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BEEF CALF REGISTRATIONS DOMINATED BY SIX MAJOR BREEDS

DURING April 2017 51,997 beef sired calves were registered on NI farms taking total registrations for the year to date to 136,419 head. This is very similar to the 136,762 beef sired calves registered during the corresponding period in 2016 and notably higher than the 114,601 beef sired calves registered during the same period in 2015.

While the total number of beef sired calves has remained stable there has been a notable reduction in the number of dairy sired calves registered on NI farms during 2017 to date. During April 2017 11,406 dairy sired calves were registered on NI farms taking total registrations for the year to date to 59,771 head. This is a notable reduction of 11,522 head from the corresponding period in 2016 when 71,293 dairy sired calves were registered.

Beef sired registrations to dairy cows during 2017 to date have totalled 51,390 head. This is an increase of 4,548 head from the same period in 2016 when 46,842 beef sired calves were registered to dairy cows.

Beef sired calves from the dairy herd have accounted for 38 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations in NI during 2017 to date compared to 34 per cent of beef sired registrations during the same period in 2016.

Breeds

Beef sired calf registrations in NI continue to be dominated by six major breeds (Limousin, Charolias, Aberdeen Angus, Hereford, Simmental, Belgian Blue) and together these six breeds accounted for 92 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations in the region during 2017 to date.

Limousin continues to be the most popular beef sire used on NI farms with 35,919 registrations during the first four months of 2017. This accounts for 26.3 per cent of all beef sired registrations during that period. It is however a slight reduction from the corresponding period in 2016 when 27.8 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations in NI were Limousin.

Aberdeen Angus calves registrations during 2017 to date totalled 29,794 head and this accounted for 21.8 per cent of all calf registrations in NI. This is an increase from the same period in 2016 when Aberdeen Angus calves accounted for 19.9 per cent of beef calf registrations. Aberdeen Angus is now the second most popular beef sire in NI.

During 2017 to date 29,265 Charolais calves have been registered on NI farms making it the third most popular beef sire on NI farms. Charolais calves accounted for 21.5 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations during 2017, a reduction from the same period in 2016 when 31,302 Charolais calves were registered and accounted for 22.9 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations.

A total of 11,952 Hereford calves have been registered on NI farms during 2017 to date, accounting for 8.8 per cent of all beef calf registrations. In the same period in 2016 11,205 Hereford calves were registered accounting for 8.2 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations in the region.

Simmental calf registrations during 2017 to date totalled 9,982 head and these accounted for 7.3 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations. In the same period in 2016 10,751 Simmental calves were registered, accounting for 7.9 per cent of all beef sired registrations.

A total of 8,582 Belgian Blue calves were registered on NI farms during 2017 to date and these accounted for 6.3 per cent of all beef sired calf registrations. This is an increase from 2016 levels when 7,632 calf registrations accounted for 5.6 per cent of total beef sired registrations.

Figure 1: Monthly beef sired calf registrations in Northern Ireland from January 2015 until April 2017

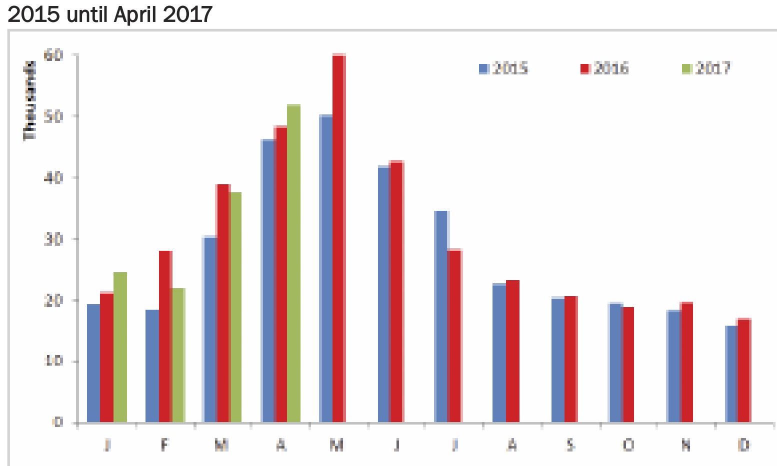
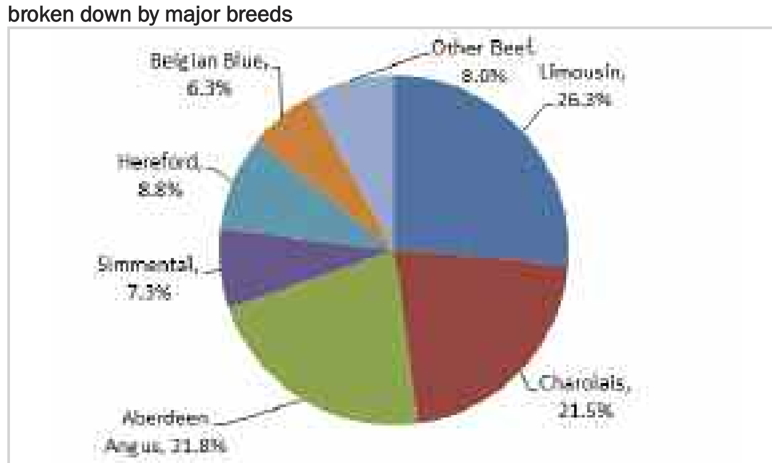


