

BEEF HAS BECOME AN ALL TOO CONVENIENT CLIMATE CHANGE SCAPEGOAT

Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) chief executive Ian Stevenson believes that the beef industry has become an all too convenient scapegoat for those within society wanting to place a disproportionate amount of blame for climate change on production agriculture. "And, of course, this narrative is enthusiastically jumped upon by those who espouse a plant based diet or vegan lifestyle," he added.

"Sections of the media also seem to buy into this totally unbalanced thinking. Hardly a day goes by when imagery of people eating hamburgers or cattle grazing does not flash up on our television or computer screens while commentators discuss the impact of climate change and 'potential' solutions that individuals can make to play their part." Ian continued: "Meanwhile, less tends to be heard of the more than significant contribution made by the likes of the transport and energy sectors to the climate change burden and the need for these sectors to get their respective houses in order." According to the LMC representative, agriculture lies fifth in the league table of industries and sectors that account for the UK's total

greenhouse gas emission levels. Topping the charts is transport, accounting for 27% all emissions, energy supply is second at 21%, followed by business and residential making up 17% and 15% respectively of all the greenhouse gas emissions produced in the UK.

"Agriculture comes next in the league table, accounting for 10% of all emissions. However, this reality is very rarely communicated across the media at large with beef and other ruminant livestock coming in for a more than disproportionate level of criticism when it comes to apportioning the blame for climate change in the first instance." Ian went on to point out that the critically important part played by agriculture in delivering food security for the UK as a whole very rarely gets a mention within the climate change debate.

"Nor does the role played by beef within a healthy and balanced diet," he stressed. "This was a topic discussed in depth by Professor Alice Stanton, from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, courtesy of her presentation to the recent Ulster Farmers' Union: Department of Agriculture,

Environment and Rural Affairs climate change conference. "She made it perfectly clear that climate cannot be discussed in splendid isolation. Rather it must be assessed in tandem with the need to develop food production systems that meet the needs of a fast-growing population while also ensuring that all consumers can benefit from a healthy and nutritious diet." And the good news is that beef can play a critically important role when it comes to meeting all of these criteria.

"Ian Stevenson fully recognises the role that LMC can play in providing balance to these climate change discussions. But this in no way diminishes the responsibility that will be placed on the farming and food sectors as they actively contribute to the fight against climate change." Farmers are up for the challenge that lies ahead. The need for fundamental change that needs to take place within the agri food sectors is already obvious. "But, here again, plenty of good news abounds. Courtesy of the existing science that is already available to us we know many of the measures that can be taken to improve efficiency levels across all of our farms." And by taking a data driven and

productivity focussed approach many farmers will be able to significantly reduce the carbon footprints of their businesses within a relatively short period of time. "Making fundamental shifts happen will require significant investment across the industry. And farmers cannot be expected to shoulder all of this responsibility by themselves. The government will have to step in and provide adequate support measures."

But as Ian also pointed out, farmers must be given realistic climate change targets to aim for in the first place. He concluded: "It is not physically possible to achieve a Net Zero Carbon scenario within Northern Ireland with livestock based agricultural systems which are so important to the region's economy, society and health and wellbeing of the nation." This is why the climate change bill introduced by Green Party leader Clare Bailey is so fundamentally flawed.

"The UK's Committee on Climate Change has recognised that reducing its carbon emissions by 82% over the next three decades is an achievable target for farming and food in Northern Ireland." This figure is based on

science. Moreover, it is the target referenced within the DAERA climate change bill, also making its way through the various Stormont procedural processes at the present time.

Image 1: Grazing livestock help sequester the carbon in the atmosphere helping tackle climate change



"It is universally recognised that the 82% emissions' reduction target will be a steep enough hill for farming and food to climb. But it is considered to be attainable and farmers are ready, willing and able to adapt their businesses accordingly. "In contrast, the fundamental climate change target within the Clare bailey bill is not based on science. Moreover, its implementation would lead to the absolute decimation of our farming and food sectors."

HALF TERM SEES THE LMC NOTCHING UP 100 SCHOOL COOKERY DEMONSTRATIONS

The Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) is confirming that just over 100 schools hosted Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb cookery demonstrations during the months of September and October.

“This means that we are fully on course to meet our target of hosting 375 demonstrations between 1st September 2021 and 31st March 2022,” confirmed Commission Marketing and Communications Manager, Lauren Patterson.

“During this period, just over 100 school cookery demonstrations took place in post primary schools across Northern Ireland. Almost 2500 pupils were reached in this time, across 33 schools.”

Lauren continued: “And November has seen our team of demonstrators equally busy. 375 demonstrations is a significant number to LMC, as it is the greatest number of demonstrations LMC has ever completed in an academic year.”

Lauren also indicated that the feedback from teachers since the

beginning of the term has been extremely positive.

Emma Badger, Home Economics Teacher at Rainey Endowed commented, “Overall both demonstrations provided a good level of theory and practical cooking skills - pupils enjoyed these and were very keen to try the dishes produced.”

