

CONFORMATION IMPROVES IN FINAL QUARTER

An analysis of the price reported prime cattle kill for the final quarter of 2013 has identified some interesting trends.

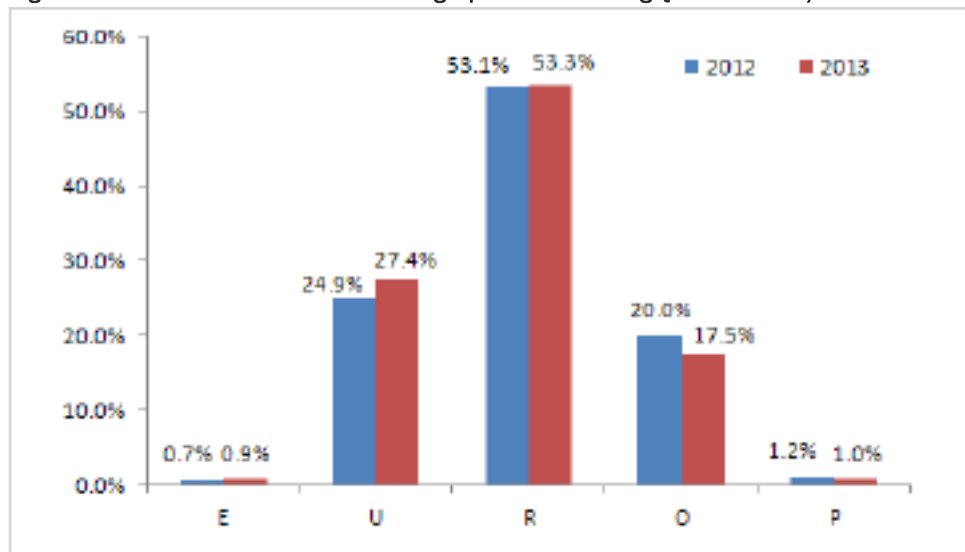
Suckler herd

If we look at the conformation scores of prime cattle sourced from the suckler herd the proportion of steers, heifers and young bulls awarded a U grade increased from 24.9 per cent in the final quarter of 2012 to 27.4 per cent in the final quarter of 2013. This is an increase of 2.5 percentage points between the two periods.

Meanwhile the proportion of R grading cattle sourced from the suckler herd was relatively unchanged year on year. In the 2013 period 53.3 per cent of suckler origin cattle were awarded an R grade compared to 53.1 per cent in the 2012 period.

Suckler origin cattle awarded an O grade during the period October-December 2013 accounted for 17.5 per cent of the total price reported prime kill.

Figure 1: Conformation scores of suckler origin prime cattle during Quarter 4 2012/13.



This was 2.5 percentage points lower than the same period in 2012 when 20 per cent of the prime kill achieved an O grade. The proportion of cattle from the suckler herd achieving a P grade was relatively unchanged between the two periods, representing around one per cent of the suckler origin kill.

The general improvement in the grades achieved by suckler origin cattle year on year has occurred despite a decline in average carcass weights. In the final quarter of 2013 the average suckler origin carcass weight was 340.5kg compared to 351.5kg in the same period in 2012. This reduction by 11kg represents a three per cent decline in suckler origin carcass weights between the two periods.

Dairy herd

A similar trend can be observed in the average carcass weight of prime cattle sourced from the dairy herd as outlined in Table 1. In the 2013 period the average carcass weight of dairy origin

Table 1: Conformation scores of dairy origin prime cattle during Quarter 4 2012/13.

