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LIMOUSIN CONTINUES TO DOMINATE AS BEEF CALF REGISTRATIONS DECLINE

BEEF sired calf registrations in NI continue to be dominated by a small number of popular breeds during January 2014 as outlined in Chart 1. Limousin continues to be the most popular breed choice in NI, accounting for 28.9 per cent of beef sired calf registrations with Charolais calves accounting for a further 21.4 per cent. Aberdeen Angus is the third most popular breed accounting for 19.4 per cent of calf registrations.

Overall beef sired calf registrations in NI during 2013 totalled 309,645 head, a reduction of 20,982 head on the previous year. During 2013 the number of beef sired calves registered each month was lower than the corresponding month in 2012 for eight months of the year. This trend of lower beef sired calf registrations has continued into January 2014 with a total of 17,826 beef sired calves registered as indicated in Figure 2. This is five per cent lower than the 18,766 head registered in January 2013.

Dairy sired calf registrations have also recorded a decline with 20,610 calves registered in January 2014 compared to 21,237 calves in January 2013. This represents a three per cent decline year on year. The number of dairy sired male calves registered was five per cent lower in January with almost 9,500 male calves registered.

The continued decline in calf registrations in both the dairy and suckler herds can be partly attributed to reduced cow fertility in

response to difficult production conditions at farm level from summer 2012 through until early summer 2013. Poor feed quality and reduced cow body condition will have contributed to higher barren rates and ultimately a higher culling rate, particularly in the second half of 2012 and the first half of 2013. The result of the higher cow kill has meant there are now less cows on the ground to produce calves. A total of 42,514 cows were slaughtered in NI plants in the first half of 2013 compared to 39,378 head in the same period in 2012. Cow slaughterings in the second half of 2013 have returned to similar levels as recorded in the corresponding period on 2011.

The reduced levels of beef sired calf registrations will start to be reflected in the number of cattle coming available for slaughter in the year ahead. Throughput of prime cattle during January have totalled 29,623 head, a 11 per cent reduction on the 33,139 head slaughtered during January 2013. In January 2014 the number of beef sired cattle on the ground aged 12-30 months totalled 333,309 head, a 1.6 per cent reduction on the 338,822 head on farm in January 2013. Meanwhile the number of dairy sired males aged 2-20 months on NI farms has declined by 12 per cent between January 2013 and January 2014.

The availability of cattle for slaughter in the NI plants will also be influenced by the level of exports out of NI for both direct slaughter and further breeding and production.

During 2013 a total of 23,658 calves under 42 days were exported out of NI compared to 20,473 calves the previous year (+15.6 per cent). Most of these calves were exported to Spain with smaller numbers going to Italy and ROI.

In addition to this 18,516 weanlings and animals over seven months of age were exported out of NI for further breeding and production during 2013 with the largest majority of these destined for GB. This was an increase of 3,277 head or 22 per cent on the previous year.

Exports out of NI for direct slaughter during 2013 totalled 25,499 head, an increase of thirty per cent on the 19,583 head exported the previous year. However exports for direct slaughter have recorded a reduction over the past few months with exports in January 2014 totalling 1,911 head compared to 2,470 in January 2013. This represents a decline year on year of 23 per cent.

Meanwhile imports of weanlings and store cattle into NI for further breeding and production during 2013 totalled 23,535 head. This is a 21 per cent decline from the 29,969 head imported the previous year with the majority of imports coming from ROI. However if we look at the period November 2013 to January 2014 a total of 7,413 weanlings were imported into NI compared to 5,699 during the period November 2012 and January 2013. This is an increase of 31 per cent when comparing the two periods.

