

INCREASE IN FQAS APPLICATIONS

In recent times there has been a renewed interest in the Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) with 900 applications to join the scheme received during 2013 to date.

At present the NIBL FQAS is treated as equivalent to the Red Tractor Beef and Lamb Assurance Scheme operating in Great Britain and as such NI FQAS beef qualifies for the Red Tractor Logo. With a large percentage of our beef destined for major UK customers this is an important marketing tool to access markets. The scheme is also important in accessing some EU markets.

Until recently the penalty for non FQAS cattle from the processors was £30 but penalties have increased in 2013 to discourage supply of non-FQAS animals. Plants are quoting penalties of up to £150 per head for non-quality assured stock with reports that some plants will not slaughter non FQAS stock.

The increased financial incentives for producing Farm Quality Assured stock have resulted in a renewed interest in the scheme from the whole supply chain. In fact the number of non-Farm Quality Assured cattle being presented

for slaughter in recent weeks has become so small it has become difficult to draw a price comparison between Farm Quality Assured cattle and non-Farm Quality Assured cattle.

If we consider the four week period ending the 16 August 2013 the proportion of price reported prime cattle slaughtered with FQ status was 99 per cent. In the same four week period in 2012 95 per cent of price reported prime cattle had FQ status. Meanwhile the proportion of price reported cows that had FQ status during the 2013 period was 96 per cent, a significant increase on the 70 per cent with FQ status in the corresponding period in 2012.

While these figures are high there still may be some NI beef producers who



have not yet applied for membership of the NIBL FQAS and who plan to present cattle for slaughter in the autumn.

Table 1 outlines the current application and certification process which takes around 3-4 weeks subject to the availability of the applicant to complete the inspection. Non-FQAS producers planning to market cattle in the autumn, who plan to apply, should schedule their application in good time. Once approved producers can market their stock as FQAS providing cattle and sheep meet the residency conditions.

The current residency period for cattle to qualify for Farm Quality Assured Status is 90 days and until this residency is complete cattle will be awarded with FQP status (Farm Quality Pending). Producers should ensure that full FQ status has been achieved before presenting animals for slaughter, i.e. the 90 days residency has been completed.

It is worth noting that the 90 days residency can be completed on more than one holding provided that the chain of assurance has not been broken. It is therefore important that producers selling cattle that are fit for slaughter within 90 days should

FQAS Application Process

1	Farmers wishing to join the NIBL FQAS can obtain application packs by calling 028 9263 3024.
2	Applications should be completed and returned to NIFCC (details provided on application form).
3	The membership fee of £55 +VAT (£66) can be paid by sending a cheque along with the application form made payable to 'Farm Quality Assurance Scheme'. Alternatively the fee can be paid online at www.lmcni.com with a valid credit/debit card.
4	Some initial pre-entry checks are completed with DARD.
5	An inspector will then contact the applicant approximately 2-3 weeks after the application has been received and the fee has been paid to organise a farm inspection at a time and date that suits both parties.
6	After the inspection has taken place there may be non conformances which need to be rectified. Once these non conformances have been rectified the farm will become an approved member of the NIBL FQAS. Once approved producers can market their cattle/sheep as FQAS, provided that they have been in their herd/flock or another FQAS herd/flock for the previous 90 days for cattle or 60 days for sheep.

apply to become Farm Quality Assured as this may well be reflected in the price in the marts.

The residency for sheep is currently 60 days with FQ status verified at point of slaughter with the red forms issued to Farm Quality Assured sheep producers.

For any further queries in relation to applications to the NI Farm Quality Assurance Scheme or with assistance in rectifying non conformances please contact LMC's FQAS helpline on 028 9263 3024.

CONCENTRATE USAGE UP 24 PER CENT IN SECOND QUARTER

THE latest Northern Ireland Animal Feed Statistics from DARD for the period April-June 2013 have indicated a 24 per cent increase in the amount of concentrates used by cattle and sheep producers when compared to the corresponding period in 2012.

This increase in concentrate usage was in response to one of the most difficult springs experienced by beef and sheep producers as a result of fodder shortages,

the poor weather conditions and the late grass growth delaying turn out for many producers. Combined with increasing concentrate costs this will have placed cost pressure on many producers however this will have been offset to some extent at least by higher farmgate prices achieved by those who have sold stock.

Concentrate usage in beef production has shown a notable increase year on year. The total amount of beef cattle