Year	E	U	R	O	P	Avg Cold Wt (kg)
2012	0.0%	1.1%	14.8%	52.8%	31.3%	298.9
2013	0.0%	1.2%	16.1%	55.6%	27.1%	291.4
Change	0.0	+0.1	+1.3	+2.8	-4.2	-7.5kg

Table 2: Proportion of prime cattle carcasses in a range of weight brackets during Quarter 4 2012/13

	<260kg	260-280kg	280-380kg	380-400kg	400-420kg	>420kg
2012	9.5%	7.8%	58.8%	8.8%	6.3%	8.6%
2013	10.9%	9.7%	62.5%	7.2%	4.6%	4.8%
Change	+1.4	+1.9	+3.7	-1.6	-1.7	-3.8

prime cattle was 291.4kg compared to 298.9kg in the same period in 2012. This reduction by 7.5kg represents a 2.5 per cent decline in average carcass weights year on year.

There have also been changes recorded in the proportion of dairy origin cattle falling within each conformation classification when comparing the two periods in question as outlined in Table 2.

In the 2012 period 14.8 per cent of prime cattle of dairy origin achieved an R grade and this increased to 16.1 per cent during the 2013 period. The proportion awarded an O for conformation increased by 2.8 percentage points between the two periods to account for 55.6 per cent in the final quarter of 2013. Meanwhile the proportion of dairy origin prime cattle awarded a P grade for conformation declined from 31.3 per cent in the 2012 period to 27.1 per cent in the 2013 period.

Weight specification

Table 1 outlines the proportion of prime cattle falling within different weight brackets during the period October-December in 2012 and 2013. During 2013 there has been a notable tightening in the application of specifications in an attempt to promote the production of more in spec cattle. In

terms of weight the in spec weight requirements for the major NI plants for steers and heifers are 280-380kg.

During the 2012 period 61.3 per cent of steers and heifers had carcass weights within these limits and during the same period in 2013 this increased by 3.8 percentage points to account for 65.1 per cent of steer and heifer carcasses. It is worth noting that there has been no change in the proportion of prime cattle sourced from the suckler and dairy herds between the two periods (62 per cent and 38 per cent respectively).

This increase in the proportion of carcasses in spec for weight has been aided by the more rigid application of penalties on overweight carcasses. In addition the cattle killed this back end are likely to have performed poorly at grass during summer 2012 which will have affected their lifetime performance and thus final carcass weight. The combination of these factors has meant producers have been slaughtering cattle at lower carcass weights. During the final quarter of 2013 16 per cent of steer and heifer carcasses were over 380kg compared to 22 per cent of carcasses in the corresponding period in 2012.

FQAS LIAISON OFFICER MART CLINICS TIMETABLE

JANUARY 2014

MC's Farm Liaison Officer, Terry White, runs Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) mart clinics at a range of Livestock Marts across Northern Ireland.

Terry is present to assist members of FQAS with non-conformances, general scheme queries and any issues prior to, or following, an inspection. Any farmers who wish to join the scheme can also do so through their local FQAS mart clinic.

Terry will be available at the livestock marts listed in the table. For further information call (028) 9263 3024.



LOCATION	DAY	DATE
Omagh	Monday	06/01/2014
Markethill	Tuesday	14/01/2014
Saintfield	Wednesday	16/01/2014
Kilrea	Wednesday	22/01/2014
Enniskillen	Thursday	23/01/2014
Balymena	Friday	24/01/2014

LMC
QUARTERLY

**SIGN UP NOW TO
RECEIVE IT FREE BY
POST**

**CONTACT:
028 9263 3000**

REMINDER

Sheep producers are reminded to complete their flock inventory cards between 1st-5th December 2014 and return the completed form to DARD in the pre paid envelope provided. The inventory should also be recorded in the producers flock book.



