LMC BULLETIN

WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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CATTLE KILL REMAINED UNDER PRESSURE IN APRIL

IN the month of April, the NI cattle kill remained under pressure with the kill down two per cent on the same period last year. However, there are signs of supply starting to stabilise with numbers of cattle presented for slaughter having been significantly lower over the last 12 months. Meanwhile the NI sheep kill continues to rise (year-on-year), reflecting increased slaughterings generally in Ireland as a whole and reduced exports of live sheep to ROI for direct slaughter.

Over the course of the year to date, the prime cattle kill is down 12 per cent compared to the same period last year. The cull cow kill is three per cent lower. Last month the prime cattle kill was down three per cent compared to April 2011. With a stronger cull cow kill, the overall cattle kill was down two per cent on the year. This decline is noteworthy for several reasons.

Firstly, in April last year, the kill was significantly lower than previous years. Indeed last April marked the start of the current cycle of tighter supplies. A further decline this year must be seen in that context as it represents a compounding of the decline last year. Secondly, the rate of decline appears to have slowed. In the first four months of the year numbers were back by about 12 per cent year-on-year. The slower rate of decline in April perhaps indicates that supplies may be beginning to stabilise as would be expected as we move through the year.

Last month the steer kill was three per cent higher than in April 2011. The young bull kill which has been in steep decline for the last year was down by eight per cent compared to last April.

It is notable that the heifer kill is down by 9 per cent compared to last April when almost 9,900 heifers were slaughtered. In April 2010 over 11,700 heifers were slaughtered, so last month's kill was effectively down by 23 per cent since April 2010. This decline certainly reflects a reduction in the number of cattle on the ground, but it may also reflect increased retentions of heifers for breeding. The June Agricultural Census will give a good indication of whether there has been a further increase in the number of beef cows / heifers-in-calf on the ground in NI this spring.

This April the cow kill has been higher than last April, driven mainly by an increase in the beef cow kill compared to last year. About 400 mature bulls were slaughtered in April, down from just over 500 last month.

The sheep kill continues to rise relative to last year due to a combination of increased availability generally and reduced exports to ROI.

Increased exports to ROI had driven down the local kill from July 2010 onwards. However, from last autumn with ROI prices slightly behind NI prices, there were reduced numbers of NI lambs exported to ROI factories and an increase in the number of lambs killed locally.

In April, the lamb / hogget kill was up by a quarter year-on-year with the ewe and ram kill also higher.

TABLE 1. NI CATTLE AND SHEEP SLAUGHTERINGS FOR THE FOODCHAIN

	April (4 weeks ended 28/04/12)			Year to Date (17 weeks ended 28/04/12)		
	2011	2012	% Change	2011	2012	Change
CATTLE						
Steers	11,669	11,973	+3%	54,472	49,505	-9%
Heifers	9,880	9,035	-9%	47,936	41,102	-14%
Young Bulls / Calves	4,617	4,260	-8%	23,508	19,668	-16%
Total Prime Cattle	26,166	25,268	-3%	125,916	110,275	-12%
Cows	4,745	5,260	+11%	25,699	24,932	-3%
Mature Bulls	518	421	-19%	3,288	1,764	-46%
Total Cattle	31,429	30,949	-2%	154,903	136,971	-12%
SHEEP						
Lambs & Hoggets	12,309	15,331	+25%	56,356	71,612	+27%
Ewes & Rams	2,292	2,742	+20%	10,437	11,386	+9%
Total Sheep	14,601	18,073	+24%	66,793	82,998	+24%

The above figures are provisional; any amendments will be incorporated in the cumulative data (source DARD).

VISIT LMC'S STAND AT BALMORAL SHOW

This year LMC has an action packed programme of events for everyone to enjoy at Balmoral Show. A warm welcome awaits producers on stand L3 (near the show jumping arena).

Come and join us at any time on any of the three days of the show for a cup of tea or coffee. Our staff will be on hand, whether you would like to discuss FQAS, industry developments, red meat promotion or the state of the trade.

