LMC BULLETIN

WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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EU R3 HEIFER LEAGUE TABLE UPDATE

WITH an average R3 heifer price of 442.5c/kg for the week ending 18 November 2012 GB has continued to top the EU Deadweight Cattle Prices League Table. This is an increase of 11.9c/kg on the previous month when the average R3 heifer price was 430.6c/kg as outlined in Table 1. The table outlines the EU deadweight R3 heifer prices converted to euro for the purposes of comparison between the EU countries (EC Dressing Spec).

Over the same period the R3 heifer price in NI increased by the equivalent of 18.1c/kg to 412.1c/kg and this reduced the differential between NI and GB to 30.4c/kg (24p/kg) in the week ending 18 November 2012. The differential had been 36.6c/kg (30p/kg) in the week ending 21 October 2012. This increase of 18.1c/kg was the largest recorded increase across the EU and has moved NI up two places into fourth position on the table.

Table1: EU Deadweight Cattle Prices - Heifers R3 Equivalent (€ Cents)

Position last Mth	Position this Mth	Country	Price last Mth (w/e 21.10.12)	Price this Mth (w/e 18.11.12)	Change on Mth (cents)
1	1	**Great Britain**	**430.6**	**442.5**	**+11.9**
2	2	Greece	427.6	421.0	-6.6
3	3	France	412.0	413.0	+1.0
6	4	**Northern Ireland**	**394.0**	**412.1**	**+18.1**
4	5	Italy	410.2	403.4	-6.8
9	6	**Ireland**	**382.9**	**392.6**	**+9.7**
5	7	Spain	401.0	392.5	-8.4
8	8	Germany	387.6	385.6	-2.0
7	9	Luxembourg	389.8	385.4	-4.4
10	10	Denmark	382.4	382.7	+0.3
11	11	Sweden	381.0	377.3	-3.7
12	12	Austria	360.0	363.2	+3.1
14	13	Belgium	333.5	336.0	+2.5
13	14	Slovenia	338.4	334.6	-3.8
15	15	Poland	316.3	311.7	-4.6
16	16	Czech Republic	298.5	293.4	-5.1
17	17	Lithuania	247.7	254.2	+6.5
EU Average			396.4	396.0	-0.5
Euro/Sterling exchange rate			81.1	80.2	

Official prices reported to the EC Dressing Specification. Source:EU

Meanwhile in ROI the average R3 heifer price for the week ending 18 November 2012 increased by 9.7c/kg to 392.6c/kg. This increase moved it up three places on the league table to sixth position. However despite this increase the differential between ROI and NI R3 heifer prices widened from 11.1c/kg in the week ending 21 October 2012 to 19.5c/kg in the week ending 18 November 2012.

It is worth noting that average R3 heifer prices in NI, GB and ROI recorded the three biggest increases in the EU between the two months tabulated, partly due to a weaker euro against sterling. During the same period the majority of EU countries experienced a decline in the average price. For example the R3 heifer price in Greece declined by 6.6c/kg to 421.0c/kg while in Spain the price declined by of 8.4c/kg to 392.5c/kg. The average EU R3 heifer price for the week ending 18 November 2012 was back by 0.5c/kg on the previous month at 396c/kg. Prices in ROI for the week ending 18 November 2012 were 3.4c/kg below the EU average price while the prices in NI and GB were 16.1c/kg and 46.5c/kg above the EU average respectively.

Figure 1: GB, NI and ROI R3 heifer prices January 2011- November 2012 (UK Dressing Specification) (Sterling)

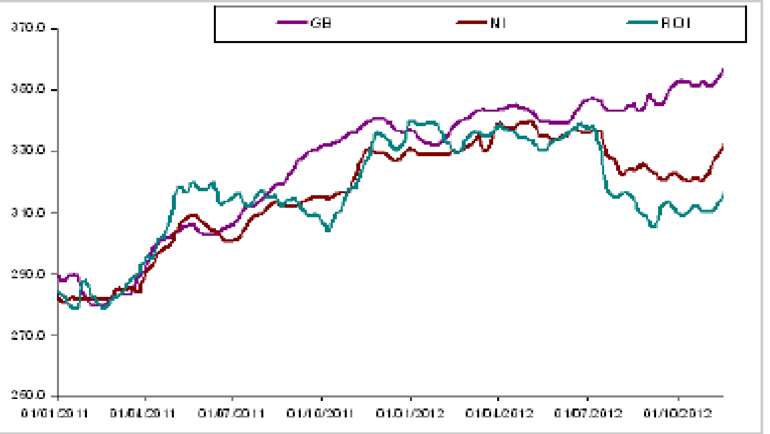


Figure 1 shows the average R3 heifer price from January 2011 to November 2012 for GB, ROI and NI. Generally the prices paid for R3 heifer carcases in NI have been higher than the prices paid in ROI but behind the prices paid in GB with the differential widening substantially from early summer 2012.

