17012015_LEFT TEMPLATE NEW 16/01/2015 14:36 Page 1

LMC BULLETIN

WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Saturday 17 January 2015 Issue No. 2352

RECOVERY IN CALF BIRTHS IN 2014

STRONG INCREASE IN ANGUS AND HEREFORD CALF NUMBERS

THERE was deep concern after the first quarter of last year that the number of beef-sired calf births had fallen at an alarming rate. In the first quarter of 2014, numbers were down eight per cent since 2013 and 17 per cent since 2012. However, since April 2014 the birth rate stabilised and by the end of the year the number of beef sired births on Northern Ireland farms was one per cent higher than 2013 levels.

The recovery in calf birth numbers as the year progressed highlighted two broad issues. The first was associated with production conditions and the second factor was a change in seasonal births with more calves coming from the dairy herd.

Firstly, there were reports of issues with fertility and productivity generally in the cattle herd in 2012 and the first half of 2013, owing largely to the extremely poor weather conditions which left farmers short on forage and cows in poorer condition. There were reports of longer calving intervals and this was potentially one of the reasons for the low level of calf births in the first quarter of 2014. In the second half of 2013 the weather improved as did the quality and availability of forage. This improvement in production conditions would have lead to better fertility with the calf birth rate rising as the year progressed.

Secondly, between 2013 and 2014 there was a shift in the NI cow herd. The beef cow herd contracted by six per cent while the number of dairy cows increased by five per cent between June 2013 and June 2014. This had consequences for seasonal trends in calf births and also for breakdown of calf births by breed.

Over the last three years, 63 per cent of calves from the beef herd have been registered in the first half of the year, compared to only 50 per cent of calves from the dairy herd. With the dairy herd getting bigger and a greater proportion of calves coming from the dairy herd, this is bound to have been a factor in generating a greater number of calf births at the back end, with fewer earlier in the year.

Breed Breakdown

It is likely that the increased size in the dairy herd, proportionate to beef cow numbers has also impacted the number of births of different breeds.

Many dairy farmers are sweeping with an Angus or Hereford bull and the number of those calves has increased sharply in 2014 relative to 2013. With around 55 per cent of Hereford cattle, and 50 per cent of Angus and Belgian Blue cattle sourced from the dairy herd, an increase in the size of the dairy herd will have been an important driver in the increased numbers of cattle from these breeds, relative to other cattle breeds.

With beef cow numbers falling between 2013 and 2014, this will have been a driver of reduced numbers of Limousin, Simmental and Charolais, the majority of which are sourced from the beef herd.

More traditional breeding

Figure 2 shows how in 2014 there was a particularly strong increase in the number of Aberdeen Angus and Hereford calf births. There was a nine per cent increase in Angus calf births, with an additional 4,300 calves registered. Hereford numbers were up by 3,600 head (a 26 per cent increase).

As well as reflecting the growth in dairy cow numbers, these increases also reflect strong bonuses in the market for traditional breeds. For example, suppliers belonging to Aberdeen Angus schemes receive an attractive premium in the market. Likewise, Hereford bonuses have increased sharply in recent years. These trends will have encouraged more calf producers (dairy and suckler) to select Angus or Hereford bulls.

Last year, Limousin calf births dropped by three per cent or 2,800 head. Simmental numbers were down by three per cent while Charolais numbers were down one per cent. This general decline is reflective of the decline in beef cow numbers and has been offset by increases in the number of Angus and Hereford calves registered.

Figure 1. Northern Ireland Calf Birth Registrations - Annual Data, 2000-2014, Broken Down by Beef Sired and Dairy Sired (male only)