Chart 1: Beef sired calf registrations in NI broken down by breed January 2014

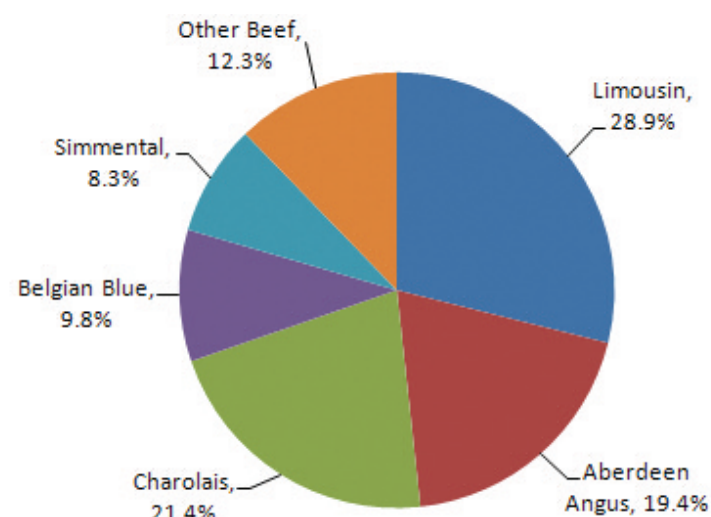
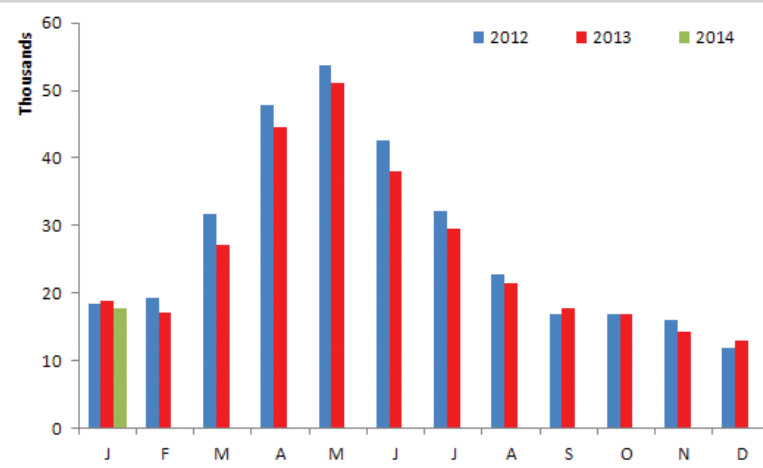
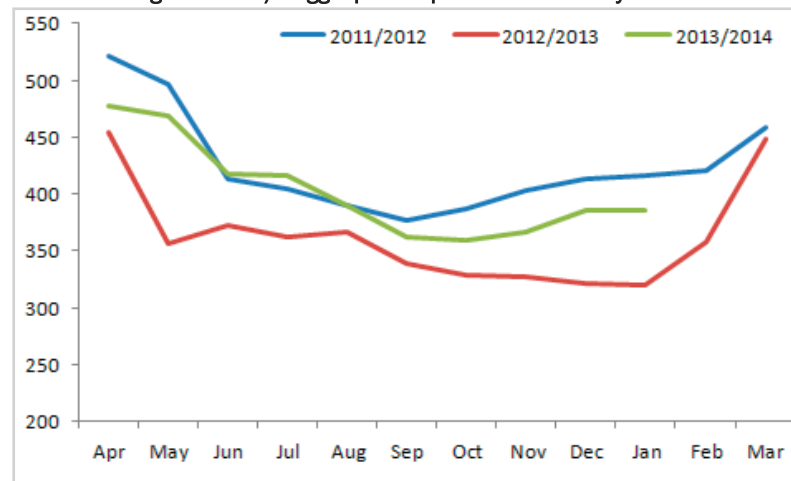


Chart 2: Beef sired calf registrations in NI January 2012 to January 2014



TRADE FOR HOGGETS REMAINS STEADY AS NUMBERS TIGHTEN

Chart 3: Average R3 lamb / hogget prices April 2011 to January 2014



Quotes from the plants have remained steady this week at 390p/kg for R3 grade hoggets with plants continuing to pay up to 22kgs. There have however been reports of numbers starting to tighten for the weeks ahead in line with normal seasonal patterns.

The average R3 hogget price in NI during the month of January 2014 was 385.4p/kg compared to an average of 319.4p/kg during January 2013. This accounts for an increase of 66p/kg in the R3 deadweight price year on year or £14.50 on a 22kg carcass.

As outlined in Chart 3 the prices paid

for lambs/hoggets during the 2013/2014 financial year to date have been consistently above those reported in the corresponding month in the 2012/2013 financial year.

During the period August 2013 to January 2014 the price being paid for R3 lambs and hoggets has been higher than the corresponding period in 2012 but lower than the record prices achieved during 2011.

The plants have reported steady supplies of hoggets to meet demand in recent weeks with a total of 35,896 hoggets slaughtered in NI plants during January 2014. This is 16 per cent

higher than the 30,884 hoggets slaughtered in NI plants during January 2013. With average carcass weights increasing by just short of half a kilogram to 22kg there has been an 18.5 per cent increase in the volume of lamb processed by NI plants year on year.

