LMC BULLETIN
WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
Saturday 29 April 2017
Issue No. 2467

INCREASED COW THROUGHPUT IN NI PLANTS

COW throughput in NI plants during 2017 to date has totalled 28,975 head, a six per cent increase from the corresponding period in 2016 when 27,431 cows were killed in local plants. Cows have accounted for 21 per cent of total plant throughput during 2017 to date which is unchanged from the corresponding period in 2016.

In the DAERA Agricultural Survey in December 2016 both suckler and dairy cow numbers remained relatively stable at 311,966 and 263,514 respectively, following on from several years of increases. This put the total cow herd in NI at 575,480 head, the highest recorded level since December 2003. This larger herd will have a greater output of cull cows which will have been a contributing factor to increased cow throughput.

During 2017 to date 1,803 cows have been exported from NI for direct slaughter in ROI with a further 166 cows exported to the UK. This is a notable decline from the 3,715 cows and 399 cows exported to ROI and the UK respectively for direct slaughter during the same period in 2016. Overall this accounts for a 52 per cent decline in the number of cows exported out of NI for direct slaughter. This will have contributed to the increase in cow throughput in local plants during 2017 to date when compared to year earlier levels.

Imports for direct slaughter

During 2017 to date 1,968 cows have been imported from GB for slaughter in local plants with a further 897 cows imported from ROI. This is a notable increase from 2016 when 861 cows were imported from GB and 732 cows from ROI. Imported cows accounted for 10 per cent of cow throughput in NI plants during 2017 to date, up from six per cent in the 2016 period.

Average carcase weights

The average carcase weight of cows slaughtered in NI plants during 2017 to date has been 298kg, a notable 9kg reduction from the corresponding period in 2016. This reduction in the average carcase weight has offset some of the increase in cow throughput in local plants. The volume of cow beef handled during 2017 to date has totalled 8,656 tonnes, a three per cent increase from 8,439 tonnes in 2016.

As the average carcase weights of all types of cattle killed in NI plants has recorded a reduction during 2017 to date when compared to year earlier levels it is likely that changeable production conditions during 2016 and the impact of poorer quality silage may be contributory factors to the reduction in cow carcases recorded during the early part of 2017.

Source of cows

Another factor that will have impacted on cow carcase weights during 2017 to date will have been the type of cows being killed in local plants. During 2017 to date 61 per cent of price reported cows were of dairy origin with an average carcase weight of 277kg. In the same period in 2016, 65 per cent of the cows killed were of dairy origin with an average carcase weight of 280kg.

Meanwhile suckler bred cows accounted for 39 per cent of the price reported cow kill during the 2017 period, up from 35 per cent in the corresponding period in 2016. The average carcase weight of price reported suckler bred cows decreased from 349kg in the 2016 period to 340kg in the 2017 period.

Grading

Despite the increase in the proportion of suckler bred cows in the slaughter mix of price reported cows there was a slight downward movement in the conformation scores awarded year on year as outlined in Table 1. P grading cows accounted for 56.8 per cent of the reported cow kill in 2017 to date while O grading cows accounted for a further 27.5 per cent.

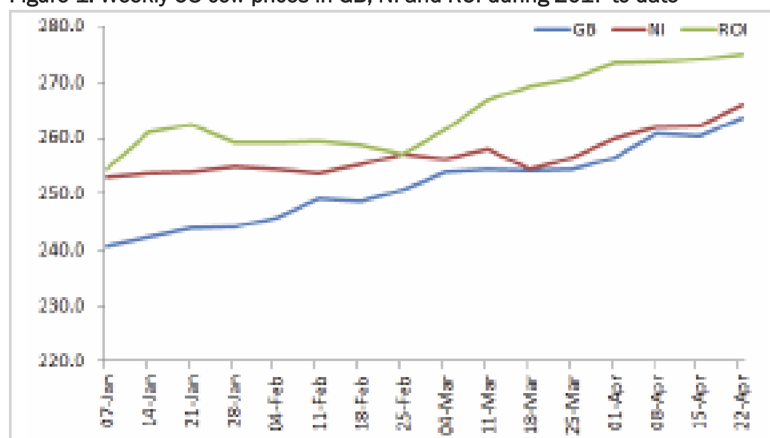
Prices

The cow trade in NI in recent weeks has gradually improved with an O3 cow price last week of 265.8p/kg. This is the highest recorded O3 cow price in the region since July 2015 and is notably higher than the corresponding week in 2016 when it was 228.8p/kg. The O3 cow price in NI has been consistently above the O3 cow price in GB during 2017 to date as indicated in Figure 1 however it has lagged behind the O3 cow price in ROI. Last week the differential in the O3 cow price between NI and ROI was 9.2p/kg.