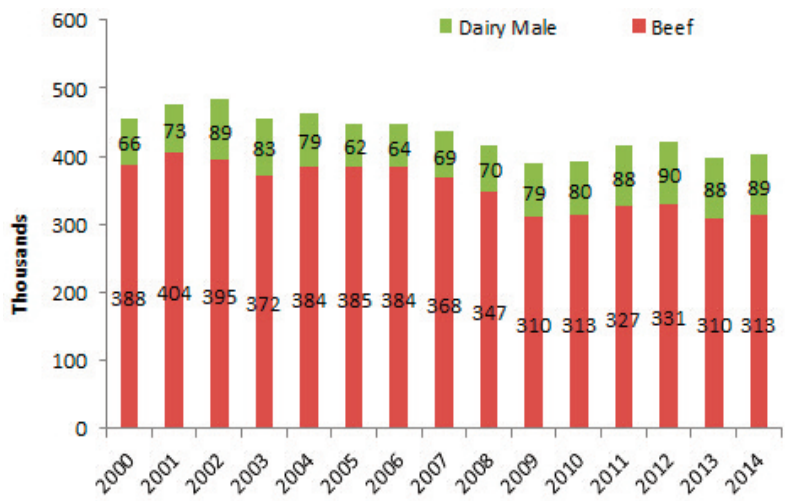


Figure 3 shows all beef-sired calf births broken down by breed. It clearly shows that Limousin remains the dominant breed in Northern Ireland, accounting for 30 per cent of beef-sired calf births in 2014. This is down from 32 per cent in 2013. Charolais accounted for 26 per cent of beef calf births last year, down from 27 per cent in 2013. The proportion of births that are Simmental has also fallen, from eight per cent in 2013 to seven per cent last year. As expected, traditional breeds accounted for an increased proportion of beef-sired births in 2014. Angus births accounted for 17 per cent of total beef sired calf births last year, up from 16 per cent in 2013. Hereford accounted for six per cent of births in 2014, compared to four per cent in 2013.

These changes will potentially have an impact on the market generally over the next 2-3 years, particularly the seasonal supply of cattle. With more of these traditional breeds coming forward for slaughter, it remains to be seen what impact, if any greater availability has on the premiums available in the market.

Figure 2. Northern Ireland Calf Birth Registrations - Annual Data, 2012-2014, Broken Down by Breed

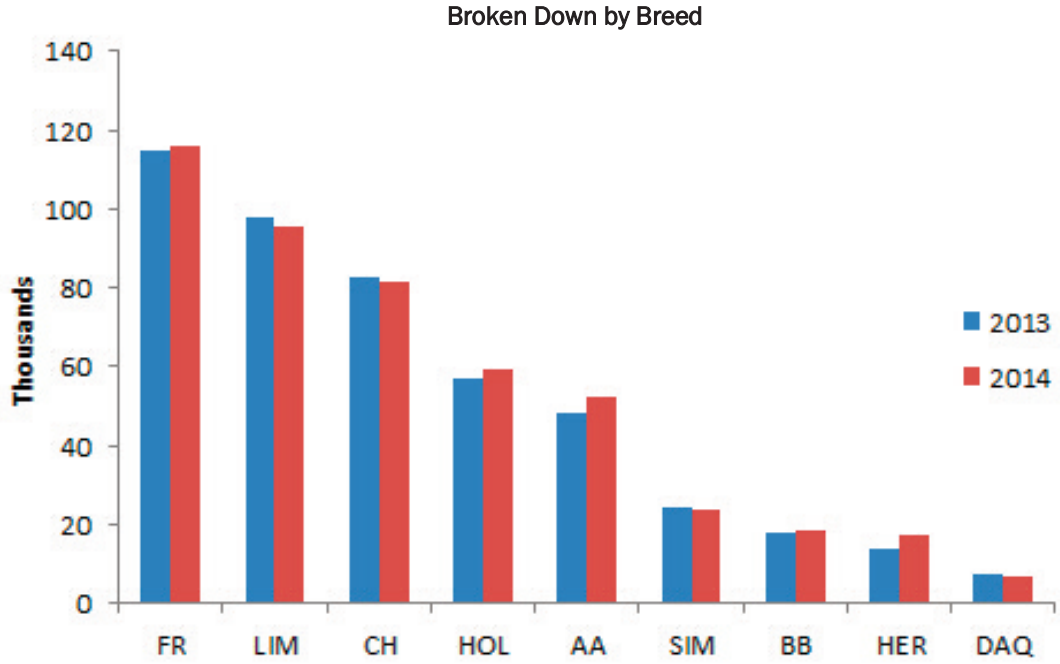
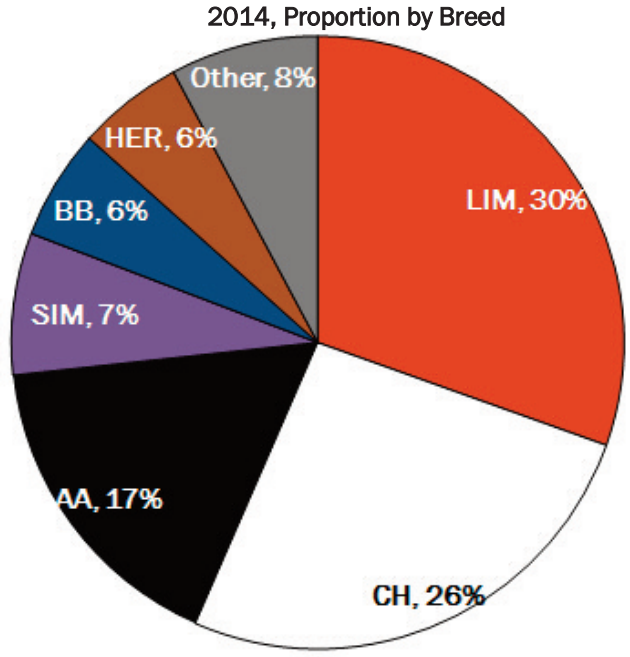


