

DEADWEIGHT CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 27/05/24	Next Week 03/06/24
Prime		
U-3	460 - 466p	456 - 464p
R-3	454 - 460p	450 - 458p
O+3	448 - 454p	444 - 452p
P+3	392 - 398p	388 - 396p
Cows		
O+3	335 - 356p	337 - 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.

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 25/05/24	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	487.1	487.9	479.2
R3	483.1	483.5	474.8
O+3	474.4	474.1	450.4

*Prices exclude AA, HER, WAG and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 25/05/24	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	232.9	249.9	263.3	286.0
P2	264.6	278.7	301.2	325.4
P3	-	312.4	321.4	327.9
O3	-	334.0	338.6	347.7
O4	-	332.0	294.0	349.6
R3	-	-	-	360.4

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Last week in NI the deadweight cattle trade softened despite a smaller kill. Prime cattle throughput totalled 7,771 head, a reduction of 302 head from the previous week. Meanwhile, cow throughput declined 195 head last week to total 1,731 head. Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter totalled 342 head last week which accounted for four per cent of the total NI prime cattle kill. By comparison in the same week last year, 6,970 prime cattle were processed and 445 prime cattle were imported from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants which accounted for six per cent of the total prime cattle kill. Meanwhile, 122 cows and one bull were also imported from ROI for slaughter in NI plants last week. Following changes to GB legislation earlier this month no live exports will leave GB for direct slaughter.

In NI, GB and ROI a softer deadweight trade was reported for prime cattle last week. In NI the R3 steer price was up 0.6p/kg to 484.8p/kg while the R3 heifer price softened by 0.4p/kg to 484.2p/kg. The deadweight trade for young bulls reported an overall increase of 0.3p/kg to 461.6p/kg, with R3 animals increasing by the same margin. Across the regions of GB the trade for prime cattle reported declines of 1.2p/kg - 9.7p/kg across the grades. Meanwhile in GB cows continue to be met with a good trade with the average O3 cow price increasing by 2.6p/kg to 391.3p/kg. This is 44.5p/kg ahead of the same price in NI where the average O3 cow price declined 1.7p/kg last week to 346.8p/kg.

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

W/E 25/05/24	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	487.1	446.7	488.7	493	486.8	492
	R3	484.8	440.1	487.9	490.6	487.8	485
	R4	482.5	442.6	489.6	492.4	486.4	486.3
	O3	473.9	434.9	469.9	478.6	476	472.3
	AVG	476.0	-	485.4	486.1	480.7	477.5
Heifers	U3	487.6	458.6	495.8	494	496.1	492.8
	R3	484.2	446.0	489.7	487.8	485.9	484
	R4	482.3	448.0	490.3	490.8	485.6	484.7
	O3	473.3	436.1	469.2	472.6	470.2	466
	AVG	476.6	-	487.7	482.1	478.4	473.8
Young Bulls	U3	479.2	444.4	477.2	487.7	488	490.3
	R3	473.5	430.3	475.6	479	476.2	482.1
	O3	457.4	415.7	458.6	440.1	451.1	454.1
	AVG	461.6	-	471.2	467.1	468.9	480.2
	Prime Cattle Price Reported	6,541	-	6,112	7,393	8,230	5,189
Cows	O3	346.8	363.3	391.9	392.3	391.3	389.1
	O4	348.7	363.0	396	393.4	391.4	387.5
	P2	308.9	327.0	350.7	350.2	348.4	342.1
	P3	326.3	349.1	368.1	371.3	364.1	358.9
	AVG	311.2	-	385.5	372.9	363.2	348.6

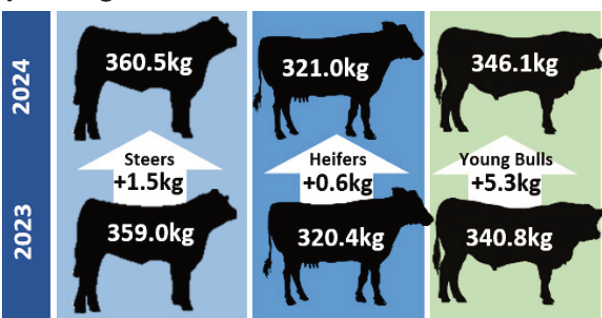
Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=85.31p Stg
(ii) Shading indicates a lower price than the previous week.
(iii) AVG is the average of all grades in the category, not just those listed

FQAS Membership Fee



The revised fee of £95 (excluding VAT) will be implemented from 1st June 2024 (June renewals onwards)

Figure 1: Average weight of prime cattle slaughtered in NI by category to w/e 25 May 2024 vs 2023 and the year on year change. Source: DAERA.