Figure 2: Beef sired calf registrations in Northern Ireland during 2017 to date broken down by major breeds



NI BEEF INDUSTRY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (APRIL SNAPSHOT)

THE average prime cattle price in NI during April 2017 was 344.2p/kg, an increase of 45.5p/kg from April 2016 levels when the average prime cattle price was 298.7p/kg. This accounts for a 15.2 per cent increase in the deadweight prices paid for prime cattle in the region year on year.

The R3 steer price in NI during April 2017 was 356p/kg, an increase of 47.7p/kg from the 308.3p/kg paid in April 2016. Meanwhile in GB the R3 steer price was just above the NI price during April 2017 at 357.7p/kg. This was 37.2p/kg above April 2016 levels when the R3 steer price in GB was 320.5p/kg. While the R3 steer price increased in GB the level of increase was lower than the increase recorded in NI and this has resulted in a narrowing of the differential in R3 steer prices between the two regions from 12.2p/kg in April 2016 to just 1.7p/kg in April 2017.

During April 2017 the R3 steer price in ROI was the equivalent of 334.4p/kg, up from 307.6p/kg in April 2016. The differential in R3 steer prices between ROI and NI has widened from 0.7p/kg in April 2016 to 21.6p/kg in April 2017.

Prime cattle slaughterings in NI totalled 24,264 head during April 2017, back five per cent from April 2016 levels. It should however be noted that the Easter holidays fell in April in 2017 while they were in March last year and this will have contributed to the reduction in the kill recorded in April 2017. Cow throughput was also back year on year with 5,886 cows killed in local plants during April 2017 compared to 6,754 cows killed in April 2016.

Carcase weights have also declined year on year with the average prime cattle carcase weight back by 7kg to 331kg in April 2017. This accounts for a 2.1 per cent decline year on year. Meanwhile the average cow carcase weight was back by 11kg to 295kg in April 2017 which accounts for a 3.5 per cent decline year on year.

Total cattle imports for direct slaughter during April 2017 totalled 1,689 head, a notable increase from 998 head in April 2016. This increase was driven primarily by an increase in imports of prime cattle from ROI and cows from GB. Meanwhile exports for direct slaughter totalled 704 head in April 2017 compared to 2,308 head in April 2016. A reduction in cow exports to ROI and a reduction in prime cattle exports to GB have been key factors behind this decline.

The number of cattle on NI farms aged 12-30 months intended for beef production totalled 475,094 head in April 2017, a 7.8 per cent increase from April 2016 levels. The number of beef sired cattle in this age category increased by 8.8 per cent in April 2017 when compared to year earlier levels while the number of dairy sired males declined by 17.5 per cent over the same period.

During April 2017 €1=£0.848 compared to €1=£0.792 in April 2016. This accounts for a 7.1 per cent increase in the value of euro against sterling between April 2016 and April 2017.

