, who are both championing their respective approaches to climate change legislation at the Assembly.

The end result of such a process would be the progression of a single bill to go through the various legislative procedures at Stormont, unimpaired.

“We don’t need two climate change bills,” Ian Stevenson stressed.

“So the idea of all the parties getting round the table and agreeing the principles associated with a single piece of legislation makes total sense. But, whatever climate change policy is eventually agreed it must fully recognise the role that farming and food play at the very heart of the local economy.”

Specifically, the LMC representative views the carbon ‘net zero’ aspiration for Northern Ireland by 2045, espoused by Clare Bailey, as being fundamentally flawed.

He explained:

“In the first instance, such a target is not achievable. Moreover, any attempt to go down this road will fundamentally damage Northern Ireland’s farming and food sectors. “The implications of such a development are extremely significant. There would be a significant haemorrhaging of jobs across the economy while many rural communities across Northern Ireland would be dealt a very serious blow in terms of their long term sustainability.”

Image 1: UK target of reaching ‘net zero’ by 2050



In contrast, Ian Stevenson believes that the carbon footprint targets set out in the Edwin Poots’ bill make sense in terms of where

evidence and science predicts it is possible to get to without causing untold harm to the economy and rural society of Northern Ireland. In essence, these reflect the Balanced Net Zero Pathway principles put forward by the UK’s Committee on Climate Change (CCC).

These envisage the UK, as a whole, reaching ‘net zero’ by 2050 with Northern Ireland securing at least an 82% reduction in greenhouse gases relative to 1990 levels within this time period.

Ian continued:

“The CCC recommendations take account of the key role played by farming and food within the local economy.

“Currently our farming and food sectors can feed between 10 and 12m people. Northern Ireland has, rightly, been recognised as the bread basket of the UK.”

Looking to the future, Ian Stevenson believes that local farming and food can meet the challenge of climate change without having to reduce current production levels.

He commented:

“Farmers can secure much greater levels of efficiency within their businesses by making better use of the management systems and technologies that are available right now. And new technologies are coming down the track. But no one should be under the illusion that attaining significant reductions in greenhouse emission levels within agriculture over the coming years will be easy. It won’t be! Farming and food is now on a journey, where climate change is concerned. And we need to see significant results being achieved over the next decade.”

The LMC’s chief executive views the journey towards a significantly reduced carbon footprint for local agriculture as akin to that of plotting a course towards sustainability for every farm business.

“There are so many things that farmers can do right now to offset and reduce the carbon footprint of their businesses,” he commented.

“They can grow trees on parcels of land that are best suited to the creation of new woodland while also expanding the footprint of their hedgerows. This leaves them the scope to improve the efficiency of production that can be achieved from land that is best suited to grassland and crop production.”

Ian made these comments in the run-up to the COP 26 summit, which kicks-off in Glasgow on October 31st. He recognises that agriculture, in

its own right, has not been singled out for discussion in the formal agenda for the event.

“But there is plenty of scope for the future of farming and food to be discussed in a very serious and strategic manner throughout the 13 days of the event as negotiators focus on relevant topics such as transport, energy, finance, nature, adaptation, science and innovation” he stressed. “The first two days of the summit will be critically important. During this period heads of government will agree the decisions that will be at the heart of the global response to climate changes over the next decade and beyond.

“COP 21, held in Paris back in 2015, saw international leaders agree the targets that must be met in order to prevent climate change having a cataclysmic impact on our world.

“Chief among these was the need to limit the impact of global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

“COP 26 should see agreement reached on the comprehensive range of steps needed to ensure this can be achieved by actions taken between now and 2050.”

Four, over-arching goals have been set for the COP 26 summit. These are:

- 1.To secure global ‘net zero’ by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach
- 2.The need for adaptation to protect communities and natural habitats
- 3.The mobilisation of finance
- 4.The need to work together to deliver

Minister of State at the Cabinet Office and President for COP 26, Alok Sharma MP, is making it clear that every facet of the UK economy and society must play its part in securing ‘net zero’ by 2050.

Writing in the foreword produced for the COP 26 summit he made it clear that to keep the temperature of the planet under control, in other words limiting the impact of global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees Celcius, no one can escape this challenge.

He added:

“Scientists tell us that by 2050, we should not be producing more carbon than we take out of the atmosphere. This is what reaching ‘net zero’ means.

Image 2: COP26 is to be held in Glasgow, commencing on the 31st October 2021.



