

CONFORMATION OF PRIME CATTLE KILL IMPROVES IN QUARTER 2

THERE was a general improvement recorded in the conformation of the prime cattle kill during the second quarter of 2014 when compared to the corresponding period in 2013. It is worth noting at this point that the proportion of price reported prime cattle sourced from the suckler herd increased slightly between the two periods in question and this may have had a positive influence on conformation scores due to improved genetics.

During the second quarter of 2014 23.3 per cent of price reported steers achieved a U grade compared to 20 per cent in the corresponding period in 2013. The proportion of steer carcasses achieving an R grade accounted for 38.6 per cent of the steer kill in the 2014 period, a slight decrease from the previous year when 39.4 per cent of the steer kill achieved an R grade. Meanwhile the proportion of steers achieving O and P grades accounted for 37.7 per cent of steers in the 2014 period, a decrease of 2.7 percentage points from the corresponding period in 2013.

This general improvement in the conformation of the steer kill between the two periods can be partly attributed to the slight increase in the proportion

of steers sourced from the suckler herd but improved production conditions on NI farms between the two years will also have had a key influence. The steers killed in the second quarter of 2013 would have been at grass during the poor summer of 2012 and this would have had a negative effect on animal performance with cattle housed at lower than expected liveweights.

The effects of the wet summer of 2012 also resulted in reduced quality and availability of forage for beef finishers which will have further impacted animal performance during housing and thus final carcass weights in 2013. Recent studies from AFBI have indicated a link between carcass weight and conformation score so with these cattle finishing at lower carcass weights as a consequence of production issues the conformation scores will also have been negatively affected.

The average price reported steer carcass weight in the second quarter of 2014 was 351kg, an increase of 5kg from the 346kg recorded during the same period in 2013. Although the delayed spring in 2013 will have reduced grass growth in the early grazing season when the good weather did arrive it boosted grass growth, improved animal performance and

allowed many beef producers to extend their grazing season. Many beef cattle will have entered the sheds in Autumn 2013 in much better condition than the previous year and will also have benefitted from an improvement in the quality of the forage. The combination of these factors will have had a positive effect on both carcass weights and conformation scores of the steers slaughtered in the 2014 period.

The conformation results for heifers slaughtered in the second quarter of 2013 and 2014 followed a similar trend to the steers with the results outlined in Figure 1. As indicated in the chart there was a general improvement in the conformation scores between the two periods with the proportion of U grading carcasses increasing by 2.2 percentage points to account for 18.6 per cent of the heifer kill in the 2014 period and the proportion of R grading carcasses increasing by 0.6 percentage points to account for 52.6 per cent of the heifer kill.

Meanwhile the proportion of heifers awarded O and P grades decreased from 31.5 per cent in the 2013 period to 28.7 per cent in the 2014 period. The average carcass weight of price reported heifers during the 2014 period was 312kg, an increase of 6kg from the

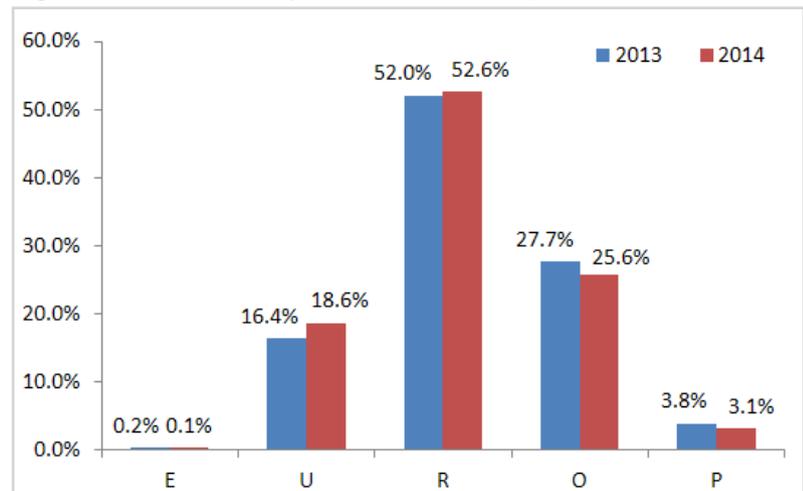
2013 period when the average carcass weight was 306kg.