Courtesy of the school demonstrations, students have had the opportunity to taste LMC’s new beef and lamb recipes, as well as hearing messaging about the Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assurance (NIFQA) scheme, the sustainable production practices of local livestock farmers and the nutritional importance of NIFQA beef and lamb as part of a healthy balanced diet.

Fiona Feeny, Home Economics Teacher at Foyle College gave feedback on the demonstrations saying: “By the end of the demo, the pupils were very knowledgeable and well informed on the importance of purchasing farm quality assured beef & lamb as well as the nutritional benefits of including it in their diet. They were able to answer

questions confidently on these topics at the end of the demo.”

Lauren Patterson again: “The cookery demonstrations have been structured to meet the needs of all secondary school student age groups. Those in pre-GCSE classes are instructed in basic food handling and cookery skills. However, older students receive unique insights, which complement the curriculum followed for the Food and Nutrition (GCSE) and Nutrition and Food Science (A Level) courses.

“The subject of farm quality assurance is touched on at GCSE level and is included as a formal element in the curriculum for those A Level students studying Nutrition and Food Science,” Lauren confirmed. She continued; “The demonstrations have been tailored to meet all of the management criteria put in place by the schools, while also delivering for the students taking part.”

LMC has been hosting cookery demonstrations in schools across Northern Ireland for almost 25 years. Their success has been based on the recognised benefit they deliver for students and the fact that they fully

complement the curriculums followed in schools.

At a very fundamental level, the demonstrations are allowing school children to learn about the role of farm quality assured beef and lamb within a balanced diet. And this is a story that has a very strong farm to fork dimension associated with it.

Image 2: LMC demonstrator Arlene Thompson carrying out a cookery demonstration



Lauren Patterson again: “All of our in-classroom communications are very much fact and science driven. Beef and lamb are unique sources of minerals and vitamins, all of which play a critically important role as key drivers of nutrition across all age groups.

“Our demonstrations have been developed with the full support of teachers and those developing the curriculums taught in our schools. And this will always be the case. Complimenting the course work taught in the classroom is at the heart of everything that we do.

“LMC’s input at school level is also helping students to develop invaluable life skills.” She concluded: “Students are consumers in their own right. So it is important that they are given relevant information which allows them to make properly informed decisions, when it comes to the foods they eat.

“The 2021/22 academic year is now in full swing. It is very encouraging to get a sense of how much value teachers place on our school demonstrations. “And it’s important that LMC builds on all of this for the future.”

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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 08/11/21	Next Week 15/11/21
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 - 290p

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 remained steady ranging from 386-394p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2020 the major processors were quoting 360-366p/kg for in spec U-3 grade steers and heifers. Quotes for O+3 grading cows came under pressure this week ranging from 260-290p/kg with similar quotes expected for early next week.

Throughput of prime cattle in the local plants improved last week with 7,934 head processed, an increase of 171 head from the previous week. This was 478 head more than the 7,456 prime cattle processed in local plants during the same week last year. Cow throughput in NI last week increased marginally from the week before to total 2,546 head, the highest weekly throughput to date in 2021. However, this is back 418 head from the 2,964 cattle processed in the same week in 2020.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants last week consisted of 297 prime cattle and 176 cows with no cattle imported from GB for direct slaughter locally. Meanwhile exports from NI to ROI last week consisted of two prime cattle and 59 cows with a further 17 prime cattle and eight cows exported from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

The NI deadweight trade for prime cattle reported a mixed performance last week. The average NI steer price last week was back 0.2p/kg to 391.6p/kg while the R3 steer price was back 0.7p/kg to 400.8p/kg. In the corresponding week last year, the R3 steer price was 369.3p/kg, 31.5p/kg behind current levels. Meanwhile the average heifer price in NI last week was back 0.8p/kg to 394.6p/kg with the R3 heifer price up 0.5p/kg to 402p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2020, the R3 heifer price was 370.8p/kg, 31.2p/kg behind current levels. The average NI young bull price was back 2.5p/kg to 375.7p/kg while the R3 young bull price was back 2.1p/kg to 388.5p/kg. The NI cow trade also reported a mixed performance last week with the average cow price back 1.2p/kg to 273.8p/kg and the O3 cow price back 1.5p/kg to 304.7p/kg.

The GB deadweight trade for prime cattle showed signs of improvement last week. The GB average steer price increased by 0.7p/kg to 411.3p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 1.4p/kg to 419.8p/kg. This brings the differential between the GB and NI R3 steer price to 19p/kg. The average GB heifer price remained steady at 408p/kg while the R3 heifer price reported an increase of 1.4p/kg to 418.2p/kg. However, the cow trade in GB continued to come under pressure with all grades back from the previous week. The average cow price was back by a penny to 259p/kg with the O3 cow price back 3.7p/kg to 286p/kg.

Last week in ROI the deadweight cattle trade for prime cattle strengthened with an increased in prices paid across all the reported grades. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was up 2.0p/kg to 354.8p/kg. The R3 heifer price in ROI last week was up 2.4p/kg to 359.3p/kg, which takes the R3 heifer price differential between NI and ROI to 42.7p/kg. The cow trade in ROI last week remained under pressure with the O3 cow price back 1.1p/kg to 294.3p/kg.

