LMC BULLETIN

WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Saturday 30 May 2015 Issue No. 2371

UPDATE ON R3 HEIFER PRICES IN THE EU

THE EU Deadweight Cattle Prices League Table compares farmgate R3 heifer prices across the EU in euro terms and allows a useful comparison to be drawn between deadweight cattle prices across the EU.

As outlined in Table 1 the average R3 heifer price in the EU during the week ending 17 May 2015 was 393.3p/kg, down 5p/kg from the week ending 19 April 2015 when the average price was 398.3p/kg. Reports have indicated that this decline in the average deadweight price has been a result of sluggish demand for beef in many major EU countries.

In euro terms the R3 heifer price in GB during the week ending 17 May 2015 was 458c/kg. While this kept it at the top of the league table the price was back by 19.6c/kg from the week ending 19 April 2015. With no change in the euro/sterling exchange rate between the two weeks tabulated this notable decline in the R3 heifer price in euro terms has occurred due to a decline in the deadweight trade in GB.

The positive differential in R3 heifer prices between GB and the EU average was 79.3c/kg in the week ending 19 April 2015 and this narrowed to 64.7c/kg in the week ending 17 May 2015. This equates to a narrowing of the differential by €46 on a 320kg carcase.

Meanwhile in the week ending 17 May 2015 the R3 heifer price in NI was the equivalent of 452.5c/kg, down 14.9c/kg from the week ending 19 April 2015 when it was the equivalent of 467.4c/kg. Despite the decline NI remained in second place in the EU league table. This decline has narrowed the positive differential between NI and the EU average from 69.1c/kg in the week ending 19 April 2015 to 59.2c/kg in the week ending 17 May 2015.

Prices in ROI have also declined over the period tabulated but not to the same degree as experienced in GB and NI. The R3 heifer price in ROI in the week ending 17 May 2015 was 417c/kg, down 4.1c/kg from the week ending 19 April 2015. This moved ROI down one position to fourth on the EU league table. The positive differential between ROI prices and the EU average was almost unchanged at 23.7c/kg during the week ending 17 May 2015.

The negative differential in R3 heifer prices in euro terms between ROI and NI was 46.3c/kg in the week ending the 19 April 2015 and this narrowed to 35.5c/kg in the week ending 17 May 2015. This narrowed the differential on a 320kg R3 grade heifer carcase from €148 to €114.

The biggest decline recorded in the EU during the two comparative weeks outlined in Table 1 was in Italy where prices were back by 19.7c/kg to 399.9c/kg in the week ending 17 May 2015. This moved it down two places on the league table from fourth position to sixth position.

Meanwhile in France the deadweight trade remained fairly steady with the R3 heifer price increasing by 1c/kg to 403c/kg in the week ending 17 May 2015. This moved it up one position on the league table into fifth position.

The biggest positive mover in the league table was Sweden where the R3 heifer price increased from the equivalent of 399.8c/kg in the week ending 19 April 2015 to 420c/kg in the week ending 17 May 2015. This accounts for a 20.2c/kg increase over the four week period. This moved it up four positions in the league table from seventh position to third position.

Figure 1: R3 heifer prices in ROI, NI, GB and the EU average January-May 2015

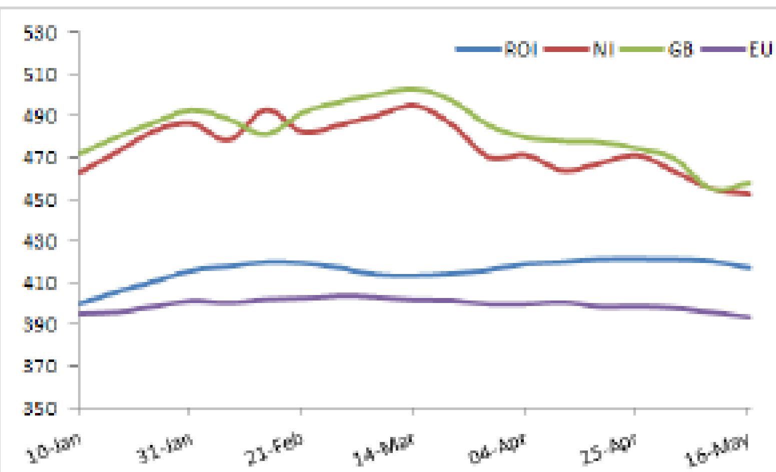

Table 1: EU Deadweight Cattle Prices - Heifers R3 Equivalent (€ Cents)