Figure 3. Northern Ireland Beef Sired Calf Birth Registrations 2014, Proportion by Breed



LMC

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

Email - bulletin@lmcni.com
Tel: 028 9263 3000

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 14/01/15	Next Week 19/01/15
Prime		
U-3	364 - 366p	366p
R-3	358 - 360p	360p
O+3	352 - 354p	354p
P+3	300 - 314p	300 - 314p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	230-255p	230-255p
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 10/01/15	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	370.7	371.0	356.0
R3	367.1	363.8	355.8
O+3	354.7	353.7	342.9

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

w/e 10/01/15	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	135.1	147.1	153.0	177.6
P2	157.6	176.0	197.5	215.5
P3	171.8	196.8	215.2	226.6
O3	-	218.9	242.9	247.5
O4	-	-	237.1	249.7
R3	-	-	-	271.7

SHEEP TRADE

HOGGET QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 14/01/15	Next Week 19/01/15
Hoggets	385-390>22kg	390>22kg

REPORTED LAMB/HOGGET PRICES - P/KG

(P/KG DW)	W/E 27/12/14	W/E 03/01/15	W/E 10/01/15
NI Liveweight	352.3	363.1	
NI Deadweight	385.5	385.0	
ROI Deadweight	376.5	379.5	379.5
GB Deadweight	416.5	422.1	419.4

Deadweight Cattle Trade

This week the deadweight trade in prime cattle was steady. Factories continued to quote 364-366p/kg for U-3 grade prime cattle, although there were ongoing reports that higher prices were available. It is expected that factories will be quoting 366p/kg for steers and heifers on Monday. Quotes for cows are expected to be steady at 230-255p/kg.

Last week's reported prices confirm that factories were paying higher prices than quoted. The average R3 steer price (excluding Angus, Hereford and Organic) was 367p/kg, higher than the U-3 quote. The reported R3 heifer price was lower at 364p/kg.

Last week's cattle kill was stronger in Northern Ireland. At total of 8,700 head were slaughtered in what was the first full working week of the year. This was 16 per cent higher than the same week in 2014. The increased kill was driven primarily by an increased steer kill, which is driven by the switch-over by farmers from bull to steer production. The heifer kill was up by 11 per cent, while the cow kill increased by almost a quarter. This increase in cow slaughterings is being mainly driven by the difficulties facing the dairy industry. Almost 66 per cent of the price reported cow kill last week were dairy cows. In previous years the equivalent figure ranged from 50-56 per cent.

The R3 steer price in NI last week was similar to English prices, although the heifer price was 7p/kg lower than equivalent prices in Northern England and 4-5p/kg lower than prices in Southern England and the Midlands and Wales. These differentials aren't incentivising live exports to the GB market with just 38 head exported last week. Meanwhile, 427 head were imported from ROI for direct slaughter. That was more than the previous week and 200 more than in the same week last year.

Prices in England and Wales increased sharply last week, with R3 steer prices up by 4p/kg and R3 heifer prices up by 5p/kg. There were sharp increases in the prices paid for U3 steers and heifers across England and Wales. Scottish prices were generally steady, with very little change week on week. Northern Ireland R3 steer prices are now 8p/kg lower than Scottish levels, while the difference in R3 heifers is 11p/kg. The gap between Scottish and English prices has narrowed significantly for certain grades of cattle. For example, the Northern England R4 steer price was slightly higher than the Scottish price last week. Prices in ROI have continued to rise. The U3 steer price was up by 6c/kg, while the R3 steer price was up by 2c/kg. Meanwhile the U3 and R3 heifer price was up by 4c/kg and 3c/kg respectively. With a very slight weakening of the euro against sterling during the week ending 10 January, these price increases were slightly tempered in sterling terms.

Sharp decline in the value of the euro

This week the euro fell sharply against sterling and the single currency at its lowest level against the pound since 2008. This will leave ROI produce more competitive in the UK market and render UK exports to the Eurozone more expensive. This is likely to have an impact on the beef and lamb markets.

