LMC BULLETIN

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BVD ERADICATION SCHEME UPDATE

BOVINE Viral Diarrhoea, or BVD, is a highly contagious viral disease of cattle which can be easily transmitted through direct contact with infected animals and also indirectly by contact with visitors and machinery from other farms. Infection with BVD can result in a wide range of clinical signs including reproductive problems and a weakening of the immune system leaving cattle more susceptible to other infections, particularly scours and pneumonias in calves.

Agrisearch, in conjunction with the DARD Research Challenge Fund, have recently funded a study to identify the proportion of dairy and suckler herds which currently have, or have been recently exposed to infection with the BVD virus. Blood samples taken during routine brucellosis herd testing on 589 randomly selected herds across Northern Ireland between April 2011 and June 2012 underwent analysis. The results indicated that two thirds of the herds tested had at least one animal that had been in recent contact with the virus.

The majority of infections with BVD occur after birth with animals becoming transiently infected (TI) before recovering and becoming virus negative after about three weeks. Transient infections may occur without obvious clinical signs but dependent on the age, sex and immunity of the animal can result in a range of reproductive problems including abortion. Transient infections can also result in the occurrence of scour and/or pneumonia that respond poorly to treatment, particularly in calves.

If a cow comes into contact with the BVD virus between 30 and 120 days of pregnancy the unborn calf will become persistently infected (PI) with BVD if it is not aborted. If the calf is born alive it will shed BVD virus at high levels for life and will therefore act as a significant source of infection. TI animals shed virus at much lower levels and only for a few days.

PI animals may appear healthy at birth but may become stunted and perform poorly as time progresses. PI animals often develop a severe and always fatal wasting condition called mucosal disease (MD). This usually occurs between 6 and 18 months of age with the majority of PI animals dying before they reach breeding weight or slaughter age due to MD or other infections which the BVD virus leaves them exposed to, particularly scour and pneumonia.

Animal Health & Welfare NI
www.animalhealthni.com

The BVD virus persists in herds through the creation of further PI calves, therefore the identification and removal of PI calves as soon as possible after birth is the key to controlling the spread of the virus. Vaccination of breeding stock to maintain immunity can offer further protection where susceptible pregnant cattle are exposed to the BVD virus. A recent study estimated that the BVD eradication programme in ROI would give a cost benefit of 10:1 over the six years of the programme, i.e. a return of €10 euro for every €1 spent.

Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI; www.animalhealthni.com) was established in 2012 as an industry-led, not-for-profit partnership to address diseases and conditions of cattle which are endemic in Northern Ireland, including BVD, but which are not currently subject to regulation or coordinated programmes of control.

To develop and put in place a BVD programme, AHWNI have convened a cross-industry BVD Implementation Group (BVDIG) which LMC is actively involved in along with representatives of the farming and veterinary organisations, the dairy and beef breed societies, AFBI, CAFRE, DARD. The programme is based on identifying and culling PI animals from the national herd as soon as possible after birth through the testing of ear punch samples collected during the administration of BVD tags.

The identification of a PI animal in a herd will require further testing, focusing on the dam of the PI calf in the first instance, to identify any other PI animals that may be present. The BVD Eradication Programme has begun with a voluntary phase in 2013 with the proposal by industry to move to a compulsory phase in 2014.

Already farmers have demonstrated their support during the voluntary phase of the programme through ordering tissue tags (accounting for approximately 25% of all tags sold in 2013) and following the programme guidelines. With continued support from the farming industry for the NI BVD Eradication Programme LMC looks forward to BVD being a thing of the past.

DECREASE IN CARCASE COVERS IN 2ND QUARTER

A previous Bulletin article examined the conformation of prime cattle slaughtered in Northern Ireland in the period April-June 2013. This article analyses the fat cover scores awarded to prime cattle slaughtered during the same thirteen week period this year and the corresponding period last year.

Table 1 outlines the fat scores awarded to the price reported prime kill sourced from the suckler herd during the period April-June 2012 and the corresponding period in 2013. When comparing the two periods there has been a general movement towards lighter fat covers.