Position last Mth	Position this Mth	Country	Price last Mth (w/e 19.04.15)	Price this Mth (w/e 17.05.15)	Change on Mth (cents)
1	*1*	*Great Britain*	***477.6***	***458.0***	***-19.6***
2	*2*	*Northern Ireland*	***467.4***	***452.5***	***-14.9***
7	3	Sweden	399.8	420.0	+20.2
3	*4*	*Ireland*	***421.1***	***417.0***	***-4.1***
6	5	France	402.0	403.0	+1.0
4	6	Italy	419.5	399.9	-19.7
5	7	Luxembourg	405.6	397.7	-7.9
10	8	Denmark	375.6	385.9	+10.3
8	9	Spain	377.1	370.9	-6.1
9	10	Germany	376.9	370.1	-6.8
11	11	Austria	360.3	357.3	-3.0
12	12	Slovenia	340.8	341.1	+0.3
13	13	Belgium	331.0	330.5	-0.5
14	14	Poland	319.5	314.0	-5.5
15	15	Czech Republic	269.4	269.9	+0.6
16	16	Lithuania	244.9	232.3	-12.6
		EU Average	398.3	393.3	-5.1
Euro (€1=)			71.98	71.95	-0.0

Official prices reported to the EC Dressing Specification

FQAS MART CLINICS JUNE

LOCATION	DAY	DATE
Omagh	Monday	01/06/2015
Saintfield	Wednesday	03/06/2015
Markethill	Tuesday	09/06/2015
Enniskillen	Thursday	11/06/2015
Ballymena	Friday	12/06/2015
Kilrea	Wednesday	24/06/2015

LMC's Farm Liaison Officer, Terry White, runs Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) mart clinics at a range of Livestock Marts across Northern Ireland. Terry is present to assist members of FQAS with non-conformances, general scheme queries and any issues prior to or following an inspection.

Any farmers who wish to join the scheme can also do so through their local FQAS mart clinic. Terry will be available at the livestock marts listed above. For further information call (028) 9263 3024.

UK BEEF EXPORTS LOWER IN 2015

THE most recent available figures from HMRC have indicated that during March 2015 8,122 tonnes of beef and veal were exported from the UK bringing exports for the first quarter of 2015 to 23,898 tonnes. In the corresponding period in 2014 a total of 27,130 tonnes of beef and veal were exported which accounts for a 12 per cent decline year on year.

Exports to the EU during the first quarter of 2015 totalled 22,228 tonnes and accounted for 93 per cent of all UK beef and veal exports. In the corresponding period in 2014 26,049 tonnes of beef and veal were exported from the UK to EU countries and this accounted for 96 per cent of total UK exports.

Ireland has been the biggest export market destination for UK beef in terms of the volume of exports with 9,807 tonnes exported during the first quarter of 2015. This accounted for 44 per cent of all UK exports to other EU countries. In the same period in 2014 exports to ROI totalled 8,248 tonnes and accounted for 32 per cent of total UK exports to EU countries.

Another key market for UK beef in terms of volume sales is the Netherlands with 5,240 tonnes exported during the first quarter of 2015 and accounting for 24 per cent of total UK beef and veal exports to the EU. There has however been a notable decline in the volumes exported when compared to year earlier levels when 9,253 tonnes were exported. This accounts for a 43 per cent decline in the total volume year on year.

Exports of UK beef to Belgium have also recorded a decline year on year. In the first quarter of 2015 1,022 tonnes of beef and veal were exported from the UK to Belgium compared to 1,732 tonnes in the same period in 2014. This accounts for a 41 per cent decline in volume sales year on year. Meanwhile the volume of beef and veal exports to France has remained relatively steady with 2,446 tonnes exported during the first quarter of 2015. This accounted for 11 per cent of total UK exports to the EU during the first quarter of 2015.

