

**PRESS RELEASE**  
26 January 2023

**04/23**

## **End of year boost to lamb purchases welcomed by LMC**

RECENT figures released by data agency Kantar suggest that consumers sought alternatives to turkey for Christmas 2022, with lamb recording a marked increase in sales.

Delving into the detail of the Kantar analysis reveals enhanced lamb sales during December, with lamb roasts up 10 percent on Christmas 2021 and 13.6 percent on 2019 levels. Lamb shoulder joints recorded a positive growth just shy of four percent. Also worthy of note was the two percent increase on the 2021 figures for beef roasts.

Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) chief executive Ian Stevenson welcomed the positive reported figures.

Ian said, “2022 was a challenging year for lamb sales. The year brought a welcome return to ‘normality’ for the hospitality industry but also saw consumers become increasingly mindful of their money due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. Taking this into account it’s fair to say lamb sales sat against a complex backdrop in 2022. But that said it is pleasing that the year ended with a stronger performance for lamb which brought a reversal of the trend of falling retail sales and volumes in 2022 to this date.

“Lamb tends to be a particularly price sensitive meat with consumers, who often reduce their consumption of lamb as retail price increases. It is a meat that is often more closely associated with special occasions and religious festivals than other meats and the challenge for industry and levy bodies is to get consumers to think positively about lamb as a versatile and good value centrepiece for meal solutions throughout the year.

“As we enter 2023 volatility in markets, pressure on consumer spending power and weakness in the global economic situation continues to fuel a sense of uncertainty. However initial indications are that consumers post-Christmas are not retrenching their spending as quickly as might have been anticipated. One of LMC’s key workstreams is educating and informing consumers about the health and environmental benefits of beef and lamb and making sure that both meats are front and centre of their weekly shopping purchases.

“LMC is proactively leading the conversation with science based evidence on the health and environmental benefits of beef and lamb. Independent tracking research on the LMC advertising campaign, Good Honest Food, shows that consumers are receptive to positive messaging about Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured (NIFQA) beef and lamb. A staggering 93 percent of consumers who had seen the Good Honest Food campaign were aware of NIFQA beef, and 88 percent of these consumers purchase beef regularly. This reinforces the positive impact of the campaign and illustrates in a very clear way that consumers are making educated choices when it comes to the foods they eat.

“As we move towards spring 2023, for LMC the focus will remain on promoting NIFQA beef and lamb as sustainable, healthy and an environmentally friendly choice. Many NI consumers are already opting to actively seek out NIFQA beef and lamb and are incorporating these meats into healthy balanced diets.”

**ENDS**

**Photo caption**

**001 – LMC chief executive Ian Stevenson**

**Notes to Editor**

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