LMC QUARTERLY

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CONTACT:
028 9263 3000

On the first day of the show we will be highlighting the versatility of Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef by sampling hot beef rolls. Filling, nutritious and tasty this is the easiest way to demonstrate the convenience of cooking with beef. Come and see for yourself – samples are being distributed between noon and 3pm.

On Thursday LMC host the Tesco/Foyle Producer Group best steak competition. Entries have been whittled down to the final eight. Competing farmers will cook their own produce and the 'champion' steak will be chosen by the finalists. This is always a competition between producers and their different breeds. Battle commences at 2pm.

Friday, the final day, sees one of LMC's cookery demonstrators cooking and sampling simple Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb recipes on the stand. Feel free to come and pick up useful tips, a sample of what has been cooked, and easy recipes to cook at home. Join us between noon and 5pm.

REMINDER – TRANSFER OF HERD NUMBER AND FQAS STATUS

FQAS members should take note of the following important points about their FQAS status when transferring herds:

- Traditionally when a farmer died or passed the farm to a successor his/her herd number also transferred.
- Changes to legislation means that **this is no longer possible** and as a result the new herd keeper must become registered and thereby obtain their own herd number.
- All cattle must then be transferred to the newly registered herd numbers but it is important to note that the **Farm Quality Assured status does not transfer with the cattle unless the new herd has been registered as Farm Quality Assured.**
- This can have financial implications for the producer when presenting cattle for sale at the markets or at the abattoir.
- To avoid problems it is **important that the producer informs the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme in writing of any changes to the herd number** of a Farm Quality Assured farm.
- This should be done **before** any cattle are moved into a new herd **to ensure that the Farm Quality status of animals in the herd is retained**.
- If you have any queries surrounding this please contact the FQAS Helpline on 028 9263 3024 or NIFCC on 028 9263 3017.

Any changes in herd number which you would like to transfer the FQ status to should be done so in writing to:

Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification
Lissue House
31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
BT28 2SL

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC

CATTLE TRADE

CATTLE QUOTES		
(P/KG DW)	This Week 07/05/12	Next Week 14/05/12
U-3	326 - 330p	324 - 328p
R-3	320 - 324p	318 - 322p
O+3	314 - 318p	312 - 316p
Cows	280 - 290p	280 - 290p

* Plus 8p/kg in-spec bonus where applicable.

LAST WEEK'S NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG				
W/E 05/05/12	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls	Cows
U-3=	338.7	341.3	330.5	-
U=3=	339.2	346.4	335.1	-
U=4=	330.4	338.0	326.0	-
R=3=	336.1	341.0	327.4	300.5
R=4=	333.4	333.2	-	301.8
O=3=	321.3	319.5	313.7	286.3
O+3=	330.3	331.9	318.0	300.6
O+4=	324.7	328.6	-	296.5
P+2=	301.8	-	299.2	255.2
P+3=	307.5	300.5	301.3	276.6
Average	327.6	330.2	318.6	265.5

Note: The table above shows prices for selected grades from the 15-point scale. The table below merges grades down to the 5-point scale for comparison with GB regions and ROI.

LAST WEEK'S CATTLE PRICES (UK / ROI)							
W/E 05/05/05		Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland
Steers	U3	360.0	350.3	350.2	345.6	337.9	330.8
	R3	354.3	342.3	339.1	335.0	335.9	322.3
	R4	356.1	348.3	339.4	333.8	333.1	321.7
	O3	339.6	326.7	322.0	314.3	322.0	310.2
	Average	354.4	342.3	336.3	319.6	327.6	-
Heifers	U3	360.4	353.7	351.6	342.9	343.9	345.1
	R3	351.7	342.3	339.0	335.3	339.4	333.1
	R4	354.8	342.0	338.9	334.5	333.3	332.8
	O3	334.5	329.1	325.0	314.9	324.5	318.7
	Average	352.5	339.1	337.0	326.5	330.2	-
Young Bulls	U3	348.9	339.7	345.1	341.0	333.8	327.6
	R3	340.4	328.8	331.5	328.9	327.9	321.8
	O3	326.1	309.7	310.7	314.5	311.7	313.1
	Average	336.4	319.5	320.9	323.8	318.6	-
Prime Cattle Price Reported		7,110	6,424	6,017	4,766	5,103	-
Cows	O3	293.9	279.8	279.0	259.9	286.8	285.4
	O4	299.9	282.6	280.5	267.9	291.7	287.4
	P2	238.5	234.8	245.0	221.3	248.4	254.1
	P3	246.6	264.4	255.2	238.5	271.2	280.5