The volume of beef and veal exported to other key EU markets during the first quarter of 2015 such as Italy, Germany, Denmark and Spain have remained similar to year earlier levels.

Exports of beef and veal during March 2015 from the UK to non EU countries amounted to 507 tonnes bringing the total for the first quarter to 1,671 tonnes. This is an increase from the corresponding period in 2014 when 1,080 tonnes were exported. While this remains a small percentage of total exports it is encouraging to see more UK products being exported to global markets.

Strenuous efforts are being made to open up more third country market opportunities for UK beef and lamb exporters and any early progress which can be made will be welcomed.

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

Answerphone Service
Factory Quotes &
Mart Results
Updated 5pm Daily

Tel: 028 9263 3011

Text Service
Free Price Quotes sent to your mobile phone weekly

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Tel: 028 9263 3000

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 25/05/15	Next Week 01/06/15
Prime		
U-3	310-316p	310-312p
R-3	304-310p	304-306p
O+3	298-304p	298-300p
P+3	248-270p	248-266p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	230 - 250p	230 - 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.

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 23/05/15	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	326.9	332.0	320.3
R3	323.4	324.9	318.3
O+3	312.5	313.3	298.3

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

w/e 23/05/15	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	136.7	142.1	154.9	159.9
P2	154.0	176.2	197.2	210.2
P3	-	192.1	217.6	224.9
O3	-	247.0	211.3	240.6
O4	208.0	178.0	235.6	250.5
R3	-	-	-	265.9

Deadweight Cattle Trade

BASE quotes from the plants this week for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 310-316p/kg with plants indicating quotes in the region of 310-312p/kg for early next week. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows remained steady at 230-250p/kg this week. The plants are indicating steady supplies of all types of cattle to meet demand with reports of some difficulties in beef sales.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 6,657 head, an increase of 496 head from the previous week and the highest weekly throughput since mid-March 2015. The weekly throughput however was notably lower than the 7,575 prime cattle slaughtered during the corresponding week in 2014. Cow throughput in NI plants last week totalled 1,390 head, an increase of 235 head from the previous week.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter last week were similar to the previous week and totalled 337 head. These imports accounted for five per cent of the total prime cattle kill, a reduction from earlier in May when almost ten per cent of the NI prime cattle kill were imported from ROI for direct slaughter. A small number of cows were also imported from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week. Meanwhile exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 8 prime cattle, 265 cows and 15 bulls. There were no exports of cattle from NI to GB for direct slaughter last week.

The average steer price in NI last week was 313.9p/kg, down 3.9p/kg from the previous week while the R3 steer price was back 3.5p/kg to 325.1p/kg. This brings the R3 steer price in NI to its lowest level since the first week of September 2014. The R3 steer price in NI has declined by 40p/kg since the first week of January 2015 which is the equivalent of £128 on a 320kg carcase. Meanwhile the average heifer price in NI last week was back by 4.5p/kg to 317.7p/kg with the R3 heifer price back by 1.9p/kg to 326.3p/kg.

In GB last week the trade showed some signs of stabilising with reports of cattle supplies tightening. The average steer price in GB last week was unchanged at 326.4p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 1p/kg to 332.7p/kg. R3 steer prices were within 1p/kg of the previous week in Southern England, Scotland and Northern England with the R3 steer price in the Midlands increasing by 3.3p/kg to 330.4p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week was 329.3p/kg, up 1p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was unchanged at 332p/kg. There was however a mixed trade across GB with R3 heifer prices in Northern England increasing by 5.1p/kg to 335.4p/kg last week while prices in the Midlands and Southern England were back by 4-5p/kg.

In ROI last week the trade remained steady in sterling terms with an equivalent R3 steer price of 292.1p/kg and an R3 heifer price of 300.4p/kg. Reports have indicated a tightening in cattle availability for slaughter in ROI in recent weeks with firm demand from processors. The total cattle kill in ROI last week was 27,679 head compared to 32,821 head in the corresponding week in 2014.