Meanwhile exports of hoggets to ROI for direct slaughter during January 2014 totalled 38,011 head compared to 61,593 head exported during January 2013. This accounts for almost a forty per cent drop in exports for direct slaughter when comparing the two periods.



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

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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 03/02/14	Next Week 10/02/14
Prime		
U-3	340-344p	336-340p
R-3	334-338p	330-334p
O+3	338-332p	324-328p
* Plus 8-14p/kg in spec bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	225-250p	230-250p
Steakers	150-200p	150-200p
Blues	110-130p	110-130p

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 01/02/14	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U-3=	368.1	373.4	322.9
U=3=	365.7	373.7	345.6
U=4=	365.9	361.5	311.8
R=3=	364.8	366.7	335.7
R=4=	358.2	363.5	-
O+3=	358.3	358.3	318.0
O=3=	347.4	339.4	317.6
Average	355.5	360.2	324.2

REPORTED COW PRICES NI W/E 01/02/14 (p/kg)

Grades	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220- 250kg	Wgt 250- 280kg	Wgt >280kg
O+3=	-	-	250.0	250.8
O-3+	-	183.9	220.0	238.8
P+2+	149.5	188.4	208.9	225.9
P+3+	-	202.0	196.3	225.7
P-1-	132.1	134.4	135.8	-

COMMODITY PRICE

W/E 01/02/14	Price (£) per tonne / 1000litre	% weekly change
Barley	156.00	n/c
Wheat	173.00	-0.6
Soya	17.40	-
Straw	710-720	-

* Latest available data

SHEEP TRADE

HOGGET QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 03/02/14	Next Week 10/02/14
NI Factories	390p > 22kg	390p > 22kg

REPORTED HOGGET PRICES - P/KG

(P/KG DW)	W/E 18/01/14	W/E 25/01/14	W/E 01/02/14
NI Liveweight	350.0p	347.9p	348.5p
NI Deadweight	379.1p	380.6p	388.2p
ROI Deadweight	369.5p	363.7p	368.4p
GB Deadweight	394.7p	397.2p	404.3p

Deadweight Cattle Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week for U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 340-344p/kg. Most factories are quoting 338-340p/kg for Monday. A bonus of 8-14p/kg continues to be available for steers and heifers that kill out in spec. Quotes for cows have remained steady across the plants this week with the majority of plants quoting 230-250p/kg for O+3 cows.

Throughput of prime cattle in the NI plants last week totalled 6,491 head, up 328 head from the previous week. This brings total prime cattle throughput for the month of January 2014 to 29,623 head compared to 33,139 head in the same period in 2013. This decline in prime cattle throughput of just over 3,500 head year on year accounts for a 11 per cent decrease. Average carcase weights have also declined year on year from 332.5kg in January 2013 to 328.5kg in January 2014. This decline by 4kg and the drop in throughput has resulted in an 11.7 per cent decline in the amount of beef from prime cattle processed by the NI plants.

Cow throughput by the NI plants in January totalled 7,657 head, 27 per cent lower than January 2013. An increase in the average cow carcase weight by 12.5 kg between the two periods has helped to offset some of the decline in throughput but the volume of cow beef processed by the NI plants was still back 18 per cent year on year.

Average steer and heifer prices in NI last week were within a penny of the previous week at 355.5p/kg and 360.2p/kg respectively with R3 steer and heifer prices following a similar trend. Meanwhile in GB the trade continues to come under pressure with average steer prices back by 3.6p/kg to 371.3p/kg with prices back in all the GB regions. The most notable decline has been in Scotland where steer prices were back by 6.6p/kg to 386.9p/kg. Average heifer prices in GB last week were back by 5.1p/kg to 369.8p/kg with the R3 heifer price back by 2.3p/kg to 372.8p/kg.

In ROI last week R3 steers and heifer prices were both back in the region of 1p/kg to 318.9p/kg and 333.2p/kg respectively while the R3 young bull price was back by the equivalent of 3.5p/kg to 291.1p/kg. The cow trade has remained fairly steady with similar prices to the previous week reported by ROI plants.