Notes:
(i)Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=81.21p Stg.
(ii) Shading indicates a lower price than the previous week.

Deadweight Cattle Trade

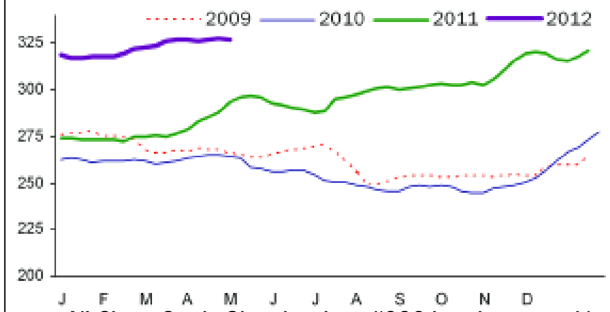
FACTORY quotes edged back this week with factories generally quoting 326-328p/kg for U-3 prime cattle. One plant was quoting 330p/kg for heifers. Two plants are now quoting 324p/kg for steers and heifers for next week, while other factories are continuing to quote higher prices of 326-328p/kg.

According to the prices reported by the factories, the cattle trade edged back last week. U3 steer and heifer prices were down by 2p/kg on the previous week. On average steer prices were back by 1.5p/kg with the average heifer and young bull prices unchanged. Cow prices were back by 2p/kg.

Numbers slaughtered in the factories have been stronger recently. Last week was the largest weekly kill since mid-February with over 8,500 head slaughtered in total. The total kill was 10 per cent greater than that for the same week last year and to some extent this must be driven by the scarcity of grass at a time when producers are clearing houses. The factories imported about 600 head from the south for direct slaughter last week. This was slightly higher than the average weekly import from ROI for the year to date.

For the most part, the trade was slightly weaker right across the UK last week. Scottish U3 steer and heifer prices continue to sit at 360p/kg, but average prime cattle prices in Scotland were lower last week. In North England and the Midlands / Wales steer prices were back by 2-3p/kg, although heifer prices in Northern England were unchanged on average. Prices in Southern England were more stable. Although the average steer price was back by 0.6p/kg, heifer prices were up by 1p/kg and young bull prices were 8p/kg higher on the week. In ROI, R3 steer and heifer prices were up by 1c/kg.

NI Average Weekly Clean Cattle Price (p/kg CW)



NI Clean Cattle Slaughterings ('000 head per week)

More detailed information on prices and explanations of these tables and charts are available from the LMC Technical Department: Call 028 9263 3000.

LATEST NI BEEF MARTS								
Finished Cattle (£/100kg LW)			Store Cattle (£/100kg LW)			Dropped Calves (£/head)		
	from	to		from	to		from	to
Steers			**Store bullocks up to 400kg**			**Continental bull calves**		
1st quality	196	209	1st quality	200	257			
2nd quality	175	195	2nd quality	176	199	1st quality	275	360
Friesians	125	164				2nd quality	220	272
			Store bullocks 400kg-500kg					
Heifers			1st quality	200	247	**Continental heifer calves**		
1st quality	191	216	2nd quality	180	206			
2nd quality	170	190				1st quality	260	410
			Store bullocks over 500kg			2nd quality	160	258
Beef Cows			1st quality	190	212			
			2nd quality	170	189	**Friesian bull calves**		
1st quality	150	200						
2nd quality	115	149	**Store heifers up to 450kg**			1st quality	200	295
			1st quality	195	292	2nd quality	100	198
Dairy Cows			2nd quality	175	194			
						Holstein Bull Calves		
1st quality	128	148	**Store heifers over 450kg**				30	160
2nd quality	90	127	1st quality	196	234			
			2nd quality	170	195			

