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**Advertising paying dividends according to LMC**

Latest data released by Kantar Worldpanel has shown that Northern Ireland beef sales continue to perform strongly, which Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) Chief Executive, Ian Stevenson claims is “very encouraging.”

In the 12 weeks, ending December 30, 2018, beef sales accounted for 86 per cent of total red meat sales in terms of volume which is an increase from 83 per cent during the same period in 2017.

The number of households buying beef has also recorded a slight increase during the 2018 period with market penetration at 83.7 per cent, up from 83.1 per cent the previous year. Furthermore, the value of beef sales totalled £29.6 million, a 1.6 per cent increase from £29.1 million.

This rise in beef sales follows the launch of the second year of LMC’s advertising campaign to encourage more local consumers to purchase Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured (NIFQAS) beef and lamb. Running until March 2019, the campaign is focusing on various media platforms including television, radio, outdoor digital screens, online and in the press.

Commenting on the latest rise in beef sales, LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson said: “A key pillar of LMC’s activity is to promote the consumption of NIFQA beef and lamb in the domestic market.

“In October 2018 we launched the second year of our ‘Flavour your Life’ advertising campaign with bursts of activity to reach consumers across a range of media communicating the quality and versatility of our local NIFQA beef and lamb.

“Northern Irish consumers tend to place a strong emphasis on local within their fresh purchases and its very encouraging that the value of beef sales for the 12 week period, ending December 30, 2018, was up by half a million pounds relative to the same period in 2017.

“With the uncertainty the industry is currently facing, these positive figures should give our producers and processors confidence that local consumers continue to enjoy local beef.

“We’ve long since known that locally produced beef and lamb is a premium product and it’s more important than ever that consumers recognise and choose to purchase the high quality beef and lamb produced on their doorstep.”

**ENDS**