This week's marts

Finished first quality steers sold to an average price of 209p/kg liveweight this week with second quality selling to an average of 183p/kg. Finished heifers meanwhile sold to an average of 207p/kg for first quality and 178p/kg for second quality. First quality beef cows sold to an average of 180p/kg with a top reported price of 203p/kg with plainer beef type cows selling to average of 135p/kg. First quality store heifers over 450kg sold to an average of 216p/kg compared to an average of 210p/kg the previous week. First quality bullocks up to 400kg sold for an average of 208p/kg with the second quality to an average of 170p/kg.

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the plants for R3 grading hoggets have remained steady at 390p/kg this week with plants paying up to 22kg. The factories have reported steady supplies of hoggets to meet demand. Throughput in the NI plants last week totalled 7,106 head with a further 7,934 hoggets making the journey to ROI for direct slaughter. Deadweight lamb prices in NI last week averaged 388.2p/kg, up 7.6p/kg from the previous week. Meanwhile in ROI prices have also firmed in response to tighter supplies with an equivalent price last week of 368.4p/kg. In GB last week the average deadweight price was 404.3p/kg, up 7.1p/kg from the previous week.

This week's marts

THE trade across the marts this week was generally similar to previous weeks with good numbers passing through several of the marts. In Omagh last Saturday 1,081 hoggets sold from 345-380p/kg compared to 818 hoggets the previous Saturday selling from 343-368p/kg. A similar trade to the previous week in Massereene on Monday saw 1,216 hoggets sold from 345-378p/kg while in Kilrea this week 540 hoggets sold from 347-375p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 524 hoggets sold to an average of 359p/kg with firm demand reported for hoggets from 21-24kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday 1,589 hoggets sold to an average of 347p/kg compared to 1,167 hoggets last week selling to an average of 347p/kg. Top prices reported for good quality cull ewes ranged from £68 to £78.

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

W/E 01/02/2013	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	366.5	324.9	396.3	376.7	378.5	383.3
	R3	364.5	318.9	386.8	372.2	368.3	373.1
	R4	364.5	319.8	388.7	387.0	373.3	380.7
	O3	350.4	304.0	363.9	358.1	350.2	341.1
	AVG	355.5	-	386.9	374.4	364.8	352.5
Heifers	U3	370.3	343.8	395.9	381.2	379.5	384.8
	R3	366.5	333.2	386.0	370.0	366.6	364.7
	R4	362.9	332.5	386.4	373.6	366.5	362.2
	O3	351.6	318.8	359.6	350.3	347.1	341.8
	AVG	360.2	-	385.2	369.3	363.6	354.9
Young Bulls	U3	335.8	298.8	387.8	334.2	361.0	374.9
	R3	339.8	291.1	374.9	327.1	356.8	341.1
	O3	319.3	266.8	332.4	311.9	327.0	335.8
	AVG	324.2	-	351.4	320.0	337.2	335.4
	Prime Cattle Price Reported	5441	-	6201	5745	5063	20831
Cows	O3	242.4	240.8	244.7	234.6	255.3	220.5
	O4	246.4	242.7	247.2	238.2	259.1	228.3
	P2	195.8	203.2	187.0	184.7	190.9	165.3
	P3	219.7	228.8	205.3	210.3	220.8	179.0
	AVG	227.5	-	240.2	219.9	250.0	188.4

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=82.30p 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 01/02/14	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	198	220	209	165	197	183
Friesians	150	169	156	142	149	145
Heifers	195	220	207	160	194	178
Beef Cows	160	203	180	120	159	135
Dairy Cows	100	122	110	60	99	80
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	196	213	208	130	195	170
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	208	240	220	160	207	185
Bullocks over 500kg	214	238	222	160	213	185
Heifers up to 450kg	205	226	210	156	204	180
Heifers over 450kg	202	222	216	159	201	180
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	270	465	310	170	268	220
Continental Heifers	225	350	260	120	220	170
Friesian Bulls	130	205	170	40	138	90
Holstein Bulls	80	170	105	2	78	40

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 01/02/14		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 06/02/14		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	1081	345	380	-
	Donemana	400	336	364	351
	Swatragh	850	348	391	-
Monday	Massereene	1216	345	378	-
	Kilrea	540	347	375	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	614	340	407	-
	Rathfriland	524	336	400	359
Wednesday	Ballymena	1589	332	370	347
	Enniskillen	648	338	369	-
	Markethill	850	330	369	348

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