

COW FAT SCORES IMPROVE AUTUMN 2013

CULL cows being presented for slaughter during the six week period ending 15 November 2013 have shown a marked improvement in terms of fat cover when compared to the corresponding period in 2012.

The improved grass growth this summer and prolonged grazing period has helped to ensure cows are in better condition at point of slaughter this autumn when compared to autumn 2012. However with reports of improved fertility and increased levels of forage conserved this year cow throughput in the plants has been lower year on year.

In the 2013 period 31 per cent of the total price reported cow kill were awarded a fat class three compared to 26 per cent of cows in the same period in 2012. Meanwhile the proportion of cows achieving a fat class four increased from 11 per cent in the 2012 period to 16 per cent in the 2013 period.

The proportion of cows achieving a one or two for fat cover accounted for 61 per cent of the price reported cow kill in the six weeks ending mid November 2012 and this declined to 51 per cent in the

same period in 2013. There is however a distinct difference between the fat scores achieved by dairy and suckler bred cows as outlined in Figure 1.

Dairy origin cows predominantly achieved fat scores of one and two (44 per cent and 32 per cent respectively) during the 2013 period with a further 20 per cent achieving fat class three. In the 2012 period 17 per cent of dairy origin cows achieved a fat class three.

While there has been a general improvement in the fat classes awarded to dairy bred cows there has also been an increase in the average carcass weight year on year. In the six weeks ending 17 November 2012 the average carcass weight from a dairy bred cow was 263kg and this increased to 267kg in the 2013 period. This accounts for a 1.5 per cent increase in average carcass weights.

Dairy origin cows accounted for 55 per cent of the cow kill during the six week period in 2013, nine percentage points lower than the corresponding period in 2012 when 64 per cent of the cow kill were of dairy origin. High numbers of

dairy origin cows were slaughtered in Autumn 2012 due to poor fertility and with forage budgets tight many producers opted to cull unproductive stock.

Meanwhile the proportion of suckler cows in the price reported cow kill has increased from 36 per cent in the 2012 period to 45 per cent in the 2013 period. The fat class scores achieved by suckler cows also showed an improvement year on year as outlined in Table 1. The proportion awarded fat class three or four increased from 69 per cent in the six week period ending 17 November 2012 to 77 per cent in the corresponding period in 2013.

Average carcass weights for suckler origin cows increased from 317kg in the 2012 period to 321kg in the 2013 period and the increased proportion of suckler origin cows in the slaughter mix has pulled the average carcass weight for the total cow kill up to 291kg, an increase of 9kg between the two periods.

Figure 1: Fat class scores awarded to suckler and dairy origin cows during six weeks ending 15 November 2013

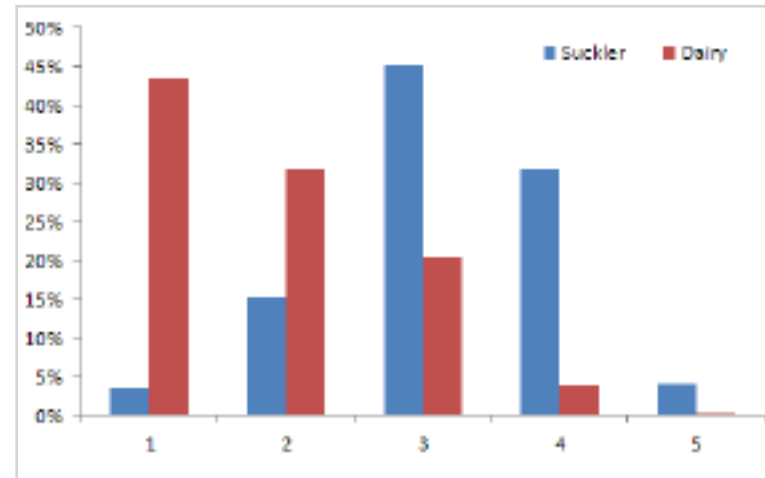


Table 1: Fat scores awarded to suckler cows during six weeks ending 15 November 2013 and the corresponding period in 2012

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Avg Cold Wt
2012	6.7%	19.3%	42.4%	26.7%	5.0%	317kg
2013	3.9%	15.6%	44.5%	31.8%	4.3%	321kg

FQAS ONLINE PAYMENTS UP AND RUNNING

LMC would like to remind Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme members that they can now use the online payment system to pay annual renewal fees at www.lmcni.com. This service can also be used to pay initial registration fees but producers should note that completed application forms need to be forwarded via post.

