

## NI MOVES UP EU PRICES LEAGUE TABLE

THE EU Deadweight Cattle Prices League Table provides a useful comparison of the prices paid at the farmgate for R3 grade heifers across the EU.

During the w/e 23 April 2017 the average R3 heifer price in the EU was 384.6c/kg, an increase of 2.6c/kg from the w/e 26 March 2017 when the average price was 382c/kg. It is also slightly higher than the corresponding week in 2016 when the average R3 heifer price in the EU was 378.1c/kg.

Sweden continues to maintain first place in the EU league table with an average R3 heifer price the equivalent of 447.1c/kg. However despite remaining in first position in the league table the R3 heifer price in Sweden was back by the equivalent of 27.8c/kg from the w/e 26 March 2017.

With an R3 heifer price the equivalent

of 420.5c/kg GB moved up one position in the league table into second place in the week ending 23 April 2017. This is an increase of 14c/kg from the w/e 26 March 2017 when it was 406.5c/kg.

While a firming in the deadweight cattle trade in the UK has contributed to this notable increase in deadweight prices the uplift in euro terms has also been partly driven by a weakening in the value of euro against sterling. In the week ending 26 March 2017 €1= £0.866 and in the w/e 23 April 2017 this had come back to €1= £0.839. This accounts for a 3.2 per cent decline in the value of the euro against sterling.

Deadweight prices for R3 grade heifers in NI have also recorded an improvement due to a firmer deadweight cattle trade and a weaker euro. In NI the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 417.7c/kg in the w/e 23

April 2017, an increase of 14.2c/kg from the previous month when it was the equivalent of 403.5c/kg. This put the R3 heifer price in NI 33.1c/kg above the EU average price and 2.8c/kg below the GB price in the w/e 23 April 2017. NI is in third position in the league table in the w/e 23 April 2017, up one position from the previous month.

Meanwhile in ROI a firming in the deadweight cattle trade has placed it in fourth position in the EU league table in the w/e 23 April 2017. This has moved it up from seventh position in the w/e 26 March 2017. The R3 heifer price in ROI was 405.9c/kg during the w/e 23 April 2017, up by 14.7c/kg from the previous month. The R3 heifer price in ROI was 11.8c/kg lower than the equivalent price in NI during the w/e 23 April 2017 and 21.3c/kg higher than the average EU R3 heifer price.

Table 1: EU Deadweight Cattle Prices - Heifers R3 Equivalent (€ Cents)

Position last Mth	Position this Mth	Country	Price last Mth (w/e 26.03.17)	Price this Mth (w/e 23.04.17)	Change on Mth (cents)
1	1	Sweden	475.0	447.1	-27.8
3	2	Great Britain	406.5	420.5	+14.0
4	3	Northern Ireland	403.5	417.7	+14.2
7	4	Ireland	391.2	405.9	+14.7
2	5	Italy	416.2	400.0	-16.2
5	6	Luxembourg	396.2	396.2	+0.0
6	7	France	393.0	394.0	+1.0
8	8	Spain	382.2	379.1	-3.1
10	9	Germany	361.3	360.2	-1.2
9	10	Denmark	368.7	357.2	-11.5
11	11	Austria	348.5	351.2	+2.7
12	12	Slovenia	333.8	333.5	-0.3
13	13	Poland	312.9	313.2	+0.3
14	14	Belgium	306.0	307.5	+1.5
15	15	Lithuania	285.0	299.8	+14.8
16	16	Czech Republic	257.5	263.1	+5.6
		<i>Eu Average</i>	382.0	384.6	+2.6
		<i>Euro (€1=)</i>	86.6	83.9	-2.8

# DECLINE IN CONFORMATION SCORES OF PRIME CATTLE KILL IN QUARTER 1

## UKECP TO HOST CHINESE DELEGATION

**D**IRECT access for the UK to the valuable Chinese market for beef will be one step closer next week following a study tour of UK beef production controls by Chinese officials. The study tour is being facilitated by the UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP) and includes visits to factories, feed mills, competent authorities, farms and government laboratories across the UK.