Taken from a sample of beef marts in the week ended 04/05/12

Deadweight Sheep Trade

IN the middle of this week the factories had been quoting 340-350p/kg for hoggets and 400p/kg for spring lambs. At this stage there are no quotes for next week. The adjacent graph clearly shows how these prices compare to the last two to three years. At the same time last year factories were quoting 560p/kg for spring lambs and at the same time in 2010 spring lamb quotes were 440-460p/kg. Last week the factories slaughtered almost 4,900 sheep, 16 per cent more than the previous week and significantly more than the same week last year.

SHEEP QUOTES

(P/KG DW)	This Week 09/05/12	Next Week 14/05/12
Hoggets	340 - 350p	NO QUOTES
Spring Lambs	400p	

Hoggets paying upto 22kgs & Spring Lambs upto 21kgs

REPORTED LAMB PRICES - P/KG

(P/KG)	W/E 21/04/12	W/E 28/04/12	W/E 05/05/12
NI Liveweight	398.8p	376.4p	366.3p
NI Deadweight	449.5p	409.3p	384.8p
GB Deadweight	467.3p	430.8p	419.0p

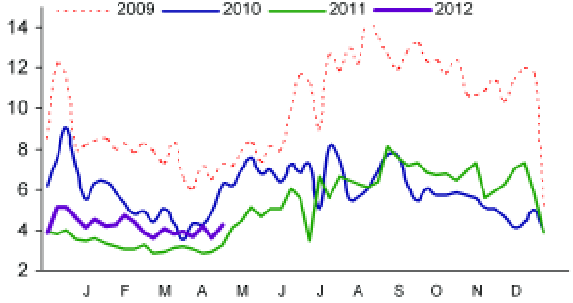
LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 05/05/2012 To: 10/05/2012		Hoggets (P/KG LW)				Spring Lambs (P/KG LW)			
		No.	From	To	Average	No.	From	To	Average
Saturday	Omagh	84	303	342	-	44	352	382	-
Monday	Massereene	267	300	330	-	302	380	402	-
	Kilrea	-	-	-	-	300	380	400	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	-	-	-	-	371	-	-	385
	Rathfriland	73	280	342	322	197	350	404	384
	Armoy	70	-	-	337	64	-	-	387
Wednesday	Ballymena	252	260	320	290	316	360	411	378
	Enniskillen	118	290	322	300	178	383	406	388
	Markethill					480	355	385	370
	Newtowns'					190	370	386	378
Thursday	Downpatrick					130	330	390	360

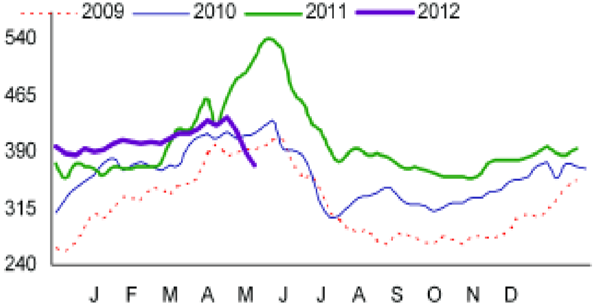
This week's marts

THE sluggishness in the liveweight sheep trade is reflected in the fact that southern buyers have been less active in the local sheep marts, driven to some extent by the weaker euro. Last week was the first in a long time that more NI sheep were slaughtered locally than exported south. Hogget numbers are drying up around the rings, but there was still a reasonably large hogget sale in Ballymena this Wednesday where 250 head sold to an average of 290p/kg, 40p/kg less than last week. Also in Ballymena over 300 lambs sold to an average of 378p/kg this week, back from 390p/kg last week.

NI Lamb / Hogget Slaughterings ('000 head per week)



NI Average Weekly Sheep Price (p/kg CW)



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