Table 1: NI Beef Industry Key Performance Indicators (April Snapshot)

	Apr-16	Apr-17	% Change
Finished Cattle Prices (p/kg)			
Average Prime Cattle Price	298.7	344.2	15.2%
Average Cow Price	209.8	245.3	16.9%
Average R3 Steer Price (NI)	308.3	356.0	15.4%
Average R3 Steer Price (ROI)	307.6	334.4	8.7%
Average R3 Steer Price (GB)	320.5	357.7	11.6%
Slaughterings			
Total Clean Slaughterings (Head)	25,539	24,264	-5.0%
Total Cow Slaughterings (Head)	6,754	5,886	-12.9%
Average Clean Carcase Weight (kg)	338	331	-2.1%
Average Cow Carcase Weight (kg)	306	295	-3.5%
Trade (Head)			
Live Imports for Direct Slaughter	998	1,689	69.2%
Live Exports for Direct Slaughter	2,308	704	-69.5%
Availability (Head)			
No. Cattle on the Ground*	440,526	475,094	7.8%
Beef Sired	397,603	432,400	8.8%
Dairy Sired (Male Only)	42,923	42,694	-0.5%
Calf Births Registrations (Head)			
Calf Births	54,917	57,346	4.4%
Beef Sired	48,437	51,997	7.3%
Dairy Sired (Male Only)	6,480	5,349	-17.5%
Euro / Stg Exchange Rate (€ / £)	79.2	84.8	7.1%

* Aged between 12-30 mths (Beef + Dairy Male Only)
All NI Figures Unless Otherwise Stated

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 08/05/17	Next Week 15/05/17
Prime		
U-3	350 - 356p	352 - 358p
R-3	344 - 350p	346 - 352p
O+3	338 - 344p	340 - 346p
P+3	288 - 304p	290 - 306p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	250 - 270p	250 - 270p
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 COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 06/05/17	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	174.9	186.7	201.6	210.2
P2	184.8	214.4	237.4	246.1
P3	194.2	233.8	249.5	255.1
O3	-	248.1	263.7	269.8
O4	-	-	265.6	273.5
R3	-	-	280.0	286.1

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 08/05/17	Next Week 15/05/17
Hoggets >22kg	400-420p	395-420p
Lambs >21kg	450-460p	450-460p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 22/04/17	W/E 29/04/17	W/E 06/05/17
NI Hoggets L/W	363.7	361.0	343.2
NI Hoggets D/W	400.6	404.7	404.3
GB Hoggets D/W	410.2	412.8	406.6
ROI D/W	407.4	424.7	437.4
NI Lambs L/W	417.2	412.6	416.2
NI Lambs D/W	443.1	442.1	440.0
GB Lambs D/W	499.6	502.2	474.9

Deadweight Cattle Trade

THE deadweight trade for prime cattle in NI has remained firm with base quotes for prime cattle ranging from 352-358p/kg across the major plants. The cow trade has also remained firm in NI with base quotes for good quality 0+3 grading cows ranging from 250-270p/kg. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Reports have indicated slightly tighter supplies of both prime cattle and cows available for slaughter in recent weeks. Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 6,335 head. This was back from the 6,626 prime cattle killed locally during the previous week. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,542 head, back from 1,671 cows killed during the previous week.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI last week totalled 175 head with 79 cows also imported. A further 9 prime cattle and 127 cows were imported from GB for direct slaughter in NI plants last week. Meanwhile 171 cows were exported from NI for direct slaughter in ROI last week with no cattle making the journey to GB for direct slaughter.

The R3 steer price in NI last week was up marginally from the previous week at 357.5p/kg and this was the eighth consecutive week in which it has recorded an increase. In the corresponding week last year the R3 steer price in NI was 312.8p/kg. The R3 heifer price in NI last week was up 2.2p/kg to 357.4p/kg and this was the tenth consecutive week in which it has recorded an increase in the region. In the corresponding week in 2016 the R3 heifer price in NI was 311.5p/kg. The young bull trade has also continued to improve in NI with an R3 price of 350p/kg last week, up 1.5p/kg from the previous week.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle has also continued to firm in GB with the average R3 steer price up 2.4p/kg to 362.1p/kg. The R3 steer price improved in all the GB regions by 3-5p/kg with the exception of Southern England where it was back by 1.8p/kg. The differential in R3 steer prices between NI and the GB average widened slightly to 4.6p/kg last week. The average R3 heifer price in GB last week was 364.2p/kg, up 4.3p/kg from the previous week. This increase was driven by improvements in the trade in Scotland, Northern England and the Midlands where R3 heifer prices were up by between 6-8p/kg. Meanwhile in Southern England the R3 heifer price was back by 5p/kg from the previous week. The differential in R3 heifer prices between NI and GB last week was 6.8p/kg, the widest it has been since early March this year.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price was the equivalent of 338.1p/kg, up 1.2p/kg from the previous week. This puts the differential between ROI and NI at 19.4p/kg or £68 on a 350kg carcase. The R3 heifer price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 347.9p/kg, up 1.4p/kg from the previous week. This puts the differential between NI and ROI at 9.5p/kg or £31 on a 330kg carcase.