There was also a general improvement recorded in the conformation scores of the price reported young bull kill between the 2013 and 2014 periods. It is worth noting that there was no change in the proportion of young bulls sourced from the dairy and suckler herds year on year with approximately 50 per cent coming from each sector in both time periods. In the 2014 period 22.4 of the young bull kill achieved a U grade compared to 19 per cent in the 2013 period while the proportion

awarded an R grade was relatively unchanged at 25.3 per cent.

Meanwhile the proportion of the young bull kill achieving O and P grades decreased from 53.9 per cent in the 2013 period to 50.6 per cent in the 2014 period. Dairy origin young bulls had an average carcass weight of 264kg in the 2014 period, unchanged from the corresponding period in 2013. Meanwhile the average carcass weight of young bulls sourced from the suckler herd was also unchanged year on year at 360kg.

Figure 1: Conformation analysis of the NI heifer kill April-June 2014



EU DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES LEAGUE TABLE

Position last Mth	Position this Mth	Country	Price last Mth (w/e 15.06.14)	Price this Mth (w/e 13.07.14)	Change on Mth (cents)
2	1	Italy	412.5	419.8	+7.3
3	2	Great Britain	410.3	414.1	+3.8
1	3	France	417.0	410.0	-7.0
6	4	Northern Ireland	397.6	407.0	+9.4
5	5	Luxembourg	401.6	397.2	-4.4
4	6	Spain	407.6	382.2	-25.4
10	7	Germany	372.2	372.1	-0.1
8	8	Ireland	380.3	366.6	-13.8
9	9	Denmark	372.5	360.9	-11.6
11	10	Austria	356.3	358.0	+1.8
7	11	Sweden	386.9	353.2	-33.8
12	12	Belgium	342.5	343.0	+0.5
13	13	Slovenia	323.1	326.0	+2.9
14	14	Poland	311.0	304.0	-7.0
15	15	Czech Republic	265.9	270.3	+4.4
16	16	Lithuania	253.6	253.1	-0.4
EU Average			393.9	384.6	-9.3
Euro (€1=)			80.52	79.45	-1.1

Official prices reported to the EC Dressing Specification

DEMAND FOR FARM QUALITY ASSURED LAMBS

Lamb throughput in the NI plants has been very strong in recent weeks with favourable production conditions during 2014 to date resulting in lambs coming ready for slaughter quicker. With throughput increasing the processors have been actively encouraging producers to present lambs for slaughter with FQAS status.

Achieving FQ assured status for sheep allows NI sheep producers to keep their options open when marketing their lambs. While FQ status is not currently a requirement for lambs that are exported for slaughter in plants in ROI it has become increasingly important for lambs which are destined for slaughter in NI plants. With an increasing proportion of NI lambs being slaughtered domestically during 2014 to date NI sheep producers should consider becoming FQ assured.

Over 11,000 NI farmers are now approved members of FQAS with the beef and lamb they produce eligible to carry the FQAS logo. In addition to this, beef and lamb born and reared in NI on FQAS farms can be marketed in the UK under the Red Tractor Logo which increases its market accessibility.

The FQ status of lambs passing through the marts has also become increasingly important with factory agents actively seeking finished lambs with FQ status. It has also become important for marketing forward store lambs with lamb finishers often looking to purchase lambs from FQAS

farms, particularly if they are not planning on keeping them for the full 60 day residency period currently required for FQAS status on sheep.

How do I join FQAS?

LMC owns the FQAS on behalf of the NI red meat industry. NI Food Chain Certification (NIFCC) is contracted by LMC to independently certify the scheme. The registration, inspection and certification of producers is handled by NIFCC.

For further information about FQAS, the application process, the cost of participation and what is involved in a farm inspection please call the FQAS helpline at LMC on 028 9263 3024.

Red FQAS verification forms

FQAS verification forms are required by meat processors when sheep or lambs are being presented for slaughter. These red forms are needed to verify that lambs have completed 60 days on a farm quality assured farm/farms prior to slaughter. FQAS approved lamb producers may incur price penalties from their processor if lambs are not accompanied by these forms as this is an essential FQAS check.