Gaining access to important markets beyond the EU in Asia, Northern America and the Middle East is a key priority for Northern Ireland's meat exporters. This access to third country markets has become increasingly important in recent times following the decision by the UK to leave the EU and the uncertainty that surrounds continued access to this market outlet.

LMC plays a strategic role facilitating the opening of new markets through its membership of the UKECP. LMC is a co-founder of this joint industry/government programme, the aim of which is to establish access for UK red meat products into third country markets.

**D**URING the first quarter of 2017 there was a general downward movement recorded in the conformation scores awarded to prime cattle killed in local plants.

Analysis of the price reported steer kill has indicated that during the 2017 period 18.2 per cent of steers achieved a U grade compared to 21 per cent of the kill during the corresponding period in 2016. The proportion of steers achieving an R grade during the 2017 period accounted for 36.8 per cent of the steer kill during Q1, back from 38.5 per cent of the kill in Q1 2016.

Meanwhile there was an increase in the proportion of both O and P grading cattle in the NI price reported steer kill. O grading steers accounted for 33.9 per cent of the kill in the 2017 period, up from 30.7 per cent in the 2016 period. P grading steers accounted for 10.8 per cent of the kill in the 2017 period, up from 9.4 per cent from year earlier levels.

This general decline in conformation scores achieved coincides with a reduction in the average carcass weight of price reported steers. During Q1 2017 the average steer carcass weight was 350kg, back from 357kg in Q1 2016. This decline by 7kg represents a 2 per cent decline in the average carcass weight year on year and has occurred despite no change in the NI slaughter mix. In the 2017 period 61 per cent of steers were of suckler origin, 23 per cent were beef crosses from the dairy herd and the remaining 16 per cent were dairy males.

The downward movement in conformation scores awarded can also be observed in the

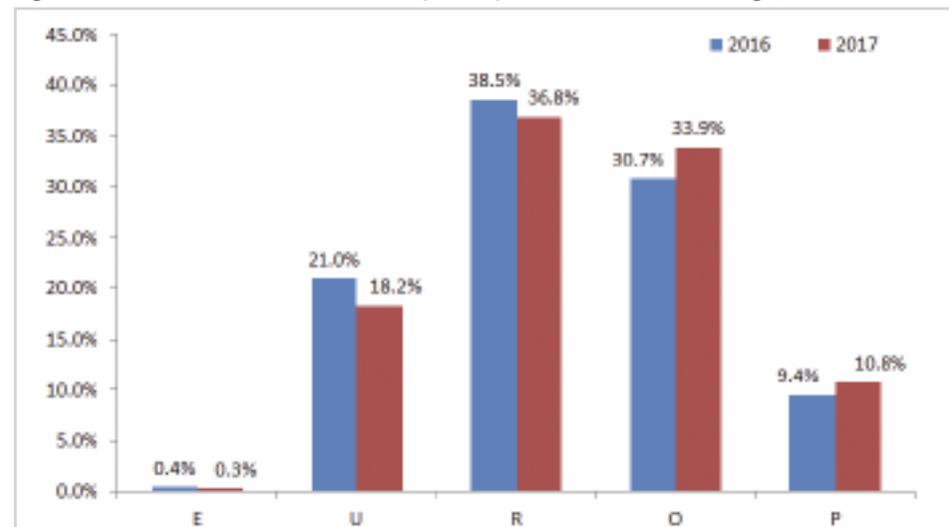
price reported heifer kill during Q1 2017 when compared to year earlier levels. During the 2017 period 16.5 per cent of price reported heifers achieved a U grade compared to 22 per cent of heifers during the corresponding period in 2016. The proportion of R grading carcasses also recorded a decline from 49.7 per cent of the kill in the 2016 period to 47 per cent in the 2017 period.

As with the price reported steer kill the proportion of heifer carcasses awarded an O or P grade recorded an increase. In the first quarter of 2017 30.2 per cent price reported heifers were awarded an O grade, a 7 percentage point increase from the 2016 period when 23.2 per cent of heifers were in this category. Meanwhile the proportion of P grades

recorded a slight increase to account for 6.1 per cent of the reported heifer kill in the 2017 period.