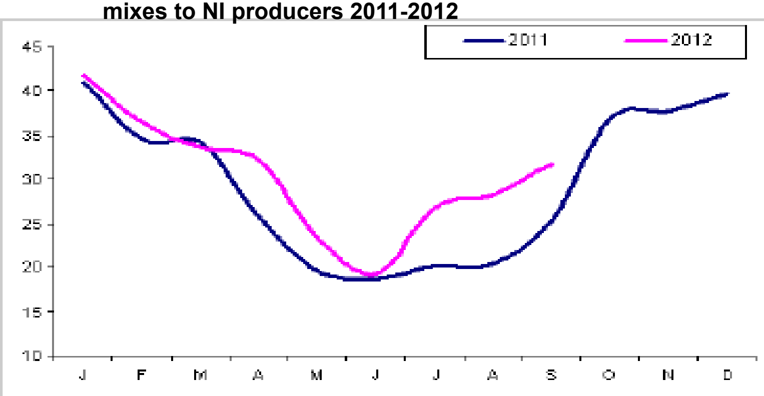
If we use the average R3 heifer carcase weight in NI for the week ending 18 November 2012, which was 320kg, then the difference in monetary value of an R3 heifer between NI and GB was almost £80/head. The difference in value between NI and ROI in the same week for a 320kg R3 heifer carcase was almost £50 head. If we compare this to the same week last year the average differential between NI and GB was almost £30 and the differential between ROI and NI was about £5.

BEEF CONCENTRATES USAGE 2012

WITH the wet and unsettled weather experienced in summer 2012 many beef producers were left with no alternative but to introduce meals at grass to maintain the performance of finishing stock to ensure they came fit for slaughter at the right time. In some instances animals had to be housed and finished on ad lib meal systems. There have also been many reports of poor calf performance at grass this summer and poor fertility with producers getting poor scanning results. As a result many producers also had to supplemented breeding stock to maintain cow condition, maintain fertility and to encourage a better milk yield to ensure calf performance was not adversely affected. The combination of these actions resulted in an increase in the level of beef concentrates purchased in NI this summer as outlined in Figure 2.

In July and August 2011 40.7 thousand tonnes of beef meal were purchased in NI and during the same two month period in 2012 it increased to 55.1 thousand tonnes. This increase by 14.4 thousand tonnes represents a 35 per cent increase in the level of concentrates being purchased. The poor grass growing conditions experienced in summer 2012 had a negative impact on the performance of cattle on many farms but also had a negative effect on the quantity and quality of the silage ensiled in many cases. With lower silage quality this autumn/winter period producers aiming to maintain animals over the winter may have to introduce meals to reach target performance rates. The higher meal feeding levels being implemented on farms across the province to compensate for poorer quality silage have already become evident in the Northern Ireland Feed Statistics. In September 2011 25.4 thousand tonnes of beef meal was purchased in NI and this has increased to 31.7 thousand tonnes in September 2012. This is a 25 per cent increase in the amount of beef meal purchased.

Figure 2: Total deliveries of beef cattle compounds and coarse beef mixes to NI producers 2011-2012



The latest Agricultural Census figures from DARD in June 2012 indicated a two per cent growth in total cattle numbers on NI farms with suckler/beef cow numbers up four per cent on the June 2011 figures which may explain some of the increase in the meal consumption. There has however been an increase in the cow kill in recent months with the NI cow kill being over 2,000 head per week for the majority of weeks since the start of July and the plants reporting good availability, particularly of dairy origin cattle. As a result of this increased availability the cow kill for the period July-November 2012 is 18.7 per cent higher than the corresponding period in 2011.

For 2012 to date around 70 per cent of the cow kill were dairy bred cows with an average age of 52.5 months. This is markedly lower than the same period in 2011 where the average age was 77 months. A similar trend can be observed in the suckler herd where the average age of cows has declined from 91.6 months in 2011 to 53.8 months for 2012 to date. With the high cost of cereals and low availability of forage this year many producers are taking the opportunity to cull underperforming stock from both the dairy and beef herds. Providing these cows are replaced with efficient and productive young stock this will be of benefit to both industries moving forward as they will have younger, fitter and more productive herds.

SHEEP: BUILDING A PROFITABLE SHEEP BUSINESS

Greenmount Campus Antrim

Wednesday 5th December 11am

This event is organised by CAFRE in conjunction with the NSA, AFBI, Agrisearch and LMC. The event will focus on breed crosses delivering lamb numbers, strategies for selecting replacements and grassland management techniques as a means to deliver profitability.