Previously all FQAS members had to pay their annual renewal/initial registration by cheque however members can now pay online with a valid credit/debit card. Paying your membership fee online is quick and easy and facilitates a more streamline payment service. The online payment system is available 24 hours a day and is completely secure through the LMC website. It should be noted that cheques are still accepted as a valid means of payment.

In order to pay using credit/debit card, FQAS members must pay through the website and it is important to remember that card details cannot be taken over the phone for security reasons. At this time we are unable to process Maestro debit cards but can facilitate the majority of major debit/credit cards.

If you have any queries regarding online payments please contact the FQAS team in LMC on 028 9263 3024.



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

EU DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES

THE EU league table of heifer prices ranks 17 countries in terms of the farm gate price paid for R3 grade heifers and allows a useful comparison to be made in the beef trade across Europe.

The average R3 heifer price in the EU in the week ending the 10 November 2013 was 405.6c/kg, an increase of 0.6c/kg on the week ending the 13 October 2013 when the average price was 405c/kg.

NI has remained in second position in the table in the week ending the 10 November 2013 with an equivalent R3 heifer price of 445.2p/kg, an increase of 1.6c/kg from the price the previous month. This puts the NI R3 heifer price 39.6c/kg higher than the EU average in the week ending the 10 November 2013.

In the same week the equivalent GB R3 heifer price was 58.4c/kg higher than the EU average at 464.0c/kg and has meant GB has retained first position in the table. This was however 2.3c/kg lower than the average price paid in the week ending the 13 October 2013 when the GB R3 heifer price was 466.3c/kg.

R3 heifer prices in Greece have shown the strongest increase in the EU between the two weeks tabulated, increasing by 9.5p/kg to 442.5c/kg.

This has allowed it to remain in third position on the table.

Meanwhile prices in France were back by 2c/kg to 429p/kg and prices in Italy were back by 10.8c/kg to 417.9c/kg. Despite the drop in R3 heifer prices in both countries they have maintained their positions on the league table of fourth and fifth position respectively.

In the week ending the 10 November 2013 the R3 heifer price in ROI was

403.4c/kg, an increase of 8.3c/kg on the previous month when it was 395.1c/kg. This has moved it up one position on the league table into seventh place.

The value of euro against sterling has weakened slightly between the two months tabulated. The exchange rate was €1=83.9p in the week ending the 10 November 2013, a decline of 0.7p/kg on the previous month when €1=84.6p

EU Deadweight Cattle Prices - Heifers R3 Equivalent (€ Cents)

Position last Mth	Position this Mth	Country	Price last Mth (w/e 13.10.13)	Price this Mth (w/e 10.11.13)	Change on Mth (cents)
1	1	Great Britain	466.3	464.0	-2.3
2	2	Northern Ireland	443.6	445.2	+1.6
3	3	Greece	433.0	442.5	+9.5
4	4	France	431.0	429.0	-2.0
5	5	Italy	428.7	417.9	-10.8
6	6	Spain	403.4	411.5	+8.1
8	7	Ireland	395.1	403.4	+8.3
7	8	Luxembourg	397.4	393.3	-4.1
9	9	Sweden	379.9	377.5	-2.4
10	10	Germany	378.7	377.0	-1.7
11	11	Denmark	372.0	356.5	-15.5
12	12	Austria	354.1	353.5	-0.6
13	13	Belgium	348.5	345.5	-3.0
14	14	Slovenia	318.2	317.1	-1.2
15	15	Poland	300.3	298.7	-1.7
16	16	Czech Republic	287.4	271.8	-15.6
17	17	Lithuania	223.3	222.6	-0.7
EU Average			405.0	405.6	+0.6
Euro exchange rate			84.6	83.9	-
Official prices reported to the EC Dressing Specification					



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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 18/11/13	Next Week 25/11/13
Prime		
U-3	360-364p	360-364p
R-3	354-358p	354-358p
O+3	348-352p	348-352p
* Plus 8-14p/kg in spec bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	240-260p	230-260p
Steakers	150-220p	150-220p
Blues	125-150p	110-150p