The average heifer carcass weight also recorded a 7kg decline year on year to 317kg in the 2017 period. However unlike the steers there was a slight shift in the source of heifers killed in local plants which may have contributed to changes in the conformation scores. Suckler origin heifers accounted for 69 per cent of the kill in the 2017 period, back 3 percentage points from 2016 levels when 72 per cent of heifers were of suckler origin. Meanwhile beef cross heifers from the dairy herd accounted for 25 per cent of the kill in the 2017 period, up from 23 per cent in Q1 2016.

Figure 1: Conformation scores awarded to price reported steer kill in NI during Q1 2016-2017



### 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



## CATTLE TRADE

### NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 01/05/17	Next Week 08/05/17
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	346 - 354p	350 - 356p
R-3	340 - 348p	344 - 350p
O+3	334 - 342p	338 - 344p
P+3	284 - 302p	288 - 304p
Including bonus where applicable		
<b>Cows</b>		
O+3 & better	250 - 264p	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 NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 29/04/17	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	357.9	359.9	350.9
R3	353.9	352.8	348.5
O+3	343.8	343.5	339.4

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 29/04/17	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	171.2	183.0	191.6	216.2
P2	187.3	207.4	226.9	245.0
P3	206.9	225.8	246.0	249.3
O3	-	238.2	255.8	266.4
O4	-	-	264.3	269.0
R3	-	-	-	284.8

### Deadweight Cattle Trade

**T**HE deadweight cattle trade in NI has remained firm with base quotes for U-3 grade prime cattle this week ranging from 346-354p/kg. The majority of plants are quoting from 350-354p/kg for in spec cattle however with reports of higher prices available producers should use these quotes as a starting point for negotiation. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows ranged from 250-264p/kg across the plants this week. A slight increase in quotes is expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Throughput of prime cattle in NI plants last week totalled 6,626 head, the highest weekly throughput since the first week of March this year. The plants have reported steady supplies of prime cattle coming forward for slaughter to meet demand from their major customers. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 1,671 head taking throughput for the year to date to 30,646 head. This is an increase of 1,500 head from the corresponding period in 2016.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 223 head with 50 cows also imported. A further 8 prime cattle and 91 cows were imported from GB for direct slaughter in NI plants last week. There were no cattle exported from NI for slaughter in GB plants last week while 47 prime cattle and 141 cows were exported to ROI for direct slaughter.

The deadweight cattle trade in NI continued to firm last week with the average steer price up 1.5p/kg to 347.7p/kg while the R3 steer price was up marginally to 357.3p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 347.8p/kg, up marginally from the previous week, while the R3 heifer price was 355.2p/kg, up 1.8p/kg. Reported deadweight prices for young bulls also improved in NI last week with the average young bull price up by 6p/kg to 334.6p/kg. The R3 young bull price in NI last week was 348.5p/kg, up 6.8p/kg from the previous week. The cow trade has meanwhile remained fairly steady with the average cow price up by 1p/kg to 248.7p/kg.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle also continued to improve in GB last week with the average steer price up by 1p/kg to 350.4p/kg. Average steer prices increased in Scotland, Northern England and Southern England last week while they came back in the Midlands. The average R3 steer price in GB last week was 359.7p/kg, up by 1.7p/kg from the previous week. The average heifer price in GB last week was up by 2.3p/kg to 352.3p/kg while the average R3 heifer price was up by 4.1p/kg to 359.9p/kg. The cow trade firmed in all the GB regions last week with the average cow price up by 5.2p/kg to 240.4p/kg.

The R3 steer price in ROI last week increased by the equivalent of 5p/kg to 336.9p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 4.1p/kg to 346.5p/kg. The cow trade also firmed in ROI last week with the O3 cow price up by 4.3p/kg to 279.3p/kg. This is 14.3p/kg higher than the equivalent price in NI. Prime cattle throughput in ROI last week totalled 24,342 head while 6,422 cows were also slaughtered.