DEADWEIGHT SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 27/05/24	Next Week 03/06/24
R3 Lambs up to 21kg	800 - 810p	790 - 800p

REPORTED NI SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 11/05/24	W/E 18/05/24	W/E 26/05/24
D/W R3 Lambs	796.6	806.6	825.8
D/W Lambs	791.3	801.7	812.4
L/W Lambs	754.5	797.7	785.5

REGIONAL SHEEP PRICES (GB / ROI)

	GB	ROI
GB D/W Lambs	908.6	927.0
ROI D/W	777.7	786.9

The average carcass weight of lambs processed in NI last week was 21.4kg with 22 per cent of lambs slaughtered locally last week graded R3. Producers are reminded the highest returns from local plants can be secured for R3 grading lambs weighing 21kg which are farm quality assured.

Sheep Trade

The average deadweight lamb price in NI last week strengthened 10.7p/kg to 812.4p/kg. In ROI the deadweight lamb price reported a 6.9c/kg strengthening in euro terms however declined 0.7p/kg in sterling terms owing to a weaker exchange rate. With supplies of lambs for slaughter increasing in NI, base quotes from the major local processors softened for R3 grade lambs to end this week ranging from 790-800p/kg up to 21kg. Similar quotes are expected early next week.

This week the liveweight lamb trade came under some pressure with good numbers passing through local marts. Demand from GB continues in local marts for NI lambs, while ewes also continue to be met with a strong demand from export markets. Lamb exports to ROI for direct slaughter remained at steady levels last week with 3,088 head exported.

Local lamb throughput last week totalled 5,618 head, back 190 head on the week previous. This brings total lamb/hogget throughput in 2024 to 152,210 head, a 22,294 head or 12.8 per cent decline on the same period last year.

LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE TRADE

LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 25/05/24	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	285	320	296	238	284	260
Friesians	225	234	230	208	219	215
Heifers	276	314	290	220	275	247
Beef Cows	229	278	245	140	228	188
Dairy Cows	134	170	150	102	133	110
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers up to 400kg	351	418	375	245	350	285
Steers 400kg - 500kg	302	394	340	215	300	260
Steers over 500kg	259	288	270	233	257	246
Heifers up to 450kg	300	378	325	220	299	240
Heifers over 450kg	280	329	295	213	279	245
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	390	630	465	285	385	350
Continental Heifers	350	595	425	225	345	300
Friesian Bulls	135	235	173	70	130	90
Holstein Bulls	85	180	133	20	80	40

LIVEWEIGHT SHEEP TRADE

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 25/05/24		Lambs			
To: 30/05/24		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	54	765	798	-
	Swatragh	350	777	830	-
Monday	Kilrea	700	772	815	-
	Markethill	250	760	818	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	640	760	830	-
	Rathfriland	757	714	760	750
Wednesday	Ballymena	1311	740	854	770
	Armoey	212	770	820	-

REFLECTIONS ON BALMORAL SHOW 2024

The Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) is confirming a record attendance for Balmoral Show 2024. Just over 120,000 attended the event over the four days. "And this trend was reflected in the numbers of people coming on to our stand," Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) chief executive, Colin Smith commented. "Our outreach to individual consumers, family groups and farmers was immense, in equal measure. "The show also provided an opportunity for Commission staff and our board members to meet-up with representatives of other stakeholder groups across the farming and food sectors." Balmoral plays a key role in so many ways with regard to the work that LMC carries out. And the 2024 event did not disappoint in this context.

Image 1: Visitors to the LMC stand sampling a NIFQA recipe.



LMC cookery demonstrations are always a highlight of any Balmoral Show. And this year's event confirmed, once again, the tremendous demand at consumer levels for recipes created around the inclusion of Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured

beef and lamb. "Our cookery demonstrations proved as popular as ever," Colin Smith explained. "Balmoral Show also provided a fantastic opportunity to engage with our farmers."

Image 2: Dinmore Sensation, Beef Champion of Champions.



Friday and Saturday at Balmoral also saw LMC staff busy in the various livestock arenas. The Commission sponsored a number of important cattle and sheep competition classes. These were: the sheep inter-breed pairs' championship, beef inter-breed champion of champions, sheep young handlers and the beef group-of-five championship - native and continental classes. "The quality of the stock taking part in all the competitions was fantastic," confirmed the LMC's chief executive. "This bears testimony to the continuing investment made by Northern Ireland's top pedigree breeders." No better example of this was the securing of the Beef Inter Breed Championship by Trevor

Shields, from Killeel, with his immense Limousin heifer: Dinmore Sensation. The animal went on to secure the Champion of Champions accolade at Balmoral 2024.

Balmoral Show 2024 also provided an appropriate platform for LMC to celebrate 25 years of the organisation's education programme. This activity includes the hosting of cookery demonstrations in both primary and secondary schools. But of equal significance is the strong relationship, which LMC enjoys with the teaching profession right across Northern Ireland. Colin Smith again: "The LMC team at Balmoral created a vibrant and engaging stand once again this year to reflect and celebrate 25 years of our education programme. "We were delighted to welcome four schools on to the stand: the winners of our inaugural primary school completion." He added: "Our aim is to build on the Commission's current education programme, targeting school children of all ages. "It's hard to believe that another school year is coming to an end. It's now a case of planning for 2024/25."

