

REDUCTION IN CATTLE MORTALITY ON LOCAL FARMS DURING 2019

CATTLE mortality on farm represents a huge cost to the NI beef industry every year with just under 64,000 cattle passing through the two major rendering plants in NI during 2018. This was a four per cent increase from 2017 levels according to the latest available figures from APHIS.

Throughput at the two major rendering plants in NI represents the largest majority of cattle mortality on NI farms however the total figure will be slightly higher as some bovine carcasses are currently disposed of through hunt kennels and smaller processors which are not included in this analysis.

During 2018 local beef processing plants killed an average of 8,680 cattle per week which means that on farm cattle mortality represented a loss to the local beef industry of seven week's worth of cattle. This is a huge loss to the local beef industry and reductions in mortality levels have the potential to help the entire beef sector to make financial and environmental gains through improved efficiency.

It is worth noting that cattle mortality on NI farms was particularly high during 2018 given the challenging production

conditions faced by local producers, particularly in the first half of the year. However there has been a notable decline in the throughput of cattle in the local rendering plants during 2019, which can be partly attributed to the much more favourable weather conditions this spring and early summer.

Figure 1 displays cattle throughput in local rendering plants by category for the period January-July 2019 and the corresponding period in 2016-2018. As indicated in the chart throughput levels during 2019 to date are operating significantly below 2018 levels with throughput also below the levels recorded in the same period in 2016 and 2017.

Cattle mortality on farm totalled 64,000 head in 2018 which is the equivalent of seven weeks throughput for local beef processors.

APHIS figures have shown that during 2019 to date 34,665 cattle have

passed through local rendering plants, a reduction of 6,449 head (16 per cent) from the same period in 2018. If we consider throughput in the rendering plants during 2017, which represents a more typical year in terms of on farm cattle mortality, then current levels of on farm cattle mortality are running three per cent lower.

As outlined in Table 1 this decline in cattle mortality has been across all categories during 2019 to date with the levels of on farm mortality appearing to return to the more typical levels for all categories recorded in 2016 and 2017.

Cattle mortality on NI farms tends to peak annually in the spring to coincide with the peak calving period with a smaller peak in September/October which coincides with autumn calving and the housing period. While not all mortality on farm can be prevented there are measures that producers can take to help minimise the risk of losses.

These measures may include the implementation of a preventative health plan for example or changes to animal housing to improve ventilation and help reduce disease risk.

Figure 1: Cattle throughput in major rendering plants in Northern Ireland by category during January-June 2016-2019.

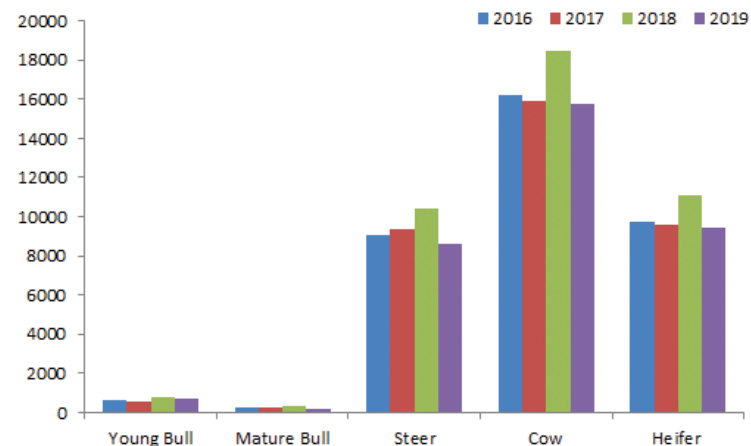


Table 1: Cattle throughput in major rendering plants in Northern Ireland by category during January-June 2016-2019.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	% Change 2018/19
Young Bull	652	591	795	678	-15%
Mature Bull	273	273	311	224	-28%
Steer	9067	9376	10443	8585	-18%
Cow	16218	15891	18486	15775	-15%
Heifer	9705	9604	11079	9403	-15%
Total	35915	35735	41114	34665	-16%

LMC EXTENDS FQAS MART CLINICS

CURRENTLY, LMC's Farm Liaison Officer, Terry White, runs a FQAS mart clinic every month in each county Ballymena, Kilrea, Omagh, Markethill, Enniskillen and Saintfield which will continue as normal.

Image 1: Terry White, LMC FQAS Farm Liaison Officer



The latest addition to the service has seen Terry visiting other quality assured marts. Due to the success of this service in 2018, LMC has decided now to repeat this in 2019. Terry will cover the majority of quality assured marts in Northern Ireland. This will allow all members a chance to use this service in their local area.