Table 1: Conformation scores of the price reported cow kill in NI during 2017 to date and the corresponding period in 2016

Kill Year	E	U	R	O	P
2016	0.0%	2.1%	14.8%	26.7%	56.4%
2017	0.0%	1.5%	14.2%	27.5%	56.8%

Figure 1: Weekly O3 cow prices in GB, NI and ROI during 2017 to date



FQAS MART CLINICS MAY 2017

LMC'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 above. For further information call (028) 9263 3024.

LOCATION	DAY	DATE
Saintfield	Wednesday	03/05/2017
Omagh	Monday	08/05/2017
Markethill	Tuesday	16/05/2017
Enniskillen	Thursday	18/05/2017
Kilrea	Wednesday	24/05/2017
Ballymena	Friday	26/05/2017

UK BEEF EXPORTS DECLINE IN 2017

During February 2017 8,325 tonnes of beef were exported by the UK according to the latest available data from HMRC. This takes exports for the first two months of the year to 16,899 tonnes, a nine per cent decline from the same period in 2016 when 18,616 tonnes were exported.

Exports to the EU during the first two months of 2017 totalled 14,307 tonnes and accounted for 85 per cent of total UK exports of beef. In the same period in 2016 exports of beef to the EU totalled 17,175 tonnes and accounted for 92 per cent of total UK beef exports.

Ireland continues to be the largest market outlet for UK beef and accounted for 35 per cent of all UK beef exports during the 2017 period. However with 4,991 tonnes of beef exported during the first two months of 2017 this was a notable 33 per cent drop from the 7,493 tonnes exported to Ireland during the same period in 2016.

Exports from the UK to the Netherlands during the first two months of 2017 totalled 4,057 tonnes and accounted for 28 per cent of total UK exports to the EU. This was a 3 per cent decline from the same period in 2016 when 4,179 tonnes were exported from the UK to the Netherlands.

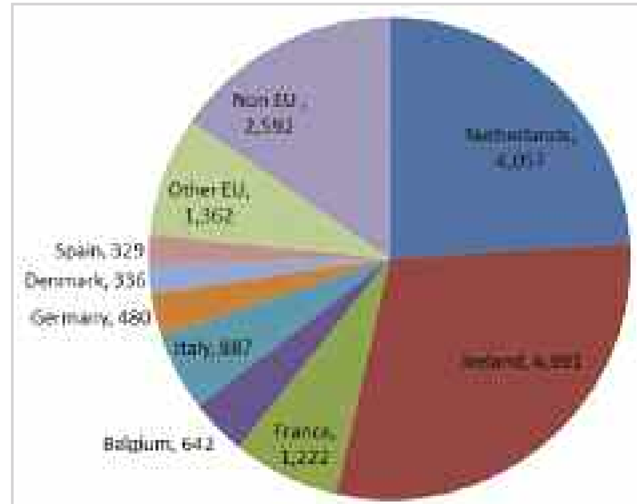
Beef exports to France during the first two months of 2017 totalled 1,222 tonnes, back from 1,808 tonnes in the same period in 2016. This accounts for a 33 per cent decline year on year. However despite the notable decline France remains the third largest export destination for UK beef.

During the 2017 period beef exports from the UK to Belgium, Germany and Denmark all recorded volume declines when compared to the same period in 2016 however the volumes involved remain relatively small. Meanwhile exports of beef from the UK to Italy recorded a 4 per cent increase to total 887 tonnes in the 2017 period with exports to Spain increasing by 32 per cent to total 329 tonnes over the same period.