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the plants for spring lambs this week were in the region of 450-460p/kg with plants paying up to 21kg. The number of spring lambs coming forward for slaughter has increased in recent weeks in line with normal seasonal trends with spring lambs accounting for two thirds of the price reported kill last week. The hogget season has almost come to an end with the plants quoting 395-420p/kg for the small numbers coming forward for slaughter. Total lamb/hogget throughput in NI plants last week was 4,592 head compared to 5,209 head during the previous week. In the same week last year 4,644 lambs/hoggets were killed in local plants. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week was 440p/kg while the deadweight hogget price was 404.3p/kg

This week's marts

SMALL numbers of sheep passed through many of the marts this week with the trade remaining broadly similar to previous weeks. In Massereene on Monday 342 spring lambs sold from 415-445p/kg compared to 207 spring lambs last week selling from 400-436p/kg. In Saintfield this week 140 spring lambs sold from 410-440p/kg compared to 66 spring lambs last week selling from 400-430p/kg, In Ballymena on Wednesday 309 spring lambs sold from 400-461p/kg (avg 415p/kg). In Enniskillen this week 342 spring lams sold from 385-434p/kg. The cull ewe trade has remained firm with top reported prices generally ranging from £90-110. The highest recorded cull ewe price was £111 in Omagh last Saturday.

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

W/E 06/05/2017		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	360.5	347.6	375.2	358.3	361.9	361.3	364.4
	R3	357.5	338.1	373.0	355.4	360.0	358.4	362.1
	R4	355.2	339.4	372.7	363.5	360.1	356.5	364.1
	O3	344.6	324.0	348.0	328.0	328.6	332.0	334.2
	AVG	347.6	-	368.5	349.7	345.5	343.6	352.4
Heifers	U3	361.6	360.5	382.9	366.0	372.4	372.9	373.8
	R3	357.4	347.9	377.2	358.3	362.7	355.6	364.2
	R4	353.8	348.9	373.8	357.9	361.3	353.1	362.6
	O3	347.3	333.6	346.5	331.0	337.4	327.9	336.3
	AVG	349.4	-	372.1	351.2	351.3	340.8	355.1
Young Bulls	U3	355.1	340.4	366.0	352.0	354.5	352.2	355.5
	R3	350.0	332.3	360.5	343.6	343.1	338.4	345.7
	O3	328.8	316.3	322.6	305.4	306.6	320.6	309.9
	AVG	336.1	-	350.7	324.2	330.6	328.7	332.3
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5620	-	6254	6995	6586	4043	23878
Cows	O3	268.9	279.9	277.8	269.7	268.4	265.1	269.5
	O4	273.2	281.7	280.2	272.0	271.3	264.5	271.2
	P2	234.2	257.5	230.3	228.4	215.3	217.0	219.9
	P3	252.1	274.2	242.6	242.6	231.3	241.1	236.6
	AVG	256.6	-	270.6	250.7	234.3	232.1	241.7

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=84.61p 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 06/05/17	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	194	209	201	174	190	182
Friesians	154	174	160	128	147	137
Heifers	201	219	210	170	200	185
Beef Cows	150	195	163	115	149	132
Dairy Cows	112	138	125	70	111	90
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	220	262	245	185	219	210
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	210	246	225	180	209	195
Bullocks over 500kg	200	267	220	170	199	185
Heifers up to 450kg	200	250	225	165	199	182
Heifers over 450kg	200	220	212	165	199	183
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	280	380	330	150	278	215
Continental Heifers	225	365	295	120	220	170
Friesian Bulls	100	180	140	55	98	80
Holstein Bulls	70	145	105	35	68	50

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 05/05/17		Hoggets (P/KG LW)				Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 11/05/17		No	From	To	Avg	No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	-	-	-	-	55	412	432	-
Saturday	Omagh	342	364	415	-	93	414	441	-
Monday	Massereene	107	370	405	-	342	415	445	-
	Kilrea	200	389	417	-	-	-	-	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	130	320	360	-	140	410	440	-
	Rathfriland	-	-	-	-	136	404	470	433
Wednesday	Ballymena	157	260	320	300	309	400	461	415
	Enniskillen	-	-	-	-	342	385	434	-
	Markethill								

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