The processors want prime cattle carcases that have been adequately finished to meet customer specifications with fat cover scores ideally a 3 or 4 (- or =). In the 2012 period 36.2 per cent of prime carcases from the suckler herd were classified as a 4 for fat cover but during the corresponding period in 2013 this was back 8.2 percentage points to account for 28 per cent of the suckler origin prime kill. Meanwhile the number of carcases awarded a 3 for fat cover increased slightly from 49.1 per cent of the suckler sourced prime kill in the 2012 period to 51.2 per cent kill in the 2013 period.

In the 2012 period the proportion of suckler origin carcases awarded a fat cover of 3 or 4 totalled 85.3 per cent. In the same period on 2013 this was back by 6.1 percentage points to account for 79.2 per cent of the suckler origin prime kill. Meanwhile the proportion of suckler origin carcases awarded a 2 for fat cover increased by 5.4 percentage points to account for 17.6 per cent of the suckler origin prime kill with the proportion of carcases awarded a fat cover of 1 increasing to 1.9 per cent.

This movement towards lighter fat covers is likely to be a result of the difficult production conditions experienced by producers over the previous 12 months. These production difficulties and increasing beef production costs combined with problems in the quality of feedstuffs on many farms during winter 2012 and spring 2013 will have had an important role to play in the increased proportion of leaner carcases produced.

Chart 1 outlines the fat score allocations for the NI price reported prime kill for the 13 week period April-June 2013 broken down by suckler and dairy origin cattle. A larger proportion of dairy origin carcases are awarded fat scores of 1 or 2 when compared to their suckler counterparts and this can be linked back to the influence of their dairy genetics.

The proportion of dairy origin cattle awarded a 4 for fat cover has declined by 6.4 percentage points year on year while the proportion awarded a 3 has declined by 1.5 percentage points. This has meant that the proportion of dairy origin cattle meeting fat cover3 or 4 has declined from 68.6 per cent in the 2012 period to 60.7 per cent in the 2013 period.

Meanwhile the proportion of the dairy origin kill awarded a 2 has increased by 5.5 percentage points year on year to account for 29.9 per cent with the proportion of dairy origin carcases awarded a 1 for fat cover increasing by 2.7 percentage points to 8.8 per cent of the dairy origin kill.

*Please consult the Market Information Section of the LMC Website for a summary of conformation and Fat Class for Quarter 2 2013 www.lmcni.com

Chart 1: Fat classifications of the prime kill April-June 2013 by origin

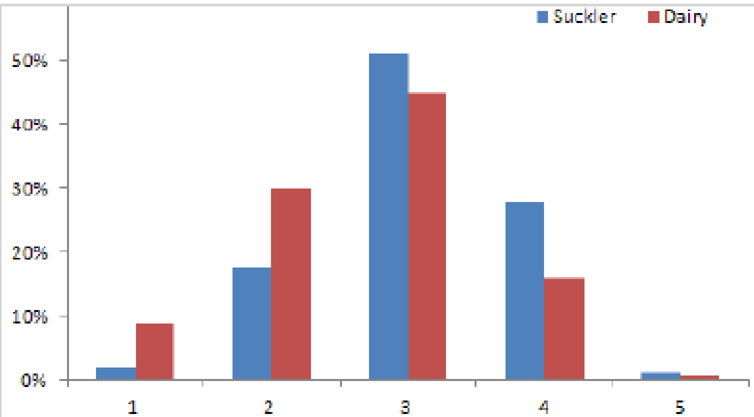

Table 1: Fat class allocations of the suckler origin prime kill April-June 2013

	1	2	3	4	5
2012	1.1%	12.2%	49.1%	36.2%	1.4%
2013	1.9%	17.6%	51.2%	28.0%	1.1%

Table 2: Fat class allocations of the dairy origin prime kill April-June 2013

	1	2	3	4	5
2012	6.1%	24.5%	46.4%	22.2%	0.8%
2013	8.8%	29.9%	44.9%	15.8%	0.6%

FQAS Liaison Officer Mart Clinics Timetable

Markethill	Tuesday	23/07/2013
Ballymena	Friday	26/07/2013
Kilrea	Wednesday	31/07/2013

FQAS NOTICE

ONLINE PAYMENTS

LMC has recently launched an online payment system for the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme. This allows producers to pay annual membership renewal and initial registration fees through the LMC website.