Deadweight Sheep Trade

The deadweight sheep trade remained steady this week with quotes ranging from 385-390p/kg for R3 grade hoggets up to 22kg. ThiOn Monday all plants are expected to be quoting 390p/kg. Last week was the strongest sheep kill since November with almost 9,500 head slaughtered. The hogget kill was four per cent higher than in the same week last year, with the ewe kill 20 per cent lower. About 9,300 sheep were exported last week, an increase on previous weeks and similar to export levels at the same time last year. However, smaller numbers through the rings this week may give an indication of tightening supplies.

This Week's Marts

THE mart trade was steady this week with prices generally similar to the last week. In Masserene on Monday there were 822 hoggets through the ring with prices ranging from 350-377p/kg. This a smaller sale than last week when over 1,000 head were sold from 350-386p/kg. In Saintfield on Tuesday 611 hoggets sold from 330-400p/kg, a similar trade to the week before. In Ballymena, there was a small sale of 812 hoggets with an average price of 362p/kg. This was a better trade compared to the previous week when 1750 head sold at an average of 347p/kg. Armoy also reported a very small sale due to very difficult weather conditions in north Antrim. With smaller numbers and firm demand, strong prices were reported. Ewe prices remained very firm in NI last week with top prices continuing to reach to £130/head or more.

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

W/E 10/01/2015		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	370.8	316.3	382.8	379.0	379.8	378.2	380.2
	R3	368.1	306.5	375.8	367.9	367.2	366.9	369.9
	R4	365.1	306.3	377.0	377.4	368.1	365.0	373.9
	O3	347.3	292.1	357.1	343.3	338.4	339.8	345.3
	AVG	357.8	-	374.4	366.7	352.7	352.7	363.3
Heifers	U3	371.0	325.9	383.9	382.9	382.8	385.0	383.3
	R3	364.0	314.5	374.7	371.0	368.9	367.8	371.0
	R4	362.4	314.8	377.1	371.8	367.9	366.4	371.8
	O3	348.5	300.0	350.3	349.8	336.7	340.6	345.9
	AVG	359.1	-	376.1	366.4	360.7	353.2	366.2
Young Bulls	U3	356.8	304.2	379.4	343.5	367.0	373.9	359.0
	R3	356.1	298.5	362.8	339.8	354.4	349.6	348.5
	O3	328.6	284.1	331.5	308.8	315.9	327.1	319.5
	AVG	338.9	-	342.8	325.4	331.5	324.6	329.5
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5,543	-	6,201	5,669	5,167	3,800	20,837
Cows	O3	246.7	248.9	255.0	250.7	241.5	237.7	247.6
	O4	249.2	250.4	248.6	252.6	246.3	240.4	247.0
	P2	199.1	222.0	173.4	203.8	190.0	177.2	184.9
	P3	222.1	241.4	207.7	229.6	206.4	211.9	213.9
	AVG	222.2	-	238.7	228.9	210.0	205.7	222.1

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=78.20p 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 10/01/15	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	201	228	212	160	200	186
Friesians	160	175	164	130	159	148
Heifers	202	233	217	150	201	186
Beef Cows	165	227	172	118	164	141
Dairy Cows	100	132	110	65	99	83
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	205	220	211	175	197	186
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	207	231	218	176	202	188
Bullocks over 500kg	204	226	214	182	190	186
Heifers up to 450kg	200	216	206	168	195	185
Heifers over 450kg	200	222	210	163	198	187
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	340	440	375	180	338	260
Continental Heifers	290	415	325	130	288	210
Friesian Bulls	145	280	168	50	142	100
Holstein Bulls	70	135	100	2	68	35

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 10/01/15		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 16/01/15		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	1386	339	390	
	Swatragh	635	325	393	
	Newtownstewart	102	330	375	
	Donemana	420	348	382	
Monday	Massereene	822	350	377	
	Kilrea	393	352	392	
Tuesday	Saintfield	611	330	400	
	Rathfriland	615	330	370	356
Wednesday	Ballymena	812	340	392	362
	Enniskillen	402	347	386	365
	Armoy	215	365	410	

Contact us:
Website: www.lmcni.com
Telephone: 028 9263 3000
Fax: 028 9263 3001
FQAS Helpline: 028 9263 3024
Answerphone: 028 9263 3011
Comments: bulletin@lmcni.com

LMC does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any third party information provided in or included with this publication. LMC hereby disclaims any responsibility for error, omission or inaccuracy in the information, misinterpretation or any other loss, disappointment, negligence or damage caused by reliance on third party information.

Not for further publication or distribution without prior permission from LMC

LMC