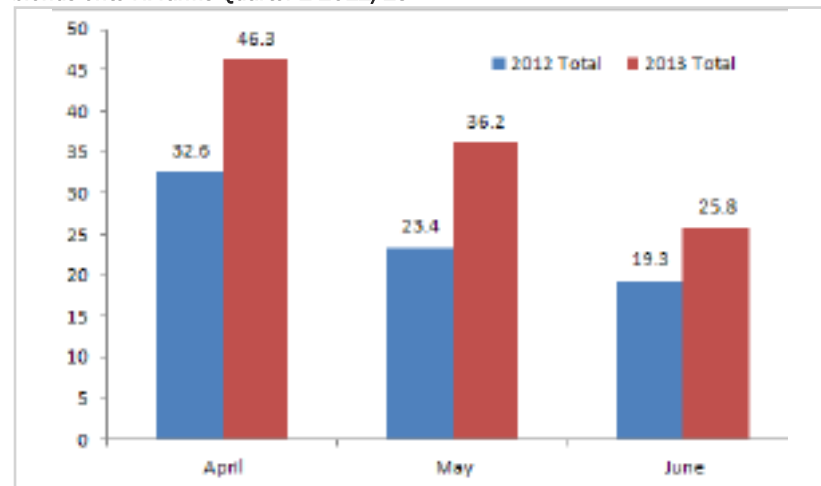
compounds and beef mixes and blends purchased increased from 74.7 thousand tonnes in Quarter 2 2012 to 108.2 thousand tonnes in Quarter 2 2013. This accounts for a 45 per cent increase year on year as displayed in Chart 1.

Meanwhile the quantity of sheep concentrates purchased increased from 15.8 thousand tonne in Quarter 2 2012 to 23.7 thousand tonnes in Quarter 2 2013. This increase by 7.9 thousand tonnes represents a 50 per cent increase in concentrate usage year on year.

While some of this increase can be attributed to difficulties in production there were also some reports from industry that the feed concentrates available to producers were of a lower quality than previous years.

The poor harvest conditions in 2012 resulted in a decline in the quality of the cereals used in animal feed production which will have impacted on animal performance as a result. In some cases producers may have had to increase concentrate feeding levels to maintain animal performance and to get cattle and sheep fit for slaughter.

Chart 1: Combined deliveries of beef cattle compounds and beef coarse mixes and blends onto NI farms Quarter 2 2012/13



MINOR AMENDMENTS TO FQAS STANDARD

ALL members of FQAS should be aware of two minor amendments to the Standard as recently agreed by the FQAS Standard Setting Committee. The amendments are listed below and will be reviewed during FQAS inspections.

Code 3.13 – Warranty declarations for straw

Warranty declarations for feeding straw will no longer be required for FQAS. Warranty declarations will still be required for all other Crop products /by products e.g. silage

Code 6.1- Drivers must hold a statutory licence to drive the type of vehicle used

FQAS inspectors will no longer be checking personal driving licences for the correct category for towing a trailer.

These minor adjustments to the scheme will come into force with effect from week commencing 26th August 2013. For any further queries please contact LMC's Farm Liaison Officer on (028) 92 633024.



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

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 19/08/13	Next Week 26/08/13
Prime		
U-3	350-352p	350-352p
R-3	344-346p	344-346p
O+3	338-340p	338-340p
* Plus 8p/kg in spec bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3	270-280p	270-280p
Steakers	250-270p	250-270p
Blues	180-185p	180-185p

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 17/08/13	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U-3=	367.1	375.3	351.3
U=3=	367.0	365.3	355.5
U=4=	361.3	372.1	-
R=3=	373.0	364.1	352.1
R=4=	377.0	363.0	-
O+3=	366.5	359.9	335.0
O=3=	355.6	354.9	323.7
Average	358.2	360.4	339.5

REPORTED COW PRICES NI W/E 17/08/13

Grades	Price (p/kg)	Avg Wgt
O+3=	299.4	322.5
O-3+	279.8	288.8
P+2+	260.1	289.9
P+3+	274.9	317.1
P-1-	178.8	225.1

COMMODITY PRICE

W/E 17/08/13	Price (£) per tonne / 1000litre	% weekly change
Barley	159.50	-2.5
Wheat	170.50	-4.0
Straw	20.00	-
Diesel	720-725	-

Deadweight Cattle Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week for U-3 grade prime cattle have steadied at 350p/kg for steers and 350-352p/kg for heifers. Quotes for cows this week were 270-280p/kg. Similar quotes are expected for early next week. The plants are reporting steady supplies of both prime cattle and cows to meet demand.

Prime cattle throughput in the plants last week increased slightly on the previous week to 5,897 head with 1,959 cows also slaughtered. Exports of prime cattle for slaughter in GB plants last week totalled 248 head with 42 cows also exported. Exports for slaughter in ROI plants last week consisted of 14 prime cattle and 83 cows.

The average steer price in NI last week came back by 7p/kg to 358.3p/kg while the average heifer price was back 10p/kg to 360.4p/kg. However it does appear that some relatively high prices continued to be paid, in particular for R3 and R4 steers.

In GB prices have been under pressure with average steer prices last week back 3.4p/kg to 387p/kg and average heifer prices back 2.2p/kg to 385.0p/kg. Average steer prices were back across all of the GB regions by 3-5p/kg with the exception of Scotland where average prices were unchanged. NI R3/R4/O3 steer prices were on a par with the corresponding prices in Southern England but lower than prices paid in other GB regions.

The average cow price in NI last week came back 9p/kg to 265.3p/kg but still remains strong in comparison to GB prices. NI cow prices (by grade) were the highest in the British Isles last week. The O3 cow price in NI last week was 287.6p/kg compared to an average GB price of 273.4p/kg.