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

W/E 06/11/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	403.0	363.8	420.3	425.3	427.1	420.3	423.4
	R3	400.8	354.8	421.0	422.0	419.2	415.9	419.8
	R4	398.7	355.1	422.5	426.7	419.7	415.4	422.8
	O3	392.1	340.9	405.6	402.3	396.4	394.1	398.6
	AVG	391.6	-	417.0	414.5	407.4	402.9	411.3
Heifers	U3	404.9	368.6	426.9	426.9	431.8	422.9	427.9
	R3	402.0	359.3	421.8	418.5	420.0	412.6	418.2
	R4	400.0	359.6	420.8	421.3	419.3	410.2	419.4
	O3	394.5	349.8	398.4	397.4	392.7	387.6	392.5
	AVG	394.6	-	417.5	412.6	405.3	394.0	408.0
Young Bulls	U3	395.7	347.4	413.8	420.0	419.1	408.0	416.2
	R3	388.5	342.0	403.8	415.4	418.3	403.8	413.1
	O3	373.6	331.5	368.5	379.8	392.5	366.8	384.2
	AVG	375.7	-	399.8	395.3	402.0	372.0	397.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6334	-	6289	6684	6933	4480	24386	
Cows	O3	304.7	294.3	289.2	285.5	286.4	283.4	286.0
	O4	307.7	295.5	293.1	291.2	286.7	280.9	287.7
	P2	266.6	260.4	246.6	247.1	250.5	243.4	247.9
	P3	284.4	282.7	261.8	257.5	266.1	254.8	261.7
	AVG	273.8	-	286.9	266.2	256.3	246.2	259.0

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=85.04p 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 06/11/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	240	264	248	200	239	218
Friesians	172	180	175	133	166	144
Heifers	214	257	228	178	213	200
Beef Cows	170	215	188	130	169	150
Dairy Cows	115	142	125	80	114	102
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	230	274	245	200	229	210
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	220	249	232	180	219	200
Bullocks over 500kg	208	225	215	170	207	190
Heifers up to 450kg	225	256	235	180	224	200
Heifers over 450kg	200	237	218	170	199	188
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	330	430	380	225	325	275
Continental Heifers	280	390	340	150	275	215
Friesian Bulls	80	110	103	30	75	50
Holstein Bulls	70	110	83	8	65	35

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 06/11/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	404.3	406.9	395.6
R3	398.9	401.7	388.5
O+3	393.3	394.7	380.8

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 06/11/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	200.1	212.3	218.9	234.5
P2	220.0	240.3	263.8	276.1
P3	247.0	271.2	274.6	286.8
O3	-	269.8	299.3	305.3
O4	-	-	313.5	307.6
R3	-	-	-	325.4

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 08/11/21	Next Week 15/11/21
R3 Lambs up to 22kg	520-525p/kg	555-565p/kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 23/10/21	W/E 30/10/21	W/E 06/11/21
NI L/W Lambs	470.6	484.2	499.2
NI D/W Lambs	487.7	497.0	517.4
GB D/W Lambs	529.9	533.2	556.5
ROI D/W	531.3	537.0	556.6

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the major processors for R3 grade lambs strengthened as the week progressed and ended the week ranging from 555-565p/kg up to 22kg. Last week the throughput of lambs in the local plants increased by 320 head from the previous week to 9,270 head. However, this is back 498 head when compared to the same week in 2020. A further 8,137 lambs were exported to ROI for direct slaughter last week, up 750 head from the previous week. The NI average deadweight lamb price last week was 517.4p/kg, up 20.4p/kg from the previous week. In the same week in 2020 the NI deadweight lamb price was 428.6p/kg. The deadweight lamb price in ROI was up 19.6p/kg to 556.6p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

This week a good trade was reported across the marts with steady numbers through many of the sale rings. On Saturday in Omagh 838 lambs sold from 523-559p/kg compared to 1095 lambs sold from 506-541p/kg the previous week. On Tuesday in Rathfriland 638 lambs sold from 500-667 (avg 538p/kg) compared to 671 lambs sold from 480-566 (avg 502p/kg) last week. In Ballymena on Wednesday 2501 lambs sold from 520-588p/kg (avg 525p/kg) compared to 2755 lambs sold from 490-535p/kg (avg 486p/kg). On Thursday this week in Markethill a good entry of 1370 lambs sold from 540-593p/kg compared to 1130 lambs sold last week from 490-565p/kg. The strong trade for cull ewes continues with top reported prices ranging from £143-£216 across the marts this week.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 06/11/21		Lambs			
To: 11/11/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	838	523	559	-
	Swatragh	1175	464	629	-
Monday	Kilrea	760	482	586	-
	Massereene	510	500	548	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	525	500	600	-
	Rathfriland	638	500	667	538
Wednesday	Ballymena	2501	520	588	525
	Enniskillen	828	525	618	-
	Arroy	621	535	590	538
	Markethill	1370	540	593	-

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