It is well known that some producers can find a number of the scheme requirements, such as the completion of records, a little daunting. The Liaison Service is in place to assist farmers in

a face-to-face manner and to ensure that as many producers as possible can continue to benefit from being a member of the scheme.

The daily FQAS helpline that LMC also currently provides is still available alongside the mart clinics. Producers can use the service for any general enquiries in relation to FQAS membership, to help prepare for an inspection and also to help resolve any non-conformances identified during a farm inspection. Table 2 shows the marts Terry will be attending during August 2019.

**FQAS helpline:
028 92633024**

**FQAS Email:
fqas@lmcni.com**



Mart	Day	Date
Omagh	Monday (Day)	05/08/2019
Saintfield	Wednesday (Day)	07/08/2019
Swatragh	Monday (Day)	12/08/2019
Markethill	Tuesday (Day)	13/08/2019
Rathfriland	Tuesday (Evening)	13/08/2019
Camlough	Wednesday (Day)	14/08/2019
Enniskillen	Thursday (Day)	15/08/2019
Armoy	Monday (Evening)	19/08/2019
Kilrea	Wednesday (Day)	21/08/2019
Ballymena	Friday (Day)	23/08/2019
Clogher	Saturday (Day)	24/08/2019
Dungannon	Tuesday (Day)	28/08/2019

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 29/07/19	Next Week 05/08/19
Prime		
U-3	320 - 330p	320 - 330p
R-3	314 - 324p	314 - 324p
O+3	308 - 318p	308 - 318p
P+3	260 - 272p	260 - 272p
Including bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	235 - 250p	235 - 250p
Steakers	140 - 170p	140 - 170p
Blues	120 - 130p	120 - 130p

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 for U-3 grade prime cattle this week ranged from 320-330p/kg with the majority of plants quoting 324p/kg for both steers and heifers. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows ranged from 235-250p/kg this week with the majority of plants quoting in the region of 240-245p/kg. Similar base quotes for all types of cattle are expected for Monday.

The plants have reported steady supplies of cattle to meet demand for beef with throughput of prime cattle last week totalling 5,086 head. This was a decrease of 215 head from the previous week and 664 head lower than the 5,750 head killed during the same week last year. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,702 head and while this was an increase from the previous week it was well behind the 2,219 killed in the same week in 2018.

Prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 356 head with 41 cows also imported. Meanwhile imports from GB for direct slaughter consisted of 3 prime cattle and 64 cows. Exports from NI for direct slaughter in ROI plants last week consisted of 10 prime cattle and 94 cows while no cattle were exported from NI to GB for direct slaughter last week.

There was a mixed deadweight trade for prime cattle in NI last week. The average steer price was back by 1.4p/kg to 323.3p/kg while the R3 steer price decreased by 0.6p/kg to 332.5p/kg. The average heifer price last week increased by a penny to 328.8p/kg with the R3 heifer price back by 1.6p/kg to 313.6p/kg while the R3 young bull price came back half a penny to 320.6p/kg. Meanwhile the cow trade came under pressure with the average cow price back 5.6p/kg to 236.9p/kg. The O3 cow price last week was back by 1.9p/kg to 255.4p/kg.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle also reported a mixed trade across the GB regions last week. The average steer price was back by 0.7p/kg to 326.4p/kg last week while the R3 steer price was back by just over a penny to 333.7p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 steer price in NI and GB at 1.2p/kg last week compared to 6.7p/kg in the same week in 2018. The average heifer price in GB last week was 329.1p/kg, back 0.4p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was back by just over a penny to 333.2p/kg. This puts the NI R3 heifer price above the equivalent price in GB last week.

The deadweight cattle trade continued come under pressure in ROI with declines reported in all cattle grades. The R3 steer price was back by 5.9p/kg to the equivalent of 313.9p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back by 6.1p/kg to the equivalent price of 324.5p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 heifer price at 11.2p/kg or £36 on a 320kg carcass. The O3 cow price was back by 2.9p/kg to 252p/kg. This is 3.4p/kg below the equivalent price in NI. Prime cattle throughput in ROI last week totalled 26,649 head while 7,583 cows were also slaughtered.