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

W/E 29/04/2017	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB	
Steers	U3	359.2	345.0	369.0	359.3	357.6	368.6	362.9
	R3	357.3	336.9	370.0	352.5	354.8	360.2	359.7
	R4	353.1	337.5	373.8	364.6	353.4	360.1	363.7
	O3	343.8	323.7	344.3	323.8	322.4	326.1	329.3
	AVG	347.7	-	366.6	347.4	341.9	344.3	350.4
Heifers	U3	360.2	358.5	378.3	363.4	368.5	369.1	370.0
	R3	355.2	346.5	369.8	349.9	356.7	360.6	359.9
	R4	352.7	346.8	373.8	356.9	356.2	360.3	361.7
	O3	346.1	330.6	349.3	328.1	325.6	339.2	335.7
	AVG	347.8	-	370.6	350.4	341.1	345.2	352.3
Young Bulls	U3	350.7	340.2	367.2	343.3	351.6	354.4	352.9
	R3	348.5	329.2	358.3	331.7	340.3	349.4	342.6
	O3	329.3	315.4	317.0	304.7	308.0	316.2	309.3
	AVG	334.6	-	343.3	315.1	321.8	332.3	325.8
Prime Cattle Price Reported	5829	-	6508	7529	6947	4855	25839	
Cows	O3	265.0	279.3	273.0	265.3	269.6	266.0	268.0
	O4	268.6	280.1	275.3	268.0	268.6	263.6	268.3
	P2	226.3	251.5	230.8	231.0	212.4	214.9	218.7
	P3	245.6	273.4	242.9	249.1	231.8	239.2	238.2
	AVG	248.7	-	262.8	247.4	235.2	232.3	240.4

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=84.71p 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 29/04/17	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Steers	201	221	209	170	200	188
Friesians	147	168	155	120	146	130
Heifers	200	214	206	165	199	185
Beef Cows	146	218	160	112	145	128
Dairy Cows	115	141	125	75	114	93
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>						
Bullocks up to 400kg	225	266	245	195	224	210
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	205	244	225	180	204	192
Bullocks over 500kg	200	220	212	170	199	185
Heifers up to 450kg	200	241	220	160	199	180
Heifers over 450kg	200	223	212	160	199	185
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>						
Continental Bulls	270	380	325	145	265	205
Continental Heifers	185	295	250	100	182	150
Friesian Bulls	100	170	135	60	98	80
Holstein Bulls	75	150	100	20	72	40

# SHEEP TRADE

## SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 01/05/17	Next Week 08/05/17
Hoggets >22kg	400-415p	400-420p
Lambs >21kg	450-460p	450-460p

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 15/04/17	W/E 22/04/17	W/E 29/04/17
NI Hoggets L/W	343.6	363.7	361.0
NI Hoggets D/W	398.5	400.6	404.7
GB Hoggets D/W	412.0	410.2	412.8
ROI D/W	418.2	407.4	424.7
NI Lambs L/W	391.7	417.2	412.6
NI Lambs D/W	448.4	443.1	442.1
GB Lambs D/W	496.7	499.6	502.2

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

**Q**UOTES from the major processors for R3 grade hoggets this week ranged from 400-415p/kg up to 22kg however the plants have indicated that the hogget season is coming to an end. Quotes for spring lambs this week were in the region of 450-460p/kg up to 21kg with similar quotes expected for early next week. Hogget/lamb throughput in NI last week totalled 5,209 head while a further 5,012 sheep were exported to ROI for direct slaughter. The deadweight hogget price in NI last week was up 4.1p/kg to 404.7p/kg while the deadweight lamb price was back by 1p/kg to 442.1p/kg. In the same week last year the deadweight lamb price in NI was 414.7p/kg. In ROI last week the combined hogget/lamb deadweight price was up by 17.3p/kg to 424.7p/kg due to an increased proportion of spring lambs in the slaughter mix.

