LMC BULLETIN

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BEEF CALF REGISTRATIONS BACK 6 PER CENT

BEEF sired calf registrations during 2013 were at the lowest recorded level in the last decade. During 2013 a total of 309,645 beef sired calves were registered compared to 330,627 beef calves during 2012. This reduction by 20,982 head accounts for a 6.3 per cent reduction year on year.

Figure 1 displays the number of beef sired calves registered in NI annually during the period 2003-2013. The number of beef sired calves registered peaked in 2005 at 385,188 head and then recorded a gradual decline until 2009 following the decoupling of subsidies from production. During the period 2009 to 2012 however the number of beef sired calves started to show a gradual recovery as the industry responded to improvements in beef prices.

Beef sired calf registrations in 2013 were 75,543 head behind the peak levels recorded in 2005, representing a 19.6 per cent reduction when comparing the two years. While some of this reduction will have been caused by a contraction in suckler cow numbers following the 2003 CAP reforms changes in the management practices in the NI dairy herd will also have had an impact. A tightening in calving patterns and an increase in the number of dairy producers breeding their own replacements will have reduced the number of beef sired calves being produced from the dairy herd.

The combination of the poor summer weather in 2012, reports of reduced cow fertility and fodder shortages as we moved into spring 2013 will all have contributed to the fall in calf registrations. These factors, combined with increased costs of production and a relatively high cow beef price, will have contributed to a higher cow culling rate and subsequently further impacted on calf registration levels.

The Agricultural Census carried out by DARD in June 2013 recorded 270,100 cows on NI farms for beef production, a three percent reduction on the 279,200 recorded on farms during June 2012. The number of in calf beef heifers also recorded a decline between the two years, falling from 40,900 in June 2012 to 37,400 in June 2013. This is a reduction of 9 per cent year on year. On a more positive note however the number of heifers under two years in calf remained fairly steady at 16,200 while the number of heifers in calf over 2 years of age was back 14 per cent year on year.

Figure 2 displays the monthly beef sired calf registrations during 2013 compared to 2012. As indicated in the chart beef sired calf registrations tend to peak in April, May and June to coincide with the peak grass growing season. In addition to this a percentage of the beef sired calves born during this period will be a result of dairy producers using a beef bred sweeper bull. During both 2012 and 2013 43 per cent of beef sired calves were registered during this three month period.

During 2013 the number of beef sired calves registered per month was lower than the corresponding month in 2012 for eight months out of the twelve. During December 2013 a total of 12,940 beef calves were registered compared to 11,933 registered during December 2012. This accounts for an 8.4 per cent increase in registrations with an additional 1,007 calves registered.

Dairy-sired bull calves

During 2013 a total of 87,906 dairy-sired male calves were registered in NI, a 2.8 per cent reduction on the 90,462 dairy bull calves registered in 2012.

Traditionally a large number of these dairy bull calves have been exported out of NI for further production elsewhere within the EU. During 2013 a total of 23,634 calves under 42 days of age were exported out of NI compared to 20,473 calves during 2012 accounting for a 15.4 per cent increase year on year. Almost all of these calves are dairy sired male calves with just over 90 per cent of the calves exported out of NI last year destined for young bull beef production in Spain.