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

W/E 27/07/19	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	330.4	322.0	340.6	337.4	334.0	329.9	335.5
	R3	332.5	313.9	343.1	337.9	330.8	324.4	333.7
	R4	332.6	315.0	348.6	344.3	331.9	324.3	340.5
	AVG	323.3	-	340.6	332.1	316.9	312.6	326.4
Heifers	U3	338.1	336.0	347.4	342.9	339.6	334.9	341.1
	R3	335.7	324.5	340.1	334.6	333.2	324.8	333.2
	R4	335.6	323.4	345.3	341.8	333.5	329.6	338.8
	AVG	328.8	-	340.6	335.4	319.8	317.0	329.1
Young Bulls	U3	324.2	314.8	326.3	327.2	327.5	323.9	326.8
	R3	320.6	302.5	319.6	320.7	317.6	314.8	318.5
	O3	302.0	282.6	297.0	290.8	286.1	299.9	290.4
	AVG	313.6	-	321.3	314.0	312.6	307.1	313.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported		4,228	-	5,667	6,709	6,819	4,190	23,385
Cows	O3	255.4	252.0	255.2	256.4	255.1	258.0	256.2
	O4	260.2	253.2	256.7	258.7	255.8	251.8	256.1
	P2	220.8	226.0	212.9	217.7	209.4	222.1	214.9
	P3	236.0	244.1	223.8	232.5	229.4	238.3	231.5
	AVG	236.9	-	247.5	241.3	227.6	230.8	233.8

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=89.51p 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

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 27/07/19	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	329.3	337.4	324.0
R3	328.1	334.0	321.5
O+3	323.9	327.7	310.0

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 27/07/19	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220- 250kg	Wgt 250- 280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	149.3	166.4	178.3	194.1
P2	175.2	199.8	221.6	226.6
P3	169.3	216.5	234.4	238.4
O3	208.0	225.5	247.5	256.6
O4	-	244.1	251.3	260.6
R3	-	-	-	275.5

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 29/07/19	Next Week 05/08/19
Lambs up to 21kg	365-370p	370-380p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 13/07/19	W/E 20/07/19	W/E 27/07/19
NI L/W Lambs	365.1	345.2	336.5
NI D/W Lambs	387.0	382.6	364.9
GB D/W Lambs	414.9	414.6	399.5
ROI D/W	421.1	410.3	400.4

Deadweight Sheep Trade

LAMB quotes from the plants held steady this week ranging from 365-370p/kg for R3 grading lambs up to 21kg. Base quotes of 370-380p/kg are expected for early next week. Lamb throughput in NI plants last week increased by 926 head to 9,399 head. This was similar to the same week last year when 9,802 lambs were killed in local plants. A further 7,514 lambs were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week, up 2,580 head from the previous week. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week was 364.9p/kg, back 17.7p/kg. In the same week last year the deadweight lamb price was 399.2p/kg. In ROI last week the deadweight lamb price was the equivalent of 400.4p/kg, back 9.9p/kg from the previous week.

This week's marts

GOOD numbers of lambs continued to pass through the marts this week with the live trade improving as the week progressed. In Swatragh on Saturday 900 lambs sold from 320-367p/kg compared to 1,400 lambs last week selling from 335-420p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 926 lambs sold from 335-365p/kg compared to 904 lambs last week selling from 330-363p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 722 lambs sold from 337-421p/kg (avg 360p/kg) compared to 715 lambs last week selling from 330-382p/kg (avg 357p/kg). A good entry of 960 lambs in Markethill this week sold from 350-375p/kg compared to lambs last week selling from 340-362p/kg. The ewe trade remained strong this week with top reported prices over £100 across many of the marts.

LATEST LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 27/07/19	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	203	209	205	175	202	188
Friesians	148	160	154	132	147	142
Heifers	208	225	212	180	205	195
Beef Cows	154	188	163	123	153	138
Dairy Cows	106	124	110	60	105	85
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	220	249	230	195	219	208
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	200	220	210	165	199	185
Bullocks over 500kg	175	196	185	150	174	162
Heifers up to 450kg	220	242	230	185	219	200
Heifers over 450kg	202	220	210	170	200	185
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	350	450	400	235	345	300
Continental Heifers	250	345	300	145	245	200
Friesian Bulls	155	185	160	30	120	80
Holstein Bulls	120	185	145	2	90	50

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 26/07/19		Lambs			
To: 01/08/19		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	270	316	346	-
Saturday	Swatragh	900	320	367	-
	Omagh	920	347	403	-
Monday	Massereene	926	335	365	-
	Kilrea	450	330	390	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	703	330	400	-
	Rathfriland	722	337	421	360
Wednesday	Ballymena	1958	340	390	352
	Enniskillen	789	330	365	-
	Armoy	312	340	400	-
	Markethill	960	350	375	-

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