Farm Quality Assurance Scheme participants who are approved for sheep can request lamb verification forms by calling the FQAS Helpline 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

Answerphone Service
Factory Quotes &
Mart Results
Updated 5pm Daily

Tel: 028 9263 3011

Text Service
Free Price Quotes sent to your mobile
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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 23/07/14	Next Week 28/07/14
Prime		
U-3	316-322p	316-322p
R-3	310-316p	310-316p
O+3	304-310p	304-310p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	230-256p	230-256p
Steakers	140-170p	140-170p
Blues	120-130p	120-130p

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 19/07/14	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	335.1	328.2	313.1
R3	323.3	321.6	313.8
O+3	312.5	312.0	306.6

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

w/e 19/07/14	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220- 250kg	Wgt 250- 280kg	Wgt >280kg
O+3=	-	-	250.0	247.5
O-3+	-	-	214.0	247.2
P+2+	-	186.0	207.1	224.4
P+3+	-	-	223.8	238.6
P-1-	146.4	148.1	153.7	153.8

COMMODITY PRICE

W/E 19/07/14	Price (£) per tonne / 1000litre	% weekly change
Barley	139.00	-1.8
Wheat	159.00	-1.2
Straw	17.00	-

Deadweight Cattle Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week for U-3 grade prime cattle ranged from 316-322p/kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. With paid prices higher than these base quotes would suggest producers are encouraged to shop around to secure the best deal before presenting cattle for slaughter. Quotes for O+3 cows this week ranged from 230-256p/kg with the majority of plants quoting 240-250p/kg.

Prime cattle throughput in the NI plants last week was lower due to the bank holiday and reduced kill days with a total of 3,244 head slaughtered. This was 1,131 head lower than the previous week and markedly lower than the 5,462 prime cattle slaughtered in NI plants in the corresponding week last year. The cow kill in NI last week was also reduced last week with 970 cows slaughtered compared to 1,486 cows killed the previous week.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 247 head bringing imports for the year to date to 9,115 head compared to 12,006 imported in the corresponding period in 2013. Imports of prime cattle from GB for direct slaughter in NI plants have totalled 681 head during 2014 to date compared to 38 head in the corresponding period last year.

The average steer price in NI last week was 316.3p/kg, up 2p/kg from the previous week while the R3 steer price was unchanged at 324.8p/kg. Meanwhile the average heifer price increased by 1.2p/kg to 318p/kg in NI last week while the R3 heifer price was back by 2.8p/kg to 322.3p/kg. The trade for young bulls firmed last week with the average young bull price up 8.1p/kg to 302.8p/kg. The U3 young bull price was back by 2.3p/kg to 313.1p/kg while the O3 young bull price increased by 7.6p/kg to 294.1p/kg. The average cow price also increased in NI last week, up by 3.5p/kg to 231.5p/kg.

Meanwhile in GB the deadweight cattle trade has shown signs of stabilising with average steer prices recording an increase in all the regions. The most notable increase was in the Midlands where the average steer price was up 3.3p/kg to 315.8p/kg with the GB average steer price up by 1.1p/kg to 328.3p/kg. The average R3 steer price in GB last week increased by 2.8p/kg to 332.9p/kg with R3 steer prices up in all the regions by 2-3p/kg. Average heifer prices in GB last week were up by 1-2p/kg across the regions with the exception of Northern England where the average heifer price was down by 3.1p/kg to 333.8p/kg.

Meanwhile in ROI last week R3 steer and heifer prices were up in the region of 2p/kg to 287.9p/kg and 295p/kg respectively. Deadweight cattle prices in ROI remain notably behind the prices paid in NI and GB. As indicated in the EU deadweight cattle prices league table on the previous page that while prices in NI and GB have firmed prices in ROI have declined. In the w/e 13 July 2014 the R3 heifer price in NI was the equivalent of 22.4c/kg above the EU average while the R3 heifer price in ROI was 18c/kg below the EU average.