www.lmcni.com

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 15/07/13	Next Week 22/07/13
Prime		
U-3	364-370p	364-370p
R-3	358-364p	358-364p
O+3	352-358p	352-360p
* Plus 8p/kg in spec bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	275-300p	275-300p
Steakers	250-270p	250-270p
Blues	180-185p	180-185p

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 13/07/13	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U-3=	384.5	384.1	368.1
U=3=	387.6	386.0	369.1
U=4=	389.8	387.8	346.0
R=3=	381.4	382.8	367.7
R=4=	374.7	375.3	362.0
O+3=	374.8	368.3	355.9
O=3=	367.9	365.3	348.6
Average	373.2	372.6	353.4

REPORTED COW PRICES NI W/E 13/07/13

Grades	Price (p/kg)	Avg Wgt
O+3=	315.2	318.2
O-3+	294.2	303.1
P+2+	267.3	283.1
P+3+	280.7	295.7
P-1-	193.5	225.2

COMMODITIES

COMMODITY PRICE

W/E 13/07/13	Price (£) per tonne / 1000litre	% weekly change
Barley	179.00	-1.4
Wheat	190.00	+1.3
Straw	23.33	-
Diesel	715-720	-

Deadweight Cattle Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week for U-3 grade prime cattle have steadied at 364-370p/kg with the 8p/kg bonus available for steers and heifers that kill out in spec. Quotes for good quality cows range from 275-300p/kg across the plants.

There have been reports of a tightening in the availability of both prime cattle and cows as shed cattle numbers have started to dry up and grass cattle failing to appear in good numbers. The continuing good weather is also keeping producers busy with other farm work which may make transporting cattle for slaughter less of a priority. Throughput of prime cattle last week totalled 5,391 head, back 650 head on the previous week due to the shorter week. Throughput of prime cattle for the year to date has been 182,279 head, a 4.5 per cent increase on the 174,416 head slaughtered in the same period last year but the latest statistics indicate that the number of cattle aged 18-30 months on the ground is back three per cent year on year which could result in tighter supply as the year progresses. Lower carcase weights for the year to date have meant total beef production from prime cattle is up by only 0.5 per cent despite the four per cent increase in throughput.

With the 8p/kg drop in base quotes in NI plants last week the average steer price was down 5.5p/kg on the previous week to 373.2p/kg while the average heifer price was down 7p/kg to 372.6p/kg. It is however worth noting that the base quote from the plant does not necessarily reflect the price being paid and should be considered as a starting point for negotiation. The top quote available from the plants last week for an R-3 steer was 360p/kg and if the 8p/kg bonus is included the top price available was 368p/kg. The average price paid however for an R-3 steer last week was 382p/kg, 14p/kg higher than the highest quoted price.

Average steer prices in GB last week were almost unchanged at 402.3p/kg but there was some variability across the regions. In Scotland average steer prices were up 2p/kg to 418.4p/kg while in Northern England the average steer price was back 3p/kg to 404.2p/kg. In the Midlands the average price was unchanged at 392.8p/kg while in Southern England prices were up 1.5p/kg to 385.9p/kg. Meanwhile average heifer prices in GB last week were up 1.4p/kg to 400.4p/kg.

The drop in prices paid for prime cattle in NI last week has widened the price differential between NI and GB. The R3 steer price in NI last week was 382.9p/kg while the GB average was 405.4p/kg putting the average differential at 22.5p/kg. R3 steer prices in Scotland last week were 36.7p/kg higher than NI, in Northern England they were 20.3p/kg higher, in the Midlands they were 13.9p/kg higher and in Southern England they were 16.3p/kg higher. Meanwhile prices paid for R3 steers in ROI were the equivalent of 15.8p/kg lower than the average R3 steer price in NI.

In ROI last week the price paid for all reported grades of prime cattle were back on the previous week. R3 steer and heifer prices were back in the region of 4p/kg to 367.1p/kg and 385.6p/kg respectively. The biggest decline however has been recorded for young bulls with prices back the equivalent of 8-9p/kg across the reported grades.

