

NI CALF REGISTRATIONS REMAIN STRONG

THE June 2016 Agricultural Survey recently published by DAERA recorded increases in both suckler and dairy cow numbers on NI farms. The number of dairy cows on NI farms in June 2016 reached record high levels with an increase by two per cent to 317,000 head. Meanwhile the number of suckler cows increased by four per cent to total 269,700 head in June 2016. Overall cattle numbers in June 2016 reached 586,900 head which was three per cent higher than the 571,800 head recorded in June 2015.

The increase in total cow numbers on NI farms during 2016 has resulted in a rise in beef sired calf registrations, with seven out of the eight full months during 2016 to date recording higher levels of calf registrations than during the corresponding months in 2015 and 2014 as per Figure 1. Beef sired calf births in NI continue to follow a seasonal pattern with registrations peaking in the spring and early summer to suit our grass based production systems.

During the period January to August 2016 a total of 291,160 beef sired calves were registered in NI compared 264,207 head during the corresponding period in 2015. This increase of 26,953 registrations accounts for a ten per cent rise in beef sired calf registrations year on year.

The increase in the number of beef sired calf registrations in NI has led to a notable rise in the number of young beef sired cattle on NI farms. During August 2016 there were 187,230 beef sired cattle on NI farms aged 0-6 months, a 17 per cent increase on the 160,644 beef sired cattle in this age

category during August 2015. The number of beef sired cattle on NI farms aged 6-12 months during August 2016 was 148,828 head, also a 17 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

Beef sired breeds

While the total number of beef sired calf registrations has increased the type of beef sires used on NI farms has remained fairly consistent year on year. During January to August 2016 the most popular beef sires used in NI continue to be Limousin and Charolais with 85,197 Limousin sired calves registered and 74,497 Charolais calves registered. These accounted for 29.3 per cent and 25.6 per cent of total beef sired calf registrations respectively as indicated in Figure 2.

The third most popular beef sire used in NI continues to be Aberdeen Angus with 50,777 calves registered accounting for 17.4 per cent of total beef sired calf registrations during 2016. Meanwhile Simmental calf registrations totalled 22,754 head during 2016, Hereford registrations totalled 21,077 and Belgian Blue totalled 14,148. During January to August 2016 these six breeds accounted for 92.2 per cent of total beef sired calf registrations in NI.

Dairy origin beef calves

The dairy herd continues to act as a valuable source of raw material for NI beef production. During the first 6 months of 2016 28 per cent of all beef sired calves registered in NI had dairy dams, a slight increase from the first 6 months in 2015 when 26 per cent of beef sired calves were sourced from the dairy herd.

A total of 67,607 beef sired calves were

registered to dairy cows in the first six months of 2016, this represents a 27 per cent increase from the 53,333 beef sired calves registered to dairy cows during the first half of 2015. The most popular beef sires used on dairy cows in NI continue to be Aberdeen Angus, Limousin and Hereford.

Dairy sired male calves

Dairy sired male calves also provide the NI beef industry with animals to finish as beef. During January to August 2016 the number of dairy sired male calf registrations in NI totalled 50,585 head, a seven per cent reduction from the corresponding period in 2015 when 50,585 dairy sired male calves were registered on NI farms.

During 2016 to date 12,348 of these dairy sired male calves have been exported out of NI for further production with the largest majority of these destined for Spain. During 2016 to date 96 per cent of calf exports were exported to Spain with small numbers also exported to Italy, GB and France.

Exports of calves from NI for further production accounted for 24 per cent of male dairy calf registrations during 2016 to date with the rest remaining on NI farms for further production. With the level of export remaining steady and the reduction in dairy sired calf registrations the number of dairy sired male calves on NI farms has recorded a decline. At the end of August 2016 there were 12,904 dairy sired male calves on NI farms, a nine per cent reduction from year earlier levels while the number aged 6-12 months totalled 30,179 head, a five per cent reduction from August 2015 levels.