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

W/E 19/07/2014	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	335.2	295.7	353.3	339.8	336.9	331.8	341.8
	R3	324.8	287.9	346.2	332.9	327.2	318.6	332.9
	R4	324.0	286.1	349.0	347.2	329.3	318.4	339.7
	O3	306.6	272.6	323.8	305.9	297.0	293.6	305.9
AVG	316.3	-	345.9	334.7	315.8	307.1	328.3	
Heifers	U3	327.9	306.5	356.4	342.5	339.2	331.2	344.5
	R3	322.3	295.0	345.5	331.5	325.0	314.5	331.5
	R4	321.5	293.4	348.4	339.1	324.7	316.6	335.1
	O3	311.1	278.3	321.3	311.3	300.9	298.3	310.0
AVG	318.0	-	347.6	333.8	320.0	307.7	330.6	
Young Bulls	U3	313.1	288.1	348.3	312.7	323.9	327.2	324.9
	R3	314.5	281.7	338.3	303.1	311.9	312.1	312.6
	O3	294.1	256.1	290.4	271.9	280.3	281.6	279.2
	AVG	302.8	-	337.1	297.6	309.9	303.6	308.7
Prime Cattle Price Reported	3725	-	7153	5846	5690	4084	22773	
Cows	O3	245.4	234.8	253.1	248.8	257.3	239.1	248.6
	O4	249.6	236.5	257.1	247.5	261.2	244.2	250.9
	P2	199.6	211.5	204.1	200.9	220.1	194.0	200.4
	P3	230.4	228.1	221.3	220.1	215.9	215.2	218.5
AVG	231.5	-	243.6	229.1	250.0	211.0	229.9	

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=79.25p 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

W/E 12/07/14	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	186	198	192	165	185	175
Friesians	130	147	140	112	128	123
Heifers	180	208	194	160	179	170
Beef Cows	135	173	145	110	134	122
Dairy Cows	100	128	110	70	98	84
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	192	200	195	150	191	174
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	195	209	200	170	194	182
Bullocks over 500kg	180	191	186	165	179	172
Heifers up to 450kg	190	207	197	164	189	174
Heifers over 450kg	195	213	202	166	194	180
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	295	405	350	180	290	235
Continental Heifers	200	245	220	100	198	150
Friesian Bulls	80	110	95	28	78	50
Holstein Bulls	60	110	80	28	58	45

SHEEP TRADE

LAMB QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 23/07/14	Next Week 28/07/14
Lambs	360p>21kg	360p>21kg

REPORTED LAMB PRICES - P/KG

(P/KG DW)	W/E 05/07/14	W/E 12/07/14	W/E 19/07/14
NI Liveweight	327.2	335.6	333.1
NI Deadweight	388.8	365.0	353.5
ROI Deadweight	373.7	358.6	346.6
GB Deadweight	459.8	419.4	392.8

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week have steadied at 360p/kg for R3 grade lambs with the plants reporting good supplies of lambs to meet demand. The quality of lambs being presented for slaughter has been very good with 76 per cent of the price reported lamb kill last week achieving an R3 or U3 grade. With the shorter working week lamb throughput in the NI plants last week totalled 9,665 head compared to 11,823 head the previous week. The average deadweight lamb price in NI last week was 353.5p/kg, down 11.5p/kg from the previous week. The lamb price in ROI was back by a similar margin to 346.6p/kg while prices in GB were back by 26.6p/kg to 392.8p/kg.

This Week's Marts

A firm trade was reported across the marts this week for finished lambs with a good trade also reported for good quality store lambs. In Massereene on Monday 1,110 lambs sold from 335-362p/kg compared to 510 lambs last week selling from 330-351p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 1,652 lambs sold to an average of 342p/kg compared to 907 lambs last week selling to an average of 337p/kg. In Enniskillen on Wednesday 638 lambs sold from 333-362p/kg compared to 488 lambs last week selling from 316-341p/kg. A similar trade was reported in Markethill on Wednesday with 1,330 lambs selling from 320-345p/kg compared to 650 lambs last week selling from 320-352p/kg. The trade for cull ewes has remained steady with top prices of over £90 for well fleshed ewes reported in several marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 19/07/14		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 25/07/14		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Donemana	873	314	367	-
	Swatragh	800	317	416	-
	Omagh	457	328	347	-
Monday	Massereene	1110	335	362	-
	Kilrea	500	320	350	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	801	325	370	-
	Rathfriland	1652	328	400	342
	Ballymena	1207	310	373	321
Wednesday	Enniskillen	638	333	362	-
	Markethill	1330	320	345	325
	Arroy	386	317	368	328

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