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 16/11/13	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U-3=	377.0	375.6	356.9
U=3=	377.2	383.3	369.1
U=4=	361.0	362.4	-
R=3=	378.6	378.0	346.5
R=4=	368.4	372.0	338.0
O+3=	364.5	364.0	341.4
O=3=	359.8	358.2	334.4
Average	362.5	368.3	339.5

REPORTED COW PRICES NI W/E 16/11/13

Grades	Price (p/kg)	Avg Wgt
O+3=	261.3	321.2
O-3+	239.1	301.9
P+2+	222.0	288.9
P+3+	231.8	321.9
P-1-	148.9	219.6

COMMODITY PRICE

W/E 16/11/13	Price (£) per tonne / 1000litre	% weekly change
Barley	157.00	-2.2
Wheat	182.50	-0.3
Straw	17.10	-
Diesel	712-720	-

Deadweight Cattle Trade

QUOTES from the plants for U-3 grade prime cattle this week ranged from 360-364p/kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. The plants are generally reporting a tightening in the availability of prime cattle. Quotes from the plants for next week for O+3 cows range from 230-260p/kg with the plants reporting steady supplies.

Prime cattle throughput in the plants last week totalled 6,511 head, a reduction of 133 head on the previous week. During the six week period ending the 16 November 2013 a total of 41,899 prime cattle were processed by NI plants. This was very similar to the corresponding period in 2012 when 41,643 head were processed. Cow throughput in the plants last week was similar to the previous week and totalled 2,356 head. Imports of prime cattle for direct slaughter from ROI last week totalled 494 head with 152 cows also imported. Meanwhile 287 cows were exported from NI for direct slaughter in ROI plants. Exports to GB for direct slaughter last week were similar to previous weeks and consisted of 240 prime cattle and 44 cows.

Average steer prices in NI last week were back 2p/kg to 362.5p/kg while the average R3 price was unchanged at 375.4p/kg. The average heifer price in NI was up 1.3p/kg to 368.3p/kg with the R3 heifer price up a penny to 376.8p/kg. Cow prices in NI have shown a marked decline with average prices back 7.8p/kg to 219.8p/kg. The O3 cow price was back 7.1p/kg to 249.6p/kg last week while the P3 cow price was back 8.6p/kg to 226.5p/kg.

The deadweight trade in GB has generally been subdued with the average prices paid for heifers, young bulls and cows all recording declines last week. Average steer prices meanwhile recorded an increase of 1.9p/kg to 391.3p/kg with increases of 1-2p/kg recorded in average prices across all the GB regions. The trade for heifers has shown more variation across GB with average prices recording an improvement in Scotland and Southern England while they declined in the Midlands and Northern England. Cow prices have recorded a decline across all the GB regions with the strongest decrease recorded in the Midlands where prices were back 9.5p/kg to 215.5p/kg. The NI average cow price remains above all GB regions with the exception of Scotland where the average cow price was 231.4p/kg.

In ROI the deadweight trade was back slightly with good supplies reported. The average R3 steer price was the equivalent of 326.9p/kg while the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 339.6p/kg.

This week's marts

FINISHED first quality steers sold to an average of 206p/kg liveweight this week with second quality selling to an average of 182p/kg. Meanwhile first and second quality finished heifers sold to 207p/kg and 180p/kg respectively. The trade for forward store cattle remained firm with bullocks over 500kg selling to an average of 198p/kg for first quality and an average of 182p/kg for second quality. Heifers over 450kg sold to an average of 196p/kg for first quality with second quality selling to average of 172p/kg.