“The journey is already underway. Despite the pandemic, the direction of travel is changing. Around 70% of the world economy is now covered by net zero targets, up from less than 30% when the UK took on the Presidency of COP26. The world is moving towards a low-carbon future.

“Clean energy, like wind and solar, is now the cheapest source of electricity in most countries; many of the world’s car makers are committing to make only electric and hybrid models; countries around the world are undertaking important work to protect and restore nature; cities, states and regions across the world are also committing to reduce emissions to zero.”

Sharma also made it clear that at COP 26 agreements will be reached to take forward action on protecting and restoring forests and critical ecosystems.

He further commented:

“We will also champion the transition towards sustainable, resilient and nature positive agriculture.”

Ian Stevenson believes that the upcoming COP 26 summit will be a landmark event, in terms of its future impact on global agriculture.

He said: “The good news for Northern Ireland’s beef and lamb sectors is the fact that our cattle and sheep industries are already extremely sustainable in global terms.

“Our ability to grow grass in such a natural way gives our farmers a very positive advantage.

“But the livestock industry must now fully quantify where it is in terms of its carbon footprint.

“Armed with this information, it will be possible to make effective management decisions for the future that will further enhance the sustainability of our grass-based sectors.”

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 11/10/21	Next Week 18/10/21
Prime		
U-3	386 - 394p	386 - 394p
R-3	380 - 388p	380 - 388p
O+3	374 - 382p	374 - 382p
P+3	320 - 332p	320 - 332p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3	260 - 300p	260 - 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.

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the plants this week for U-3 grading prime cattle ranged from 386-394p/kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. This week last year the major processors were quoting 354-360p/kg for in spec U-3 grading steers and heifers. Quotes for O+3 cows remained under pressure this week ranging from 260-300p/kg.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 6,890, back 316 head from the previous week. This is also back 264 head when compared to the corresponding week in 2020 when 7,154 prime cattle were slaughtered in local plants. Meanwhile cow throughput remained steady with 2,255 cows processed in NI last week, back 10 head from the previous week. This is also back 200 head when compared to the same week last year when cow throughput totalled 2,455.

Imports of cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants last week consisted of 261 prime and 202 cows, with no cattle imported from GB for direct slaughter. Last week 82 cows were exported out of NI to ROI for direct slaughter with a further 19 prime cattle and 16 cows making the journey from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The NI deadweight trade for prime cattle came under pressure last week with the majority of steer and heifer prices back from the previous week. The average steer price in NI was back 0.2p/kg to 391.7p/kg, with the R3 steer price back 1.4p/kg to 401.1p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2020 the R3 steer price was 367.0p/kg, 34.1p/kg behind current levels. The average NI heifer price was back 2.2p/kg to 393.1p/kg, while the R3 heifer price was back 0.2p/kg to 401.5p/kg, which puts it 33.3p/kg ahead of the R3 heifer price in the same week in 2020. The average young bull price in NI last week was up 0.6p/kg to 379.8p/kg, while the R3 young bull price was back 4.4p/kg to 389.3p/kg. Meanwhile the average cow price in NI last week was up 0.2p/kg to 281.0p/kg, while the O3 cow price was back 1.1p/kg to 314.0p/kg.

In GB last week the deadweight trade for prime cattle reported a mixed performance. The average steer price was back 1.1p/kg to 409.7p/kg, while the R3 steer price was back 0.9p/kg to 416.4p/kg. Last week the average heifer price in GB declined by 0.8p/kg to 407.9p/kg with the R3 heifer price up 0.9p/kg to 417.3p/kg. This places the R3 heifer price in GB at 15.8p/kg above the same price in NI. The GB cow trade remained under pressure last week, the average cow price was back 2.1p/kg to 271.1p/kg with the O3 cow price back 0.9p/kg to 300.2p/kg.

The R3 steer price in ROI last week reported a decrease of 3.4p/kg to the equivalent of 357.5p/kg, bringing the R3 steer price differential between ROI and NI to 43.6p/kg. The R3 heifer price was back 3.8p/kg to 361.3p/kg which takes the R3 heifer price differential between ROI and NI to 40.2p/kg. The O3 cow price in ROI last week was back 2.5p/kg to the equivalent of 303.4p/kg.