## This week's marts

**T**HE number of hoggets passing through the sale rings has continued to decline in line with normal seasonal trends while the number of spring lambs on offer has remained subdued across many of the marts. In Massereene on Monday 129 hoggets sold from 380-412p/kg while 207 spring lambs sold from 400-436p/kg. This compares to 380 hoggets selling from 360-395p/kg and 104 spring lambs selling from 400-430p/kg the previous week. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 141 spring lambs sold to an average of 422p/kg compared to 160 spring lambs the previous week selling to an average of 432p/kg. In Ballymena on Wednesday 251 hoggets sold to an average of 330p/kg while 198 spring lambs sold to an average of 405p/kg. The ewe trade weakened this week with top reported prices generally ranging from £95-110.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 28/04/17		Hoggets (P/KG LW)				Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 04/05/17		No	From	To	Avg	No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	424	359	411	-	27	409	458	-
Monday	Massereene	129	380	412	-	207	400	436	-
	Kilrea	150	380	429	-	-	-	-	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	290	336	380	-	66	400	430	-
	Rathfriland	-	-	-	-	141	400	436	422
Wednesday	Ballymena	251	300	361	330	198	380	452	405
	Enniskillen	-	-	-	-	146	389	429	-
	Markethill	260	320	358	-	300	400	442	-
	Armoyle	-	-	-	-	58	390	415	404

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## LMC TO MARK DOUBLE CELEBRATION AT BALMORAL SHOW 2017

**T**HERE is an open invitation for all stakeholders visiting this year's Balmoral Show to call-in to the LMC stand (B15). "Everyone will be made more than welcome," confirmed Commission Chairman Gerard McGivern. "Servicing the beef and sheep sectors at both producer and processor level is our raison d'être".

"We have a tremendous story to tell this year. In addition to the promotional work that we carry out on behalf of the red meat sector on a daily basis, our stand will also feature the timeline and history of both the Commission, as an organisation, and the NI Beef and Lamb

Farm Quality Assurance Scheme. In order to facilitate all of this, we have had to expand the scale of our exhibition presence by 50%."

McGivern added that 2017 is a very special year for LMC, on two fronts. "It represents both the 50th anniversary of our founding and the 25th anniversary of the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme.



So we have plenty of cause for celebration. And we would be delighted for stakeholders from across Northern Ireland to join us at some stage during this year's Balmoral Show. If nothing else, it will give producers a sense of the success story, which their continued funding has helped generate."

McGivern said that LMC's attendance



at Balmoral allowed the organisation to network with other stakeholders and members of the public. "Adding the extra day to this year's event will encourage even greater numbers of local consumers to attend Balmoral this year. The local market is extremely important to the beef and lamb industries. Both sectors have a great story to tell so it is important that we get a strong message across in the most effective way possible.

McGivern highlighted the challenge that Brexit will pose down the track. "LMC is committed to communicating a strong, clear message regarding Brexit on

behalf of the entire red meat sector. And, obviously, Balmoral provides a unique opportunity for LMC to communicate with other stakeholders on this issue, and other important matters".

He concluded: "Balmoral Show is all about farming and food in Northern Ireland and putting its best foot forward. The cattle and sheep sectors have a great story to tell, both in regard to the quality and the provenance of the food they produce and LMC will play a key role in communicating this strong message."

# LMC - WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AT BALMORAL 2017

LMC will be sponsoring the sheep young handlers competition classes at this year's Balmoral Show. "Our involvement with the young handlers represents a perfect fit for us," confirmed Commission chief executive Ian Stevenson.

"We want to encourage a greater uptake of the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme within the sheep sector. And, of course, we always welcome the opportunity of communicating with young people: they represent the next generation of young farmers."

The sheep young handlers' competitions get underway at 11.30 on Saturday May 13. The venue is the Balmoral sheep ring with classes for 8 to 11 year olds and 12 to 14 years olds. LMC goody bags will be available for everyone involved.

LMC will also be supporting the

**LMC staff will be available at Stand B15 to engage with our stakeholders throughout the four days of this year's Balmoral Show**



beef sector through sponsoring the Beef Champion of Champions which will be awarded on Friday May 12 at 4pm in the cattle ring.