Figure 1: Beef sired calf registrations in NI during 2003-2013

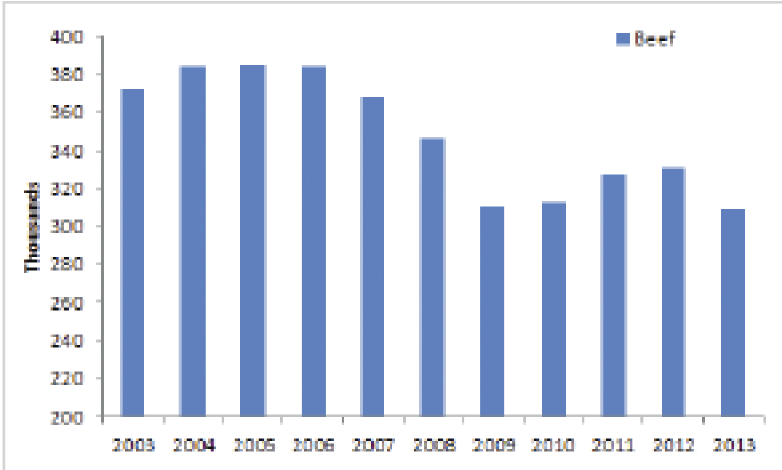
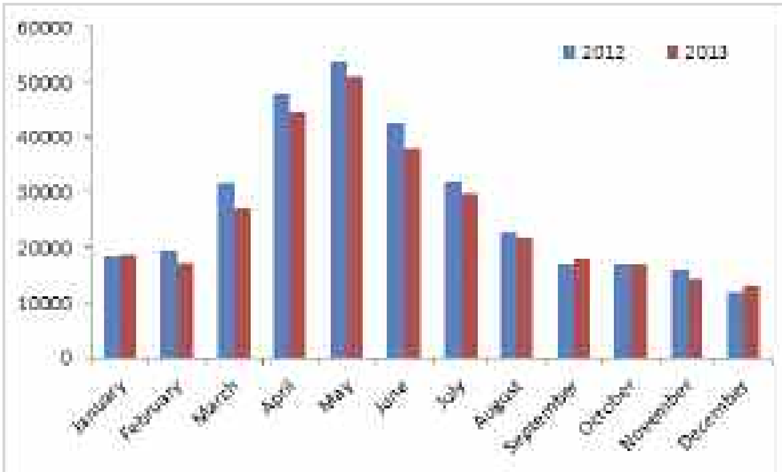


Figure 2: Monthly beef sired calf registrations in NI during 2012/2013



NI CATTLE SLAUGHTERINGS UPDATE 2013

NI CATTLE SLAUGHTERINGS						
	December			Year to Date		
	(4 weeks ended 28/12/13)			(52 weeks ended 28/12/13)		
	Dec-12	Dec-13	% Change	2012	2013	Change
Steers	12,300	9,939	-19%	162,030	144,088	-11%
Heifers	9,999	9,011	-10%	116,897	120,890	+3%
Young Bulls / Calves	4,508	6,836	+52%	62,842	74,945	+19%
Total Prime Cattle	26,807	25,786	-4%	341,769	339,923	-1%
Cows	7,900	5,980	-24%	97,965	90,314	-8%
Mature Bulls	682	739	+8%	6,622	8,209	+24%
Total Cattle	35,389	32,505	-8%	446,356	438,446	-2%

PRIME cattle slaughterings in NI during 2013 totalled 339,923 head, a one per cent reduction on the 341,769 head slaughtered in 2012. The increase in throughput of prime cattle experienced by the processors during the second quarter of 2013 was counteracted by a reduction in throughput during autumn 2013 when compared to the previous year. This has resulted in total prime cattle throughput for 2013 to be almost unchanged from the previous year.

There were however key changes recorded in the makeup of the prime cattle kill. During 2012 144,088 steers were slaughtered in NI plants compared to 162,030 during 2012. This accounts for an 11 per cent decline in steer throughput year on year. In 2012 steers made up 47 per cent of the prime cattle kill and in 2013 this was reduced to 42 per cent.

The young bull kill during 2013 totalled 74,945 head, a 19 per cent increase in young bull throughput on the previous year. In 2013 young bulls accounted for 22 per cent of the prime cattle kill compared to 18 per cent in 2012. Meanwhile the heifer kill in NI increased from 116,897 head in 2012 to 120,890 in 2013. This three per cent increase in heifer throughput perhaps reflects a reduction in the number of heifers being retained for breeding. Heifers accounted for 36 per cent of the prime kill in 2013 compared to 34 per cent in 2012.

While there have been changes in the makeup of the prime kill there have also been changes in the average carcase weight. In 2013 the average prime cattle carcase weight was 326.5kg, a 13.5kg reduction on the 340kg recorded in 2012. This accounts for four per cent reduction in average carcase weights and contributes to a 4.6 per cent reduction in the amount of beef produced from prime cattle.

The cow kill in NI during 2013 totalled 90,314 head, an eight per cent reduction on the 97,965 cows slaughtered in 2012. The cow throughput was particularly high in the final quarter of 2012 and into the first quarter of 2013 as producers culled unproductive stock due to the threat of forage shortages. Cow throughput during the second half of 2013 was at similar levels to those recorded in the corresponding period in 2011. Average cow carcase weights were almost unchanged at 296.5kg during 2013 when comparted to 2012 with cow beef production back 7.2 per cent year on year.