Balmoral 2024 also provided the LMC team with an opportunity to interface with the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – Andrew Muir MLA. He was a welcome visitor to the Commission stand at the event. In tandem with this LMC staff attended a press event, specifically hosted by Andrew Muir. "The minister's visit to our stand was of particular significance," Colin Smith confirmed. "Specifically, it gave Commission representatives an opportunity to discuss a number of issues of direct relevance to the red meat sectors."

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTED AS CRITICAL TO SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVITY

It would appear from farming industry experts speaking at a number of events at this year's Balmoral show that innovation is the key to achieving the rate of change required to meet legislative targets and deliver sustainable productivity. Events hosted by ABP, Ulster Bank and the Irish Farmers' Journal all pointed to the importance of technology in assisting farmers to improve their productivity and reducing emissions. "For the less intensive sectors, defined by high numbers of part time

farmers who rely on multiple sources of income to make their farm business sustainable, innovation must be accompanied by financial support and effective knowledge transfer," Colin Smith asserted. "The message is straightforward: with the right support we can turn the challenges of climate change into an opportunity for farmers to innovate and enhance productivity and profitability. We are very fortunate to have organisations such as CAFRE and AFBI to provide this support. "

AFBI are hosting two Open Days on 18th and 19th June 2024 where farmers will see how the latest AFBI research can help to drive further improvements in sustainability within dairy, beef and sheep farming systems, learn how livestock farming systems can transform through improvements in efficiency, as well as the adoption of new ways of working and innovations to reduce emissions and maximise carbon capture within the landscape. Speakers include AFBI scientists and invited experts.

THE WORK OF THE UK EXPORT CERTIFICATION PARTNERSHIP

A range of factors including the aforementioned animal disease challenges can impact on export markets too. To assist exporters LMC contributes to the work carried out by the UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP). Colin commented: "UKECP carries out tremendous work on behalf of beef and sheep farmers here in Northern Ireland. Not only does the UKECP monitor, inform and update NI exporters on the potential impact of disease, such as the recent BSE case in Scotland, but it is active in establishing new market access too."

LMC is an active and funding industry member of the UKECP. According to Colin Smith, numerous positive developments on third country exports were achieved through the work of the organisation. Moreover, LMC continues to support the red meat sectors in Northern Ireland through the provision of this important service. For example, this year UKECP continued to provide support and advice to LMC levy payers on export and export approval issues. The Commission's chief executive further explained: "Through the work of the UKECP a new market for lamb exports from the UK to Taiwan was achieved. Continued work was also progressed by UKECP on key market access priorities for beef and lamb including: China, Vietnam, South Korea, South Africa, Mexico and the Caribbean."

VIGILANCE ON THREAT OF ANIMAL DISEASES CRITICAL

Recent weeks have highlighted the impact that animal health challenges can have on the various livestock sectors. A confirmed isolated outbreak of BSE in Scotland, in tandem with the impact of Bluetongue and Schmallenberg Disease in many areas of Great Britain (GB), has served to put significant pressure on all the affected farming businesses.

Thankfully, Northern Ireland has not been impacted directly by these developments. Colin Smith commented: "We have seen the impact disease can have on the markets with limited availability of new season lamb in GB. This is, in-part, because early-lambing flocks in southern England and Wales were reportedly hit by Schmallenberg. Vigilance on these threats is critical and this has been reiterated recently by Northern Ireland's CVO speaking specifically in regard to Bluetongue."

STAYING SAFE OVER THE COMING MONTHS

The summer of 2024 has arrived. And with it comes the hope and expectation of some good weather, which we all can enjoy. However, the coming months will be busy ones for beef and sheep farmers across Northern Ireland.

Image 3: LMC distributed high vis vests to thousands of families with children at Balmoral Show.



The silage making season is already with us and the myriad of machinery items involved in this process will feature prominently in fields and on our roads from now right through and until the autumn. The health and safety-related risks associated with silage making are significant. "It is imperative that farmers and

contractors think safe at all times," commented Colin Smith. "And with the school holidays on the horizon, the need to be extra vigilant of young children playing is another issue that farmers and contractors should take full cognisance of." He added: "Accidents can happen in the blink of an eye. Preventing them takes that extra bit of thought and preparation before undertaking any work in fields or around silos or slurry tanks."

The LMC's chief executive concluded: "The holiday period is always a busy time on farms. For one thing, there tends to be more people around the place with folks on holiday and the children off school. "But with more people on the scene and everyone wanting to help out, the risk of a serious accident taking place becomes all the greater. "Preventing accidents from taking place requires those involved in any farm-related activity taking that little bit of extra time to work through all the permutations with regard to what could and what could not happen. "No job is that urgent that an extra minute or two's preparation would not help the project to be completed more efficiently and safely, from everyone's point of view."



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