11.00am Tour of 180 ewe sheep flock
- Featuring New Zealand Genetics, outdoor lambing and high prolificacy

01.30pm Conference
- Key speakers will focus on building a profitable sheep business

04.00pm National Sheep Association AGM.

The event costs £10, to include tea/coffee and lunch. To register contact CAFRE (by the 28th November) on 028 9442 6770 or email rebecca.coalter@dardni.gov.uk
Cheques (made payable to DARD) should be forwarded to Technology Administration at:
CAFRE
Greenmount campus
45 Tirgracy Road
Muckamore
Antrim
BT41 4PS

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE (P/KG DW)	This Week 26/11/12	Next Week 03/12/12
Prime		
U-3	322-326p	326-328p
R-3	316-320p	320-322p
O+3	310-314p	314-316p
* Plus 8p/kg in spec bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	260-275p	260-275p
Steakers	180-245p	180-245p
Blues	160-180p	160-180p

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 24/11/12	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U-3=	333.3	335.9	325.9
U=3=	332.5	338.2	328.3
U=4=	332.0	-	312.0
R=3=	335.4	338.0	322.5
R=4=	328.4	329.8	306.0
O=3=	321.4	324.9	309.6
O+3=	326.7	327.0	317.5
Average	322.6	326.5	315.6

REPORTED COW PRICES NI W/E 24/11/12

Grades	Price (p/kg)	Avg Wgt
O+3=	278.5	338.6
O-3+	261.9	305.3
P+2+	240.6	285.5
P+3+	248.0	314.5
P-1-	167.1	.216.9

COMMODITIES

COMMODITY PRICE

W/E 01/12/12	Price (£) per tonne / 1000litre	% weekly change
Barley	214.00	n/c
Wheat	230.00	+1.32
Soya	471.00	+0.86
Straw	16.05	-
Red Diesel	717-750	-

Deadweight Cattle Trade

BASE quotes from the plants this week for U-3 grade prime cattle are 326p/kg for steers and 328p/kg for heifers with the additional 8p/kg bonus available for in spec cattle. There have however been reports that more is available than quotes would suggest, particularly for in spec cattle. The plants are reporting steady supplies of cattle with 6,884 prime cattle killed last week. This is 180 more than the previous week and almost identical to the same week last year when 6,868 were slaughtered. The quotes for first quality cows have remained at 260-275p/kg with the plants reporting strong supplies. There were 2,829 cows killed last week, a 24 per cent increase on the same week last year when 2,286 were killed.

The average steer price in NI last week was 322.6p/kg, up 3.3p/kg on the previous week while the average heifer price was up 5p/kg to 326.5p/kg. The young bull price also increased last week, up 5.8p/kg to 315.6p/kg. While all reported grades for prime cattle showed an improvement in price on the previous week the biggest increase was in the R4 steer price which was up 6.6p/kg to 330.2p/kg.

Average steer and heifer prices showed an increase in all regions of GB last week with average steer prices up 5p/kg and heifer prices up 6.1p/kg. There was however variance in the increases between the regions with steer and heifer prices in Scotland up in the region of 3p/kg while in the other UK regions average prices were up in the range of 5-9p/kg. The biggest increase in price across the regions was for O3 grading heifers in Northern England which increased by 9.7p/kg to 349.8p/kg. The strong improvement in prices for many grades in Northern England last week resulted in the prices paid for steers and heifers in the region being very close to, and in some cases better than, Scottish prices.

Prices in ROI last week showed increases for all reported grades in sterling terms. The R3 heifer price in ROI last week increased by 4.2p/kg to 321.1p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 3.4p/kg to 307p/kg. The biggest increase was for O3 grading young bulls which increased the equivalent of 5.9p/kg to 296.8p/kg.

This weeks marts

FINISHED first quality steers sold to an average of 195p/kg in the marts this week, up 5p/kg on last week's average. In general however the trade for finished stock was fairly similar to last week with finished steers and heifers selling within similar ranges. The good trade for well fleshed cows has continued with first quality beef cows selling to a top of 208p/kg with an average price of 170p/kg. Dairy type cows sold within a similar range as last week (100-135p/kg).

Meanwhile the trade for first quality store cattle was similar to last week with stock selling within similar price ranges. However the trade for plainer type store cattle was generally back on last week with average prices back 10-15p/kg.