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



NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 30/12/13	Next Week 06/01/14
Prime		
U-3	344-346p	344-346p
R-3	338-340p	338-340p
O+3	332-334p	332-334p
* Plus 8-14p/kg in spec bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	225-240p	225-240p
Steakers	150-190p	150-190p
Blues	110-130p	110-130p

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 28/12/13	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U-3=	363.3	370.8	343.9
U=3=	368.9	369.9	332.0
U=4=	359.4	363.9	-
R=3=	367.7	363.1	327.0
R=4=	358.7	361.5	-
O+3=	359.3	364.9	326.4
O=3=	345.7	354.4	317.9
Average	355.1	361.4	322.7

REPORTED LAMB PRICES - P/KG

(P/KG DW)	W/E 14/12/13	W/E 21/12/13	W/E 28/12/14
NI Liveweight	359.9p	364.1p	-
NI Deadweight	384.3p	388.4p	387.9p
ROI Deadweight	360.0p	360.1p	372.2p
GB Deadweight	396.3p	396.9p	399.9p

Deadweight Cattle Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week for U-3 grade prime cattle were 344-346p/kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. Bonuses of 8-14p/kg are available across the plants for in spec steers and heifers and producers should consult with individual processors for requirements as there is some variation between plants. Quotes for O+3 grade cows range from 225-240p/kg across the plants.

The processors are reporting steady supplies of both prime cattle and cows to meet demand as we move into the New Year although the prime cattle kill was four per cent lower year on year in the last three weeks of December. They have also reported that beef sales remain subdued. Producers should note that the increased penalties for young bulls over sixteen months are now being applied by some processors.

In NI last week the R3 steer price was 365.6p/kg, an increase of 1.5p/kg on the previous week while the R3 heifer price was up by 1p/kg to 366.2p/kg. There was an improvement in the trade recorded in GB last week with average steer prices up by 2.7p/kg to 386.7p/kg and average heifer prices up by 4p/kg to 385.6p/kg. There was however some variation recorded across the regions.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price was the equivalent of 327.7p/kg, up 3.7p/kg from the previous week. The R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 342.8p/kg, an increase of 2.5p/kg on the previous week. The differential between NI and ROI last week was 37.9p/kg for steers and 23.4p/kg for heifers.

Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the plants for R3 grading hoggets this week were 395p/kg with plants paying up to 22kg. The plants are reporting steady supplies of good quality lambs to meet demand. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week was 387.9p/kg, similar to the previous week. Meanwhile in GB the average deadweight price was 399.9p/kg, up 3p/kg from the previous week when the average price was 369.9p/kg.

A small number of marts had sales over the past few days with a firm trade reported for good quality lambs. In Swatragh last Saturday a similar trade to the previous week saw 550 lambs sold from 347-405p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 1,146 lambs sold from 360-395p/kg. A total of 1,626 lambs sold to an average of 355p/kg in Ballymena on Wednesday while in Markethill 725 lambs sold to an average of 358p/kg.

HOGGET/LAMB QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 30/12/13	Next Week 06/01/14
NI Factories	395p > 22kg	395p > 22kg
ROI Factories	395p > 22kg	395p > 22kg

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

W/E 28/12/13	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	367.3	335.0	413.1	388.9	389.9	395.8
	R3	365.6	327.7	404.3	382.5	378.4	386.3
	R4	366.9	327.4	405.8	397.8	394.7	396.2
	O3	350.0	311.9	390.2	373.5	365.6	372.4
Heifers	AVG	355.1	-	404.8	386.4	381.8	386.7
	U3	369.9	353.5	415.3	387.0	390.6	396.9
	R3	366.2	342.8	403.7	379.4	382.2	385.6
	R4	362.2	342.4	406.3	386.5	388.4	389.6
Young Bulls	O3	355.1	327.5	396.5	361.1	370.8	371.7
	AVG	361.4	-	406.2	383.4	381.6	385.6
	U3	339.4	323.3	400.0	347.6	366.0	366.0
	R3	333.8	315.8	393.3	353.0	354.1	360.9
Prime Cattle Price Reported	O3	315.0	295.8	358.2	329.7	337.8	337.2
	AVG	322.7	-	378.6	334.4	349.7	347.3
	5964	-	6071	5371	4762	3642	19846
	O3	233.9	247.1	270.0	238.8	229.6	244.2
Cows	O4	238.5	249.0	264.4	246.8	243.1	246.3
	P2	186.1	216.1	135.0	208.0	189.1	163.5
	P3	213.6	231.3	-	222.3	195.0	196.4
	AVG	203.3	-	270.8	239.4	218.5	230.0