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

W/E 13/07/13		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	385.6	376.4	421.5	407.4	414.5	405.2	413.1
	R3	382.9	367.1	419.6	403.2	396.8	399.2	405.4
	R4	381.6	367.1	423.1	416.5	398.0	397.2	411.1
	O3	367.9	352.1	405.4	391.7	376.6	377.6	389.7
	AVG	373.2	-	418.4	404.2	392.8	385.9	402.3
Heifers	U3	385.4	400.7	420.6	406.3	411.3	403.2	411.4
	R3	381.3	385.6	412.1	395.5	396.4	396.6	401.0
	R4	377.1	383.4	415.8	399.8	397.8	396.3	403.6
	O3	365.6	365.7	390.9	386.7	385.8	379.0	386.1
	AVG	372.6	-	411.6	400.1	396.2	387.4	400.4
Young Bulls	U3	369.6	369.2	415.4	389.7	400.1	403.5	400.6
	R3	364.5	359.6	407.3	379.7	384.8	387.5	386.6
	O3	348.7	333.8	376.3	359.6	360.8	368.0	363.7
	AVG	353.4	-	404.0	371.4	381.7	381.2	381.6
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5130	-	6840	6002	5801	4139	22782
Cows	O3	300.0	281.6	310.0	303.1	298.8	287.8	300.8
	O4	303.7	284.8	313.1	303.7	302.5	289.9	302.5
	P2	249.2	245.8	256.9	256.2	239.4	227.7	247.4
	P3	277.8	270.1	281.7	283.0	259.2	255.1	274.3
	AVG	281.1	-	301.4	281.7	290.9	256.2	281.5

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.25p 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 06/07/13	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	210	228	216	170	209	190
Friesians	150	194	162	136	154	144
Heifers	200	225	213	168	199	183
Beef Cows	165	212	177	120	164	140
Dairy Cows	120	153	128	70	119	95
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	200	213	211	175	199	187
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	195	226	200	170	194	182
Bullocks over 500kg	201	222	214	150	200	170
Heifers up to 450kg	190	213	200	168	188	178
Heifers over 450kg	200	238	213	175	199	187
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	235	435	290	135	232	185
Continental Heifers	200	335	260	100	198	150
Friesian Bulls	80	185	120	40	78	58
Holstein Bulls	60	122	78	1	58	25

SHEEP TRADE

LAMB QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 15/07/13	Next Week 22/07/13
NI Factories	425-435p	-
ROI Factories	425-435p	-

REPORTED LAMB PRICES - P/KG

(P/KG DW)	W/E 29/06/13	W/E 06/07/13	W/E 13/07/13
NI Liveweight	417.7p	404.0p	398.4p
NI Deadweight	447.7p	439.9p	430.5p
ROI Deadweight	436.6p	432.8p	424.9p
GB Deadweight	494.2p	491.3p	483.9p

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week for R3 lambs ranged from 425-435p/kg with the plants reporting strong supplies of good quality lambs. The plants are not quoting for next week until Monday. Throughput in the plants last week totalled 7,349 head compared to 6,849 head slaughtered in the same week last year. A total of 6,994 lambs were exported to ROI last week for direct slaughter. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week was 430.5p/kg, back 9.4p/kg on the previous week. In the same week last year the deadweight lamb price in NI was 352.4p/kg. Meanwhile the deadweight lamb price in GB last week was 483.9p/kg, back 7.4p/kg on the previous week.

This week's marts

There has been a fairly good trade reported across the marts this week with keen interest from buyers for well finished lots. Some marts have also reported a steady increase in the number of store lambs starting to appear through the sale rings. In Gortin on Monday a similar trade to the previous week saw 910 lambs sold to an average of 400p/kg with 800 lambs in Kilrea selling to an average of 412p/kg. In Enniskillen on Wednesday 485 lambs sold from 385-414p/kg (av 390p/kg) with a similar trade reported in Ballymena where 1,137 lambs sold to an average of 392p/kg. In Armoy on Wednesday night a good trade saw 620 lambs selling from 375-412p/kg. The top reported ewe price of £89 was for a batch of heavy texel ewes in Armoy on Wednesday.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 13/07/13 To: 18/07/13		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
		No.	From	To	Avg
Monday	Gortin	910	390	430	400
	Kilrea	800	400	421	412
Tuesday	Lisahally	460	390	410	400
	Rathfriland	873	385	412	390
Wednesday	Enniskillen	485	385	414	390
	Ballymena	1137	375	421	392
	Markethill	750	380	406	386
	Armoy	620	375	412	

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