Figure 1: Monthly beef sired calf registrations in NI January 2014 - August 2016

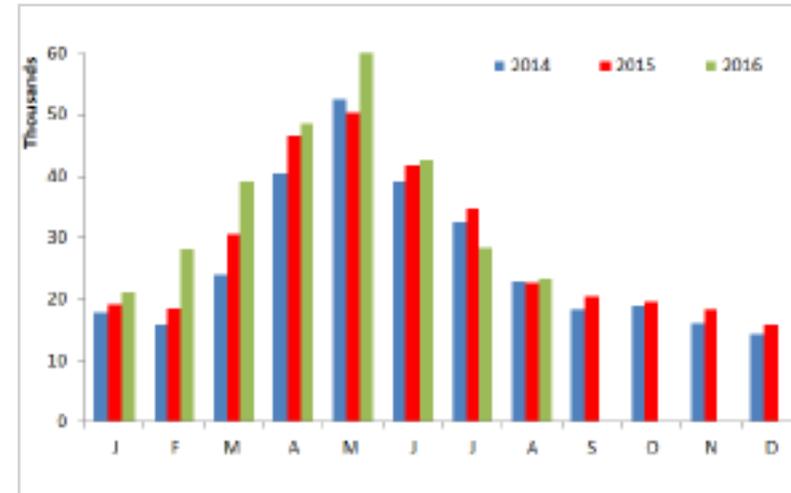
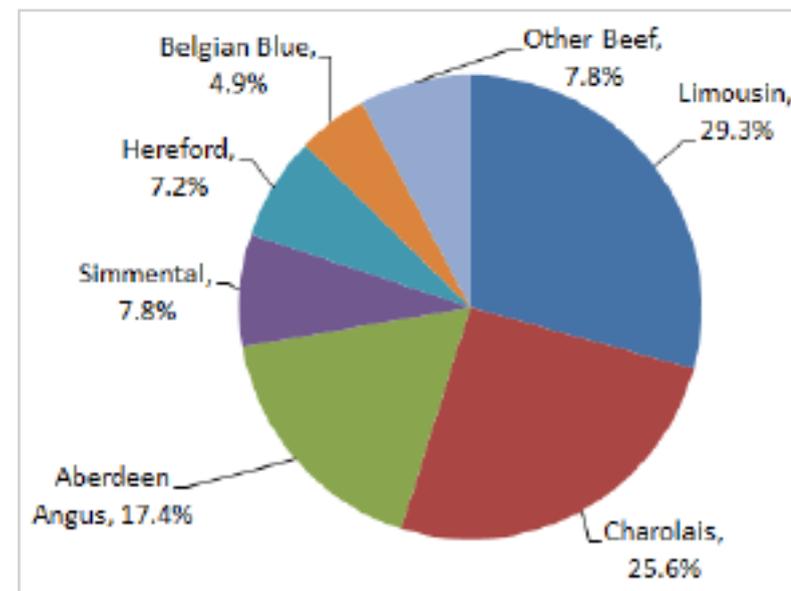


Figure 2: Break down by breed of beef sired calf registrations in NI January 2014 - August 2016



CONSIDER COSTS WHEN BUYING STORE LAMBS

WITH peak trading underway in the marts over recent weeks, the numbers of lambs passing through the NI sale rings has gradually increased with a strong trade being reported for good quality lambs. Demand however has been reported as mixed with some mart managers indicating that lamb finishing dates are running behind previous years.

The average live weight lamb price in NI during the week ending 03 September 2016 was 352.7p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2015 the average live weight lamb price in NI was 270.6p/kg accounting for a 30 per cent increase year on year.

With sales expected to gain momentum over the coming weeks it is important that buyers consider the economics of taking store lambs through to slaughter. If grass supplies are limited then producers should opt for short

keep store lambs and in cases where there are more plentiful grass supplies longer keep store lambs may be a viable option. With changeable weather conditions some producers may opt to house cattle earlier which will lead to surplus grass covers and provide suitable grazing for store lambs.

Provided that the lambs purchased are of good quality, store lambs on good quality grazing can be expected to gain 180-200g per day during early September. As the year progresses the performance of lambs at grass will ease back to 150-170g/day moving into October and down to 100g/day in late October and November.

It is important to take these growth rates into account when buying store lambs and consider supplementing lambs with meal to maintain performance and allow them to meet finishing targets. When calculating a

finishing budget producers should also remember to factor in miscellaneous costs such as mortality, veterinary and transport costs. Buyers should therefore try to purchase store lambs to suit their finishing system by focusing on the weight, price and quality of lambs on offer. Where possible store lambs should be bought in even batches as this should mean they all come fit for slaughter at a similar time.