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

W/E 23/05/2015		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	327.3	300.7	348.4	344.5	338.7	334.3	342.8
	R3	325.1	292.1	340.8	334.8	330.4	320.1	332.7
	R4	320.8	292.3	341.0	346.8	328.7	320.0	337.8
	O3	307.0	277.8	320.7	313.8	293.6	298.6	306.5
	AVG	313.9	-	338.6	335.2	314.6	307.9	326.4
Heifers	U3	332.2	311.9	351.0	348.8	342.0	332.1	345.7
	R3	326.3	300.4	339.8	335.4	327.8	319.2	332.0
	R4	319.5	300.9	341.9	339.4	327.4	317.6	334.1
	O3	309.8	287.5	320.0	320.6	293.7	302.7	312.2
	AVG	317.7	-	339.7	335.9	319.1	308.8	329.3
Young Bulls	U3	320.4	297.0	343.3	323.8	325.6	325.4	327.3
	R3	317.6	287.8	334.9	312.0	314.1	314.5	316.1
	O3	295.2	274.3	297.2	280.1	283.4	284.4	284.6
	AVG	301.3	-	330.1	305.2	306.5	301.2	307.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5679	-	6737	6794	5266	4084	22881
Cows	O3	239.5	249.6	259.4	253.4	246.3	240.8	251.5
	O4	248.5	251.4	266.8	251.9	246.4	241.6	252.9
	P2	194.7	216.2	190.7	211.8	192.3	188.7	195.9
	P3	221.2	245.0	216.1	225.8	209.0	215.4	216.0
	AVG	224.9	-	247.1	232.2	207.3	213.8	226.5

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=71.76p 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 23/05/15	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	180	200	189	155	179	177
Friesians	130	143	137	100	128	118
Heifers	180	200	187	150	179	165
Beef Cows	140	208	146	110	139	123
Dairy Cows	103	121	111	60	102	83
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	213	252	233	191	210	200
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	200	212	206	174	198	185
Bullocks over 500kg	191	206	194	168	190	179
Heifers up to 450kg	195	207	200	150	194	172
Heifers over 450kg	190	200	195	142	189	166
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	315	415	375	200	312	250
Continental Heifers	260	385	295	150	258	200
Friesian Bulls	145	205	180	60	142	85
Holstein Bulls	80	168	100	1	78	35

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP QUOTES		
(P/Kg DW)	This Week 25/05./15	Next Week 01/06/15
Lambs	350-360>21kg	350>21kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES			
(P/KG)	W/E 09/05/15	W/E 16/05/15	W/E 23/05/15
NI Lambs L/W	366.1	369.6	363.0
NI Lambs D/W	378.1	389.4	392.5
GB Lambs D/W	422.0	426.5	421.3
ROI D/W	394.0	390.0	391.4

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES for R3 grade lambs from the NI plants ended this week at 350p/kg up to 21kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. This is a decline in base quotes of 50p/kg since last week or £10.50 on a 21kg carcase. Lower demand from ROI plants for NI origin lambs and the reduced vale of euro against sterling have had a negative influence on the deadweight trade. The price reported R3 lamb price in NI last week was 393.3p/kg compared to 470.2p/kg in the corresponding week in 2014. Throughput in the NI plants last week totalled 7,229 head, an increase of 1,648 from the previous week. Meanwhile exports of sheep from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 3,527 head.

This Week's Marts

THE trade in the marts has come under pressure this week in response to reduced quotes from the local processors and reduced demand for NI origin lambs in ROI plants. In Saintfield this week 350 lambs sold from 310-370p/kg compared to 398 lambs last week selling from 347-400p/kg. In Enniskillen this week a smaller entry of 305 lambs sold to an average of 320p/kg compared to 493 lambs last week selling to an average of 384p/kg. In Markethill on Wednesday 450 lambs sold to an average of 323p/kg compared to 650 lambs last week selling to an average of 366p/kg. Reports have indicated that the general trade for cull ewes has also come back this week. The top reported price across the marts was in Omagh last Saturday where ewes sold to a top of £135.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS					
From: 23/05/15		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 29/05/15		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	477	355	398	-
	Swatragh	375	335	375	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	350	310	370	-
	Rathfriland	719	310	356	336
Wednesday	Ballymena	350	300	354	310
	Enniskillen	305	310	335	320
	Markethill	450	310	333	323
	Armoy	226	305	330	315

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