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### **Choose farm quality assured lamb and support local industry**

It is over a year since the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) launched its retailer sourcing project in May 2014. The commitment to local lamb from almost all of the main retailers in Northern Ireland has improved, in some cases significantly. The challenge now is getting consumers to choose lamb as their preferred meal choice.

LMC commissioned Millward Brown Ulster to conduct research in order to understand the origins of prepacked beef and lamb that was stocked across a variety of retail stores in Northern Ireland. Starting in August 2013 information was collected on a monthly basis by a Millward Brown Ulster Mystery Shopper who visited 5 separate stores and recorded from the product labels where the meat had come from. Each month, a fresh sample of stores and geographical location was selected. In October 2014 the number of stores visited was increased to provide a more robust sample for analysis.

And despite the greater availability of local lamb on retail shelves and over 80% of consumers recognizing Farm Quality Assured lamb products it remains a challenge to convince consumers to try out lamb inspired recipes which are an excellent source of essential nutrients and perfect as part of a healthy and balanced diet. LMC's ongoing TV advertising campaign entitled "*The naturally fresh choice for lamb*" is aimed at reminding consumers to look for the Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured logo when shopping for lamb. The campaign is complimented by a range of other delicious recipes and information at [www.beefandlambni.com](http://www.beefandlambni.com).

LMC's Industry Development Manager, Colin Smith said "Unfortunately over 40% of consumers have yet to try local lamb so we are continuing to promote this quality product across Northern Ireland. We would encourage retailers to boost their support for the local sheep meat industry by procuring more Northern Ireland Farm

Quality Assured lamb especially in the current climate when prices offer such good value.

“We are working with sheep meat producers and processors to deliver farm quality assured lamb from farm to fork. As farmers are facing significant difficulties in securing a margin when marketing their lamb it is important to get the message across to consumers to support locally produced farm quality assured lamb.

The NIFQA lamb campaign will be supported with over 300 cookery demonstrations in secondary schools throughout Northern Ireland from September 2015 to March 2016 which will educate young consumers about the nutritional benefits of lamb in a balanced diet and how to cook simple lamb dishes at home.”

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

1. A copy of the results of the research is available at [www.lmcni.com](http://www.lmcni.com)
2. For more information contact Colin Smith, LMC Industry Development Manager Tel: 028 9263 3000 or email: [csmith@lmcni.com](mailto:csmith@lmcni.com)