Meeting market specifications at point of slaughter will help maximise returns from finishing store lambs. The current specification from the major processors is for R grading lambs or better with a fat score of 2 or 3 and a carcass weight of 21kg. Processors also have a strong preference for lambs with FQ status with bonuses available in some plants while other plants will not handle non assured lambs.

FQAS NOTICE ONLINE PAYMENTS

LMC has 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



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

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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 05/09/16	Next Week 12/09/16
Prime		
U-3	334 - 336p	334 - 338p
R-3	328 - 330p	328 - 332p
O+3	322 - 324p	322 - 326p
P+3	268 - 280p	268 - 282p
Including bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	240 - 250p	240 - 250p
Steakers	140 - 170p	140 - 170p
Blues	120 - 130p	120 - 130p

Cow quotes vary depending on weight and grade.
Pricing policies vary from plant to plant. Producers are advised to check pricing policies before presenting cattle for slaughter.

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 03/09/16	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	341.7	347.2	333.7
R3	338.5	339.3	332.7
O+3	330.3	331.0	325.7

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

w/e 03/09/16	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	155.0	171.8	177.0	188.5
P2	167.5	192.2	209.5	226.3
P3	-	229.1	227.4	234.9
O3	225.8	230.2	246.4	253.7
O4	-	221.3	251.2	255.9
R3	-	-	265.5	271.2

Deadweight Cattle Trade

BASE quotes for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle firmed slightly towards the end of this week to 334-338p/kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. Reports however have indicated that higher prices are available so producers are encouraged to shop around to get the best possible deal. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows this week have remained steady at 240-250p/kg across the plants.

The major processors have reported an improvement in prime cattle supplies coming forward for slaughter with prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 5,467 head. This is eight per cent higher than the 5,060 prime cattle slaughtered in the corresponding week in 2015. Meanwhile cow throughput was also similar to the previous week with a total of 1,702 cows killed in NI last week and this is six per cent lower than the 1,809 cows killed in the corresponding week in 2015. The total volume of beef handled by NI processors last week totalled 2,419 tonnes, a three per cent increase from the 2,343 tonnes processed during the corresponding week in 2015.

Prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 111 head and accounted for two per cent of the total NI prime cattle kill. This was notably less than the corresponding week in 2015 when 590 prime cattle were imported from ROI for direct slaughter and accounted for 12 per cent of the total NI prime cattle kill. A total of 77 cows were imported from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week compared to 179 cows during the same week last year. Meanwhile exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 54 prime cattle and 28 cows compared to 6 prime cattle and 263 cows in the corresponding week in 2015. Exports to GB for direct slaughter last week consisted of 85 prime cattle and 29 cows.

The average steer price in NI last week increased by 1.7p/kg to 332.3p/kg while the R3 steer price was up by 1.2p/kg to 341.2p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week increased by a notable 6.1p/kg to 336.7p/kg while the R3 heifer price was up 2.5p/kg to 341.6p/kg. The average cow price in NI recorded an increase of 3.9p/kg to 233.2p/kg while the O3 cow price was up by 1.4p/kg to 252.2p/kg. The average steer price in GB last week was back marginally to 350.8p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 1.3p/kg to 361.8p/kg. The differential in R3 steer prices last week between NI and the GB average was at 20.6p/kg which is the equivalent of £72 on a 350kg carcass. The average heifer price in GB last week was up by 1.6p/kg to 353.6p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 2.1p/kg to 362.7p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and the GB average at 21.1p/kg which is the equivalent of £74 on a 350kg carcass.

In ROI last week deadweight prices for prime cattle held fairly steady in euro terms but were back in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 321.3p/kg, back by 3.5p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 330.5p/kg, back by 4.8p/kg. The O3 cow price in ROI last week recorded a decrease of 1.3p/kg to 252.4p/kg.