Helping to deliver enhanced farm safety standards, particularly where young people are concerned, is another priority for LMC. The organisation is actively involved with the Northern Ireland Farm Safety Partnership.

"The Commission fully supports the work of the Farm Safety Partnership in helping to make our farms safer places to live and work on," said Stevenson. "Young people are particularly vulnerable in this regard. With this in mind we will be giving out a number of Farm Quality Assurance Scheme high viz vests to young people visiting our Balmoral stand. "Numbers are limited, so they will be given out on a first-come: first served basis."

# LMC TO SHOWCASE THE BEST OF BEEF AND LAMB

LMC will be demonstrating just how wonderful home-produced beef and lamb can taste courtesy of the cookery demonstrations it will host over the four days of this year's Balmoral Show. "We will be taking everything in-house this year," confirmed the Commission's Education Services' Manager Cherrie Kenny.

"Our 8-strong LMC team will be hosting 4 cookery demonstrations per day: two dedicated to beef and two to lamb."Visitors coming onto the stand can also sample the Creamy Peppered Beef and Yummy Lamb Curry dishes. "Our cookery demonstrations are always a big draw at Balmoral. And this year will be no different."

The cookery demonstrations at Balmoral represent part of the LMC's commitment to educate consumers about the true nutritional value of red meat in the diet. The Commission also operates a highly valued and successful retail sampling and education services programmes, which bring the best of Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb to the consumers of today and tomorrow.

LMC will be conducting 4 cookery demonstrations each day on its own stand at this year's Balmoral Show



Where young people are concerned, a key driver for LMC is its **food4life website**. "The Commission has been promoting locally produced beef and lamb in secondary schools throughout Northern Ireland since 1999 and conducts in the region of 330 school cookery demonstrations each academic year," confirmed Cherrie Kenny.

"Our educational programme explains the nutritional value of Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb in a balanced diet, while highlighting the versatility of Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb in quick, simple, cost effective recipes

"It also supports Northern Ireland's Home Economics Curriculum while recognising the important role played by Home Economics' teachers as major influencers of young people."

Cherrie is expecting the LMC to be very busy over the four days of this year's Balmoral Show. "This is always the case," she added. However, the addition of the Saturday brings a new and exciting dimension to this year's event. The extra day should give families that extra opportunity to get along to the show. This is great news, from an LMC perspective. One of our core objectives is to educate local consumers regarding the prime quality and taste of the beef and lamb products that are produced on their doorstep".

"Balmoral is unique in that it allows consumers to find out about their local food industry in a relaxed and informative manner. This is why the show is so important to the LMC as a means of communicating a strong nutritional message to the red meat industry's most important customer base."

## IN MY OPINION...RICHARD HALLERON

VISITING the LMC stand at Balmoral Show should be a priority for every farmer heading for this year's event.

For the record, the organisation is one of the very few Non-Departmental Public Bodies that truly delivers at farm level in a meaningful way. And the Commission's co-ordination of the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) is proof positive of this being the case.

Farmers are always complaining about red tape and the amount of bureaucracy they have to confront. But the reality is that FQAS is putting an extra £150 in their pockets every time a finished animal goes into a sale ring or down a kill line. And this is real money. Try selling a beast of any age

that is not FQAS certified today and see what you get for it!

This year sees the Commission marking two anniversaries. It was founded in 1967 and FQAS was launched in 1992. So congratulations are merited on both fronts. Farmers coming on to the LMC stand at Balmoral will also receive a realistic perspective on what Brexit has to hold for our beef and sheep sectors.

Credit must be given where credit is due: Commission Chairman Gerard McGivern has been very clear, from the outset, regarding the respective challenges and opportunities that Brexit represents. And, no doubt, he and the other LMC board

members will have their thoughts on this subject further refined by the time we get around to show time.

Recent weeks have seen the Commission appointed by DAERA to co-ordinate the BVD PI Removal Incentivisation Scheme. It goes without saying that any farmer with any queries on the matter should make a bee line for the LMC stand. It will be fully manned throughout the four days of the event.

And if that's not enough, there's always a cup of tea or coffee on-offer to everyone coming on to the stand.



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