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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

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CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE		
(P/KG DW)	This Week 06/01/2014	Next Week 13/01/14
Prime		
U-3	344-346p	344-346p
R-3	338-340p	338-340p
O+3	332-334p	332-334p
* Plus 8-14p/kg in spec bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	225-244p	225-244p
Steakers	150-190p	150-190p
Blues	110-130p	110-130p

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG			
W/E 04/01/2013	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U-3=	370.7	371.8	327.3
U=3=	367.5	375.8	334.0
U=4=	347.5	361.6	-
R=3=	365.8	364.2	328.3
R=4=	361.3	361.4	314.0
O+3=	362.3	357.0	322.8
O=3=	350.7	341.7	312.1
Average	357.6	359.7	320.2

REPORTED COW PRICES NI W/E 04/01/2014		
Grades	Price (p/kg)	Avg Wgt
O+3=	255.4	360.1
O-3+	227.7	319.0
P+2+	212.1	291.9
P+3+	211.9	299.4
P-1-	128.4	225.6

COMMODITY PRICE		
W/E 28/12/13	Price (£) per tonne / 1000litre	% weekly change
Barley	161.50	n/c
Wheat	185.00	0.3
Straw	17.20	-
Diesel	715-720	-

Deadweight Cattle Trade

THERE has been a firming in the cattle trade this week with all the plants quoting a base price of 344-346p/kg for U-3 grade prime cattle. Additional bonuses of 8-14p/kg are available for in spec steers and heifers and producers should consult with the individual plants as criteria varies from plant to plant. The plants are reporting a slight tightening in the supply of prime cattle for the weeks ahead. Quotes for O+3 cows this week ranged from 225-244p/kg across the plants.

Throughput of prime cattle last week totalled 5,333 head compared to 5,661 head during the corresponding week last year. Imports from ROI for direct slaughter in NI factories last week consisted of 163 steers while 35 cows were also imported from GB. Exports to GB for direct slaughter were made up of 93 prime cattle and 6 cows with a further 64 prime cattle and 166 cows exported to ROI for direct slaughter. The average steer price in NI last week was 357.6p/kg, up 2.5p/kg from the previous week, while the R3 steer price was back by 1.4p/kg to 364.2p/kg. The R4 steer price was unchanged at 367.0p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 359.7p/kg, back 1.7p/kg from the previous week with the R3 heifer price back by a similar margin to 364.6p/kg. The R4 heifer price remained steady at 362.5p/kg.

In GB last week the average steer price was back by 2.5p/kg to 384.2p/kg with average prices back in all the GB regions with the exception of Southern England where the average price increased by 4.7p/kg to 369.4p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week was back a penny from the previous week to 384.5p/kg with the average R3 heifer price back by a similar margin to 384.8p/kg. There was some variation across the regions with the R3 heifer price in Scotland back by 5p/kg to 398.7p/kg while it increased in Southern England by 5.5p/kg to 375.8p/kg. The differential between NI and Southern England for R3 heifers last week was 11.2p/kg and for R3 steers it was 15.4p/kg with the gap widening further moving northwards. The differential however between NI and Southern England is notably narrower than it was during the corresponding week last year when the differential was 22p/kg for heifers and 32p/kg for steers.

In ROI the trade for finished cattle has remained subdued with average prices back for the majority of reported grades. The R3 steer price was back 4.7p/kg to 323p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back by 5.6p/kg to 337.2p/kg. This put the differential with NI last week at 41.2p/kg for R3 steers and 27.4p/kg for R3 heifers.

This weeks marts

FINISHED first quality steers sold to an average of 215p/kg this week with second quality selling to an average of 180p/kg. Finished heifers meanwhile sold to an average of 207p/kg for first quality and 175p/kg for second quality. First quality beef cows sold to an average of 168p/kg with a top reported price of 184p/kg. Plainer beef type cows sold to an average of 123p/kg. Dairy origin cows sold from 42-114p/kg depending on quality. Forward steers in the 400-500kg weight category sold to an average of 201p/kg while second quality sold to an average of 150p/kg.