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

W/E 03/09/2016	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	343.1	330.4	378.8	358.6	359.6	365.0
	R3	341.2	321.3	378.2	355.0	356.8	361.8
	R4	340.6	321.2	379.0	362.0	354.6	364.5
	O3	330.1	305.7	355.6	330.8	324.5	334.9
	AVG	332.3	-	371.9	348.3	340.4	338.6
Heifers	U3	347.2	341.9	388.7	363.9	370.9	374.0
	R3	341.6	330.5	380.8	353.8	357.5	362.7
	R4	343.3	329.3	378.1	356.0	356.0	362.1
	O3	335.3	316.5	349.4	332.8	331.9	335.9
	AVG	336.7	-	374.1	348.2	346.5	353.6
Young Bulls	U3	333.9	321.6	367.8	348.2	353.8	354.7
	R3	333.6	315.4	365.3	332.5	342.1	346.3
	O3	315.4	299.0	332.4	299.8	312.4	312.1
	AVG	321.0	-	352.5	323.5	332.5	334.8
Prime Cattle Price Reported	4937	-	6404	6348	5710	3528	21990
Cows	O3	252.2	252.4	261.1	244.0	246.3	248.8
	O4	255.0	252.5	262.4	246.0	243.2	246.2
	P2	211.9	230.9	207.5	207.0	202.7	205.8
	P3	233.0	245.0	227.3	222.8	212.6	219.0
	AVG	233.2	-	246.6	220.3	207.7	216.5

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=84.75p 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 03/09/16	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	200	216	204	170	199	185
Friesians	150	165	154	109	148	135
Heifers	193	219	202	157	190	176
Beef Cows	128	190	143	100	127	113
Dairy Cows	100	122	106	65	99	82
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	220	258	235	175	218	195
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	210	241	225	165	209	185
Bullocks over 500kg	190	213	200	160	189	175
Heifers up to 450kg	200	229	215	160	199	180
Heifers over 450kg	190	220	205	160	189	175
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	240	375	300	120	238	185
Continental Heifers	200	330	265	100	198	150
Friesian Bulls	145	245	180	40	142	85
Holstein Bulls	60	120	85	5	58	35

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 05/09/16	Next Week 12/09/16
Lambs	390-395 > 21kg	390-395 > 21kg

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 20/08/16	W/E 27/08/16	W/E 03/09/16
NI Lambs L/W	342.1	343.8	352.7
NI Lambs D/W	387.0	385.2	386.9
GB Lambs D/W	426.4	417.4	405.1
ROI D/W	395.6	390.1	388.2

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the major NI processors this week for R3 grade lambs strengthened to 390-395p/kg, with plants paying up to 21kg. Reports have indicated a decrease in the numbers of lambs coming forward for slaughter with throughput last week totalling 11,399 head compared to 12,334 lambs the previous week. In the corresponding week in 2015 lamb throughput totalled 12,241 head. Exports of sheep to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 9,434 head, a notable increase from the 6,649 sheep exported the previous week. The average deadweight lamb price in NI last week was up by 1.7p/kg to 386.9p/kg while the deadweight lamb price in ROI last week decreased by 1.9p/kg to the equivalent of 388.2p/kg.

This week's marts

THE live lamb trade strengthened this week with marts reporting increased numbers of lambs passing through almost all of the sale rings compared to the previous week. In Swatragh on Saturday 1,535 lambs sold from 348-416p/kg compared to 1,485 lambs selling the previous week from 346-411p/kg. In Saintfield this week 956 lambs sold from 340-382p/kg compared to 747 lambs the previous week selling from 338-370p/kg. In Rathfriland this week 1,325 lambs sold from 330-398p/kg compared to 1,050 lambs the previous week selling from 320-397p/kg. In Ballymena this week 2,632 lambs sold from 330-422p/kg compared to 2,453 lambs the previous week selling from 340-390p/kg. The ewe trade remained steady with a top reported price of £105 in Newtonstewart last Friday.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 02/09/16		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 08/09/16		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	528	352	378	-
Saturday	Swatragh	1535	348	416	374
	Omagh	1065	366	421	-
Monday	Massereene	1246	350	377	-
	Kilrea	650	356	379	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	956	340	382	-
	Omagh	726	346	389	374
Wednesday	Rathfriland	1325	330	398	357
	Ballymena	2632	330	422	350
	Enniskillen	1028	348	381	-
	Markethill	1550	335	375	350
	Armoy	348	320	372	343

Contact us:

Website: www.lmcni.com

Telephone: 028 9263 3000

Fax: 028 9263 3001

FQAS Helpline: 028 9263 3024

Answerphone: 028 9263 3011

Comments: bulletin@lmcni.com

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