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

	W/E 09/10/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	400.5	366.0	420.5	418.6	421.3	424.7	421.1
	R3	401.1	357.5	419.1	417.4	414.8	415.1	416.4
	R4	398.5	357.1	418.7	422.0	415.6	417.9	419.3
	O3	392.5	341.6	406.0	405.3	391.4	394.2	397.8
	AVG	391.7	-	415.8	412.9	404.2	404.9	409.7
Heifers	U3	403.8	371.0	424.9	430.1	429.8	425.6	427.6
	R3	401.5	361.3	417.7	418.9	417.3	415.5	417.3
	R4	397.1	361.9	418.4	420.8	416.8	413.4	418.0
	O3	393.9	350.0	393.4	399.0	388.7	392.5	392.9
	AVG	393.1	-	415.1	412.3	402.7	400.0	407.9
Young Bulls	U3	393.4	351.2	414.6	417.3	421.4	382.0	415.7
	R3	389.3	343.5	408.7	413.8	414.3	398.5	410.8
	O3	374.5	330.2	382.6	383.5	387.8	377.0	384.3
	AVG	379.8	-	403.4	398.5	404.4	382.6	400.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported	5662	-	6305	6467	7186	4565	24523	
Cows	O3	314.0	303.4	304.3	298.4	299.4	301.4	300.2
	O4	314.5	303.3	304.0	300.4	297.7	296.2	299.2
	P2	275.9	276.7	263.6	251.0	260.7	261.2	259.8
	P3	294.4	293.1	274.8	273.4	276.4	274.3	275.4
	AVG	281.0	-	296.9	274.3	268.2	262.3	271.1

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=85.11p 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 09/10/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	245	264	249	210	244	225
Friesians	170	197	179	130	169	150
Heifers	230	254	239	205	229	215
Beef Cows	177	213	194	136	176	156
Dairy Cows	125	155	136	105	124	115
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	230	271	255	200	229	215
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	220	256	240	190	219	205
Bullocks over 500kg	218	253	225	180	217	195
Heifers up to 450kg	225	254	238	195	224	210
Heifers over 450kg	220	250	232	185	219	205
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	380	525	430	230	375	305
Continental Heifers	340	500	390	225	335	275
Friesian Bulls	150	205	175	50	125	85
Holstein Bulls	100	155	130	5	95	50

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 09/10/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	400.4	406.2	393.3
R3	398.9	400.8	388.1
O+3	390.6	393.4	375.8

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 09/10/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	206.2	221.3	233.7	243.9
P2	215.7	250.4	276.2	287.3
P3	238.7	268.8	292.6	298.3
O3	288.6	293.1	306.4	315.0
O4	276.0	-	-	314.8
R3	-	-	-	329.7

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 11/10/21	Next Week 18/10/21
R3 Lambs up to 21kg	495p/kg	495-500p/kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 25/09/21	W/E 02/10/21	W/E 09/10/21
NI L/W Lambs	450.7	460.1	456.2
NI D/W Lambs	471.7	476.3	480.1
GB D/W Lambs	494.0	502.3	522.6
ROI D/W	510.1	521.1	521.9

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the major processors for R3 grade lambs strengthened this week ranging from 495-500p/kg up to 21kg, with similar quotes expected for early next week. Lamb throughput last week totalled 8,718, back 1,421 from the previous week. This is significantly lower when compared to the corresponding week in 2020 when 10,960 lambs were slaughtered locally. Lambs exports to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 7,536 head, up 204 from the previous week. The NI average deadweight lamb price last week was up 3.8p/kg to 480.1p/kg. The deadweight lamb price in ROI reported an increase of 0.8p/kg to the equivalent of 521.9p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

Many of the marts reported a decline in the number of lambs passing through the sale rings this week. In Omagh on Saturday 1434 lambs sold from 492-518p/kg compared to 1942 lambs sold from 467-494p/kg the previous week. On Monday in Masereene 803 lambs sold from 440-466p/kg compared to 903 lambs sold from 440-480p/kg last week. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 677 lambs sold from 440-528p/kg compared to 1046 lambs sold from 444-525p/kg the previous week. On Thursday in Armoey 312 lambs sold from 435-490p/kg compared to 574 lambs sold from 450-485p/kg last week. Top reported prices for culled ewes ranged from £132-£174 across the marts this week.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 09/10/21		Lambs			
To: 14/10/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	1434	492	518	-
	Swatragh	1520	450	526	-
Monday	Kilrea	720	438	503	-
	Massereene	803	440	466	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	555	445	515	-
	Rathfriland	677	440	528	474
Wednesday	Ballymena	2227	436	505	455
	Enniskillen	782	424	500	-
	Armoey	312	435	490	-
	Markethill	1200	450	492	-

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