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

W/E 16/11/13	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	377.7	335.4	422.5	397.4	395.5	392.6	403.3
	R3	375.4	326.9	416.0	391.7	382.3	381.7	394.2
	R4	370.8	326.3	418.1	403.7	384.2	382.5	400.2
	O3	359.0	310.2	399.8	378.5	364.9	361.5	378.0
	AVG	362.5	-	414.7	392.5	379.6	370.6	391.3
Heifers	U3	379.8	352.5	423.6	398.4	396.0	390.5	404.2
	R3	376.8	339.6	415.2	385.7	385.7	378.6	393.5
	R4	374.2	338.7	415.7	390.3	383.8	378.4	394.5
	O3	361.8	324.2	381.4	366.4	364.4	351.6	366.9
	AVG	368.3	-	410.9	385.9	380.1	366.5	388.3
Young Bulls	U3	358.1	331.3	414.8	367.7	377.5	384.0	381.0
	R3	348.1	325.5	397.8	362.7	372.5	368.5	370.7
	O3	334.3	305.1	364.3	338.7	351.3	352.7	348.9
	AVG	339.5	-	380.1	347.0	358.8	344.6	354.1
Prime Cattle Price Reported	5068	-	6353	5835	5271	3993	21452	
Cows	O3	249.6	258.4	245.2	244.3	243.8	221.4	237.3
	O4	252.9	260.6	250.0	245.8	239.7	224.5	238.4
	P2	202.5	223.9	192.9	197.3	189.6	166.8	184.6
	P3	226.5	244.8	208.8	220.3	209.3	195.3	206.9
	AVG	219.8	-	231.4	217.7	215.5	184.7	209.5

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=83.95p 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 LIVELWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

W/E 16/11/13	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	202	224	206	160	201	182
Friesians	165	193	179	149	150	150
Heifers	201	220	207	155	200	180
Beef Cows	140	209	167	105	139	125
Dairy Cows	95	143	110	60	94	77
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	196	213	207	127	195	162
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	192	219	201	150	191	172
Bullocks over 500kg	190	208	198	154	189	182
Heifers up to 450kg	182	202	192	156	181	170
Heifers over 450kg	186	206	196	160	185	172
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	280	392	318	180	278	230
Continental Heifers	210	330	260	120	208	170
Friesian Bulls	85	135	100	20	82	50
Holstein Bulls	50	100	70	2	48	22

SHEEP TRADE

LAMB QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 18/11/13	Next Week 25/11/13
NI Factories	370p > 22kg	370p > 22kg
ROI Factories	370p > 22kg	370p > 22kg

REPORTED LAMB PRICES - P/KG

(P/KG DW)	W/E 02/11/13	W/E 09/11/13	W/E 16/11/13
NI Liveweight	327.6p	332.9p	328.4p
NI Deadweight	364.8p	365.2p	367.2p
ROI Deadweight	357.9p	351.0p	353.7p
GB Deadweight	399.8p	400.7p	399.2p

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week for R3 grading lambs have remained steady with plants quoting 370p/kg up to 22kgs. Good supplies of lambs have continued to come forward for slaughter with 11,839 lambs slaughtered last week. In the six weeks ending the 16 November 2013 lamb throughput in the NI plants was 69,400 head, ten per cent higher than the 63,302 head slaughtered in the same period in 2012. Exports to ROI last week totalled 9,351 head, a reduction of 2,676 head on the previous week. The NI deadweight price last week increased by 2p/kg to 367.2p/kg while the price in GB remained fairly steady at 399.2p/kg. In ROI average prices were up the equivalent of 2.7p/kg to 353.7p/kg.

This week's marts

AVERAGE prices in the marts this week ranged from 323-340p/kg with many of the marts reporting good numbers of lambs passing through the sale rings. In Kilrea on Monday 500 lambs sold from 326-343p/kg while in Massereene 1,426 lambs sold from 325-358p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 1,235 lambs sold to an average of 340p/kg compared to 1,289 lambs last week selling to an average of 341p/kg. A firm trade was reported in Ballymena on Wednesday with 2,075 lambs selling from 320-352p/kg (avg 331p/kg) compared to 1,828 lambs last week selling from 310-350p/kg (avg 324p/kg). A slightly firmer trade was also reported in Markethill where 810 lambs sold to an average of 334p/kg compared to 1,420 lambs last week selling to an average of 326p/kg.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 16/11/13 To: 21/11/13		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
		No.	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	1481	342	362	-
	Newtownstewart	100	316	339	323
Monday	Massereene	1426	325	358	-
	Kilrea	500	326	343	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	621	330	365	-
	Rathfriland	1235	321	371	340
Wednesday	Ballymena	2075	320	352	331
	Enniskillen	585	318	343	330
	Markethill	810	325	357	334

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