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

W/E 24/11/2012		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	333.1	316.1	372.0	369.7	372.2	369.3	371.2
	R3	333.1	307.0	366.5	370.0	361.8	356.1	364.5
	R4	330.2	306.5	370.5	375.7	361.4	360.2	368.8
	O3	319.8	291.9	355.7	357.2	343.6	341.9	351.2
	AVG	322.6	-	366.3	364.9	357.5	350.2	360.9
Heifers	U3	338.3	334.3	372.6	369.4	376.4	368.5	372.3
	R3	334.6	321.1	363.5	360.6	361.7	358.2	361.4
	R4	332.3	320.3	367.1	366.7	361.4	358.0	364.1
	O3	322.2	306.0	342.5	349.8	346.5	336.0	343.9
	AVG	326.5	-	363.6	361.4	357.8	345.7	358.3
Young Bulls	U3	328.0	314.7	357.1	350.8	360.4	362.1	356.9
	R3	323.8	309.2	351.6	343.3	349.1	340.8	345.5
	O3	311.0	296.8	329.7	326.1	333.3	331.1	329.2
	AVG	315.6	-	341.9	333.6	343.0	335.1	338.2
Prime Cattle Price Reported		4726	-	6925	6650	5960	4192	23,727
Cows	O3	266.0	256.8	264.8	262.6	255.3	244.5	256.4
	O4	267.9	259.2	269.0	258.6	261.5	248.6	259.1
	P2	226.5	228.3	199.4	208.8	226.3	203.2	204.7
	P3	248.0	248.8	228.3	236.0	234.3	223.6	229.5
	AVG	232.1	-	256.3	235.6	252.1	210.0	234.5

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=80.59p 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

	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
W/E 24/11/12	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	188	206	195	165	187	176
Friesians	140	162	149	110	139	125
Heifers	184	209	190	165	183	173
Beef Cows	160	208	170	125	159	142
Dairy Cows	113	135	120	85	112	100
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	175	195	185	150	174	160
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	180	208	187	150	179	165
Bullocks over 500kg	180	197	189	150	179	165
Heifers up to 450kg	170	191	180	140	169	155
Heifers over 450kg	175	199	185	145	174	160
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	250	405	300	150	248	200
Continental Heifers	200	300	245	100	198	150
Friesian Bulls	100	175	145	20	98	50
Holstein Bulls	70	145	100	5	68	35

SHEEP TRADE

LAMB QUOTES		
(P/Kg DW)	This Week 26/11/12	Next Week 03/12/12
NI Factories to 22kg	330p	330p
ROI Factories	335p	335p

Notes: (i)Lambs up to 22kg
(ii)ROI prices converted at 1 euro=80.59p Stg

REPORTED LAMB PRICES - P/KG			
(P/KG DW)	W/E 10/11/12	W/E 17/11/12	W/E 24/11/12
NI Liveweight	294.3p	300.1p	299.7p
NI Deadweight	322.0p	330.0p	325.5p
ROI Deadweight	n/a	329.9p	332.9p
GB Deadweight	361.1p	362.1p	350.8p

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the plants for R3 grading lambs this week were 330p/kg, back from the 335p/kg available last week. The plants are reporting good supplies of lambs with the lamb kill last week totalling 11,006, an increase of 1,500 head on the previous week. Lamb throughput this year to date is currently 48 per cent ahead of the same period last year. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week came back 4.5p/kg to 325.5p/kg while deadweight prices in GB came back 11p/kg to 350.8p/kg. These changes take the differential between GB and NI back to 25p/kg which works out at £5.50 on a 22kg lamb. A total of 12,472 lambs were exported to ROI for direct slaughter last week, an increase of 1,500 head on the previous week. The deadweight price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 332.9p/kg (+3p/kg).

This week's marts

TRADE this week has generally been steady with 440 lambs in Kilrea on Monday selling from 288-310p/kg (av 297), very similar to last week when 310 lambs sold from 290-310 (av 298p/kg). A similar trade to last week in Saintfield on Tuesday saw 594 lambs sell from 284-314p/kg (av 298p/kg) compared to 650 lambs selling from 293-317p/kg last week (av 298p/kg). A slightly quieter trade in Ballymena on Wednesday saw another large entry of 1,872 lambs selling to an average of 291p/kg compared to an average of 298p/kg for 1,941 lambs last week. The cull ewe trade remains strong with top prices of over £70 for well fleshed ewes in many of the marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS					
From: 24/11/2012 To: 29/11/2012		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
		No.	From	To	Average
Saturday	Omagh	722	292	313	-
	Donemana	899	278	298	283
	Hilltown	750	283	311	295
Monday	Kilrea	440	288	310	297
	Massereene	916	295	315	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	594	284	314	298
	Rathfriland	638	280	312	295
	Armoy	312	285	310	296
Wednesday	Ballymena	1872	275	307	291
	Enniskillen	308	284	322	295
	Markethill	750	285	308	295
	Newtownstewart	280	280	300	290
Thursday	Downpatrick	326	288	302	295

Contact us:

Website: www.lmcni.com

Telephone: 028 9263 3000

Fax: 028 9263 3001

FQAS Helpline: 028 9263 3024

Answerphone: 028 9263 3011

Comments: bulletin@lmcni.com

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