Beef exports to non EU destinations during the 2017 period totalled 2,592 tonnes, accounting for 15 per cent of total beef exports in terms of volume. This was an increase from 2016 levels when exports to non EU countries totalled 1,441 tonnes and accounted for just 8 per cent of total exports.

Overall there was an 80 per cent increase in the volume of beef exports from the UK to non EU countries year on year. A weaker sterling relative to euro has allowed UK suppliers to displace some imported product onto the UK market but domestic suppliers are still heavily reliant on sales outside the UK to achieve optimum carcase balance.

Figure 2: UK beef exports by destination January-February 2017 (Tonnes)



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

LMC

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 24/04/17	Next Week 01/05/17
Prime		
U-3	344 - 352p	346 - 354p
R-3	338 - 346p	340 - 348p
O+3	332 - 340p	334 - 342p
P+3	282 - 300p	284 - 302p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	240 - 264p	240 - 264p
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 22/04/17	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	356.3	356.7	350.4
R3	352.1	351.7	342.0
O+3	343.3	344.2	333.5

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 22/04/17	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt > 280kg
P1	168.2	180.4	190.6	204.4
P2	188.2	208.1	231.6	239.2
P3	204.1	228.0	245.1	250.7
O3	222.0	295.7	260.7	266.1
O4	230.0	360.0	264.5	272.0
R3	-	-	-	287.5

Deadweight Cattle Trade

BASE quotes for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle remained steady this week ranging from 344-352p/kg with the majority of processors continuing to quote in the region of 350p/kg. Base quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows this week ranged from 240-264p/kg. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

A total of 5,294 prime cattle were slaughtered in NI plants last week, a decrease of 626 head from the previous week with the reduced kill days during the Easter week. This brings the total prime cattle kill during 2017 to date to 103,068 head compared to 101,331 head during the corresponding period in 2016. Meanwhile cow throughput in NI last week remained relatively steady with a total of 1,240 head killed locally.

Prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 147 head, a decline of 134 head from the previous week and accounting for three per cent of the total NI prime cattle kill. Cow imports from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 73 head compared to 54 head the previous week, while imports of cows from GB for slaughter in local plants totalled 92 head. Exports of cows from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 114 head.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle firmed slightly in NI last week with the average steer price up marginally to 346.2p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 1.2p/kg to 357.1p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was up by 2.1p/kg to 347.5p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by almost a penny to 353.4p/kg. The average cow price in NI last week recorded a notable increase of 4.5p/kg to 247.7p/kg while the O3 cow price was up by 3.6p/kg to 265.8p/kg.

There was a mixed trade across GB last week for prime cattle with deadweight prices strengthening in Scotland and the Midlands and Wales while coming under pressure in Northern and Southern England. The average steer price in GB was up by 2.5p/kg to 349.4p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 1.4p/kg to 358p/kg. The R3 steer price rose by 2.1p/kg in Scotland and 4.1p/kg in the Midlands and Wales while declining by 1.8p/kg and 0.4p/kg in Northern and Southern England respectively. The differential in R3 steer prices last week between NI and the GB average remained low at 0.9p/kg or £3 on a 350kg carcase. The average heifer price in GB last week was up marginally to 350p/kg while the R3 heifer price decreased by 2.4p/kg to 355.8p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and GB at 2.4p/kg or £8 on a 320kg carcase.

In ROI last week deadweight cattle prices increased in euro terms however a weakening in euro against sterling has generally decreased prices in ROI in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 331.9p/kg, back by 2.9p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 342.4p/kg, a decrease of two pence from the previous week. The O3 cow price in ROI last week was up by a penny to the equivalent of 275p/kg.