LAST WEEK'S DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES (UK / ROI)								
W/E 04/01/2014		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	366.5	328.3	414.3	387.2	391.1	392.0	397.4
	R3	364.2	323.0	405.2	379.4	381.6	379.6	387.6
	R4	367.0	324.2	405.3	393.0	387.7	376.4	392.4
	O3	350.9	308.5	385.5	368.3	360.6	357.6	368.9
	AVG	357.6	-	404.1	382.1	375.5	369.4	384.2
Heifers	U3	370.0	351.9	411.4	389.0	394.9	387.4	397.6
	R3	364.6	337.2	398.7	377.4	382.2	375.8	384.8
	R4	362.5	335.2	401.7	386.2	383.1	376.5	388.4
	O3	349.7	324.3	366.7	363.7	363.7	348.7	360.5
	AVG	359.7	-	400.0	384.4	381.2	365.6	384.5
Young Bulls	U3	332.8	316.8	407.4	362.7	371.4	377.9	374.8
	R3	330.3	310.9	390.1	350.4	364.8	364.4	362.5
	O3	314.9	291.2	353.1	331.2	341.2	347.8	342.0
	AVG	320.2	-	383.5	340.7	353.0	339.4	349.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5964	-	6082	5438	5034	3785	20339
Cows	O3	233.5	245.9	248.8	244.2	232.3	226.8	240.1
	O4	241.0	249.2	254.3	245.1	244.8	227.4	242.6
	P2	189.4	216.9	170.0	203.9	164.7	168.6	176.2
	P3	213.6	233.9	207.2	223.4	192.1	195.6	206.8
	AVG	219.9	-	253.0	229.8	213.7	199.4	226.0

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=83.22p 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 04/01/2014	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	210	231	215	145	200	180
Friesians	183	188	185	145	154	149
Heifers	200	232	207	130	198	175
Beef Cows	148	184	168	100	147	123
Dairy Cows	80	114	95	42	79	61
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	200	202	201	140	164	150
Bullocks over 500kg	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heifers up to 450kg	181	196	188	155	180	168
Heifers over 450kg	192	217	205	163	188	175
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	260	400	310	180	258	220
Continental Heifers	200	320	250	130	198	175
Friesian Bulls	80	165	105	20	78	45
Holstein Bulls	40	90	60	1	38	20

SHEEP TRADE

HOGGET QUOTES		
(P/Kg DW)	This Week 06/01/2013	Next Week 13/01/14
NI Factories	390p > 22kg	370-390p > 22kg
ROI Factories	390p > 22kg	395p > 22kg

REPORTED LAMB/HOGGET PRICES - P/KG			
(P/KG DW)	W/E 21/12/13	W/E 28/12/13	W/E 04/01/14
NI Liveweight	364.1p	-	359.7p
NI Deadweight	388.4p	387.9p	388.0p
ROI Deadweight	360.1p	372.2p	378.9p
GB Deadweight	396.9p	399.9p	406.2p

Deadweight Sheep Trade

THE trade for hoggets has come under pressure this week with the plants reporting a slackening in demand from key markets in GB and France. The plants have reported strong supplies of hoggets as we move into the New Year. The quotes for R3 grading hoggets came back to 390p/kg early this week with plants continuing to pay up to 22kg. One plant has indicated 370p/kg to 22kgs for early next week with the others remaining at 390p/kg. A total of 6,869 lambs/hoggets were slaughtered in NI plants last week with a further 8,217 exported for direct slaughter in plants in ROI. The average deadweight price in NI last week was 388p/kg, almost unchanged from the previous week while prices in GB increased by 6.3p/kg to 406.2p/kg.

This week's marts

THE trade in the marts has been slightly quieter this week with reports of lots of heavy hoggets passing through the sale rings. In Massereene on Monday 1,316 hoggets sold from 355-385p/kg compared to 1,146 hoggets last week selling from 360-395p/kg. In Kilrea on Monday a steady trade saw 620 hoggets sold from 346-368p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 745 hoggets sold to an average of 357p/kg while in Enniskillen 888 hoggets sold from 348-366p/kg. In Markethill on Wednesday a quieter trade saw 1,030 hoggets sold from 330-360p/kg (avg 344p/kg) compared to 725 hoggets last week selling from 345-368 (avg 358p/kg). The trade for cull ewes has firmed slightly with top reported prices ranging from £70-85 across the marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS					
From: 04/01/2014 To: 09/01/14		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
		No.	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	1415	342	377	-
	Hilltown	350	352	389	356
	Swatragh	1010	333	400	-
Monday	Massereene	1316	355	385	-
	Kilrea	620	346	368	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	1002	346	387	-
	Rathfriland	745	338	396	357
Wednesday	Ballymena	1608	330	368	345
	Enniskillen	888	348	366	-
	Markethill	1030	330	360	344

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