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=83.68p 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

REPORTED COW PRICES NI W/E 28/12/13

Grades	Price (p/kg)	Avg Wgt
O+3=	240.0	380.0
O-3+	232.1	317.0
P+2+	209.6	278.7
P+3+	215.2	295.2
P-1-	122.0	218.6

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 28/12/13 To: 02/01/14	Lambs/Hoggets (P/KG LW)				
	No.	From	To	Avg	
Saturday	Swatragh	550	347	405	-
Monday	Massereene	1146	360	395	-
Wednesday	Ballymena	1626	340	385	355
	Markethill	725	345	368	358

PRIME KILL FAT CLASS SCORES COMPARABLE YEAR ON YEAR

ANALYSIS of the price reporting for the final quarter of 2013 has indicated that the proportion of steers and heifers falling within each fat class score was comparable to previous years. This was true for both suckler origin and dairy origin prime cattle.

Chart 1 outlines the proportion of steers and heifers from the suckler herd falling within each fat class category for the final quarter of 2013. During the period October-December 2013 79.5 per cent of steers and heifers sourced from the suckler herd achieved a three or four for fat cover compared to 81.8 per cent during the corresponding

period in 2012.

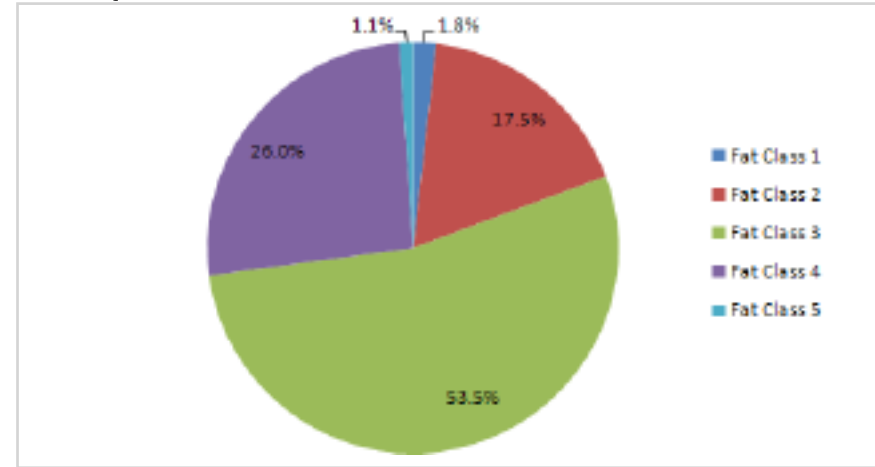
Suckler origin steers and heifers achieving a fat score of two during the 2013 period accounted for 17.5 per cent of the price reported steer and heifer kill. This compares to 15.3 per cent of steers and heifers during the corresponding period in 2012. The proportion of suckler origin cattle awarded either a one or a five for fat cover continue to represent a very small proportion of the kill.

Meanwhile steers and heifers sourced from the dairy herd generally have a lower level of fat cover than their suckler origin

counterparts due to their genetic background. In the final quarter of 2013 69.9 per cent of dairy origin steers and heifers were awarded a three or a four for fat cover, very similar to the 69.2 per cent the same period in 2012.

Those awarded a fat class two accounted for 24.2 per cent of the dairy origin steer and heifer kill in the 2013 period compared to 24.5 per cent in the 2012 period. The proportion of dairy origin steers and heifers awarded a fat class one accounted for approximately five per cent of the kill in both years in question.

Figure 2: Proportion of suckler origin steers and heifers within each fat class Quarter 4 2013



Contact us:

Website: www.lmnci.com

Telephone: 028 9263 3000

Fax: 028 9263 3001

FQAS Helpline: 028 9263 3024

Answerphone: 028 9263 3011

Comments: bulletin@lmnci.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