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

W/E 22/04/2017		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	356.8	341.0	365.4	356.6	357.1	360.9	359.8
	R3	357.1	331.9	367.2	350.3	359.4	352.2	358.0
	R4	356.2	333.0	368.5	362.2	356.8	353.6	361.5
	O3	343.0	318.5	340.2	324.1	329.4	325.3	329.9
	AVG	346.2	-	363.5	347.2	344.7	339.6	349.4
Heifers	U3	357.3	354.1	374.5	362.9	367.7	361.1	367.5
	R3	353.4	342.4	361.9	353.8	354.2	352.3	355.8
	R4	351.8	342.3	365.8	356.8	355.5	349.2	357.7
	O3	348.4	327.5	333.0	329.5	324.7	326.6	328.4
	AVG	347.5	-	363.4	350.3	345.5	336.2	350.0
Young Bulls	U3	349.0	332.9	359.1	351.8	347.2	351.5	351.8
	R3	341.7	324.5	352.7	336.0	336.8	347.4	340.6
	O3	325.3	308.6	317.4	304.3	297.9	312.5	304.9
	AVG	328.6	-	342.5	324.1	315.0	320.4	323.4
Prime Cattle Price Reported		4617	-	5769	6915	6140	3939	22763
Cows	O3	265.8	275.0	267.2	263.9	265.3	257.6	263.5
	O4	271.7	275.8	271.2	265.5	268.3	258.7	266.3
	P2	229.6	247.5	224.9	228.4	211.7	207.5	215.6
	P3	248.6	268.1	237.8	245.0	231.8	232.5	235.1
	AVG	247.7	-	256.1	244.0	230.4	225.2	235.2

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=83.86p 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

	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
W/E 22/04/17	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	199	219	208	175	198	188
Friesians	135	159	144	102	126	115
Heifers	180	195	186	159	179	169
Beef Cows	149	197	155	110	148	125
Dairy Cows	110	132	120	70	109	88
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	No Sale					
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg						
Bullocks over 500kg						
Heifers up to 450kg						
Heifers over 450kg						
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	280	400	325	150	278	210
Continental Heifers	200	340	270	100	198	155
Friesian Bulls	100	165	130	60	98	80
Holstein Bulls	50	95	80	15	48	25

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 24/04/17	Next Week 01/05/17
Hoggets >22kg	410-415p	400-410p
Lambs >21kg	450p	450-460p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 08/04/17	W/E 15/04/17	W/E 22/04/17
NI Hoggets L/W	359.9	343.6	363.7
NI Hoggets D/W	406.5	398.5	400.6
GB Hoggets D/W	417.1	412.0	410.2
ROI D/W	424.1	418.2	-
NI Lambs L/W	397.4	391.7	417.2
NI Lambs D/W	446.0	448.4	443.1
GB Lambs D/W	490.0	496.7	499.6

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the NI plants this week for R3 grade hoggets ranged from 410-415p/kg up to 22kg while quotes for spring lambs remained steady at 450p/kg up to 21kg. The processors have reported a slight reduction in the number of hoggets/lambs coming forward for slaughter with the reduced kill days during the Easter week, with throughput last week totalling 5,051 head. This was a decline of 252 head from the 5,303 hoggets/lambs killed in NI plants the previous week. Exports of sheep from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 4,111 head compared to 5,876 head the previous week. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week was up by 2.1p/kg to 400.6p/kg while the average deadweight lamb price in NI last week was back by 5.3p/kg to 443.1p/kg.

This week's marts

SMALLER numbers of hoggets passed through most of the sale rings this week with the hogget season starting to come to an end and marts have reported a range in the quality of hoggets available. Meanwhile the number of spring lambs on offer has remained subdued across many of the marts. In Massereene on Monday 380 hoggets sold from 360-395p/kg while 104 spring lambs sold from 400-430p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 160 spring lambs sold to an average of 432p/kg compared to 72 spring lambs the previous week selling to an average of 426p/kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday 176 spring lambs sold to an average of 405p/kg compared to 104 hoggets the previous week selling to an average of 400p/kg. The cull ewe trade has remained firm across the marts with a top reported price of £131 in Omagh on Saturday.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 21/04/17		Hoggets (P/KG LW)				Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 27/04/17		No	From	To	Avg	No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	125	311	376	-	25	383	424	-
Saturday	Omagh	396	381	417	-	55	397	462	-
	Swatragh	540	330	413	-	60	360	449	-
Monday	Massereene	380	360	395	-	104	400	430	-
	Kilrea	240	380	433	-	-	-	-	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	270	346	380	-	50	400	420	-
	Rathfriland	-	-	-	-	160	410	444	432
Wednesday	Ballymena	508	338	378	346	176	361	455	405
	Markethill	200	330	379	-	300	400	445	-

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