There have been reports of a tightening in the supply of cattle in ROI with a strong demand in particular reported for in spec quality assured steers and heifers with carcass weights of 300-360kg. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was back 1p/kg on the previous week at 347.9p/kg but remains markedly behind the equivalent NI price (-21.9p/kg). Meanwhile the R3 heifer price was back 3.1p/kg to 358.1p/kg, 9.2p/kg behind the NI price last week.

This week's marts

A steady trade has been reported this week with finished first quality steers selling to an average of 218p/kg liveweight compared to an average of 210p/kg last week. Meanwhile second quality finished steers sold to an average of 195p/kg (+10p/kg). A firm trade for finished heifers saw first quality selling to an average of 215p/kg compared to an average of 206p/kg last week. Second quality finished heifers sold from 170-200p/kg (av 185p/kg) compared to 165-194p/kg (av 180p/kg) last week.

Beef cows sold to a top price of 199p/kg this week with first quality selling to an average of 170p/kg. Dairy cows sold from 80-134p/kg depending on quality.

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

W/E 17/08/13	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	368.1	355.0	409.9	392.3	390.2	385.5	395.8
	R3	369.8	347.9	406.5	382.6	379.7	370.5	386.2
	R4	375.5	347.3	417.0	405.1	380.7	373.3	398.8
	O3	354.0	330.7	390.1	374.0	358.0	353.0	371.3
	AVG	358.3	-	409.0	390.0	375.0	363.5	387.0
Heifers	U3	373.4	371.5	408.8	392.9	386.4	385.8	394.6
	R3	367.3	358.1	400.0	379.3	377.3	374.1	384.1
	R4	365.8	357.6	404.6	388.9	379.5	371.8	389.0
	O3	358.1	339.7	378.8	369.4	359.0	359.8	367.9
	AVG	360.4	-	400.3	386.7	375.3	367.8	385.0
Young Bulls	U3	351.6	346.3	400.7	368.5	379.6	380.9	379.6
	R3	350.1	335.3	391.1	362.1	366.8	366.5	367.9
	O3	331.5	310.3	366.8	338.6	342.3	353.6	345.9
	AVG	339.5	-	385.4	353.0	361.4	355.9	360.5
Prime Cattle Price Reported	3912	-	6690	6005	5501	3994	22190	
Cows	O3	287.6	272.5	280.3	279.9	263.4	256.1	273.4
	O4	290.8	275.3	286.9	279.8	267.4	262.7	276.1
	P2	245.1	235.0	227.5	224.3	193.5	206.2	217.6
	P3	268.3	263.1	240.8	246.8	227.5	226.9	237.6
	AVG	265.3	-	274.1	251.1	252.2	216.1	247.1

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.90p 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 17/08/13	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Average	From	To	Average
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	212	232	218	175	210	195
Friesians	160	204	179	110	136	126
Heifers	202	234	215	170	200	185
Beef Cows	150	199	170	110	149	128
Dairy Cows	108	134	115	80	107	95
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	240	340	290	135	235	185
Continental Heifers	200	315	235	100	198	150
Friesian Bulls	75	150	100	20	70	45
Holstein Bulls	25	105	45	1	22	12

SHEEP TRADE

LAMB QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 19/08/13	Next Week 26/08/13
NI Factories	385-390p	385-390p
ROI Factories	390p	385-390p

REPORTED LAMB PRICES - P/KG

(P/KG DW)	W/E 03/08/13	W/E 10/08/13	W/E 17/08/13
NI Liveweight	360.3p	363.6p	349.4p
NI Deadweight	391.2p	399.6p	396.6p
GB Deadweight	412.7p	425.8p	423.2p

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the plants this week for R3 grading lambs were 385-390p/kg up to 21kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. The plants are reporting a good supply of lambs with slaughterings last week increasing by 1,658 head to 10,831, the highest throughput for the year to date. Exports to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 9,947 head, an increase of 1,377 head on the previous week. Approximately 53 per cent of NI sheep were slaughtered in domestic plants last week. The average deadweight price in NI last week was 396.6p/kg, back 3p/kg on the previous week. In GB the deadweight lamb price was 423.2p/kg, back 2.6p/kg on the previous week.

This week's marts

GOOD numbers of lambs continued to pass through the sale rings this week but prices have generally been back on last week with reports of some mixed quality lambs being offered for sale. In Massereene on Monday 1,109 lambs sold from 335-368p/kg compared to 1,133 lambs last week selling from 355-386p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 1,031 lambs sold to an average of 340p/kg compared to 1,217 lambs last week selling to an average of 361p/kg. An entry of 1,106 lambs in Ballymena this week sold from 328-400p/kg (av 338p/kg) compared to 1,685 lambs last week selling from 320-382p/kg (av 344p/kg). The top prices reported for cull ewes ranged from £61-88 across the marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 17/08/13 To: 22/08/13		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
		No.	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	927	347	373	-
	Hilltown	1510	354	371	363
	Newtownstewart	342	330	347	340
Monday	Massereene	1109	335	368	-
	Kilrea	500	325	351	332
Tuesday	Saintfield	782	335	385	-
	Rathfriland	1031	328	365	340
Wednesday	Ballymena	1106	328	400	338

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Fax: 028 9263 3001

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Comments: bulletin@lmcni.com

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